

November 7, 2016

Lucy Leske, Robert Luke, and Veena Abraham  
Witt/Kieffer  
Re: Florida Gulf Coast University Presidential Search

Dear Ms. Leske, Mr. Luke and Ms. Abraham:

I am excited to submit this letter and application for President of Florida Gulf Coast University. I am currently President of Doane University, a National Liberal Arts University located in Crete Nebraska. I've been following the amazing growth and development of FGCU over the years and after carefully reviewing the Leadership Profile I believe my background and experience is well matched to the needs and aspirations described therein. I'm thrilled to see the University's strong commitment to a sustainable future for the region and how that pledge is reflected every day in the work and accomplishments of students, faculty and staff.

The 2016-2021 strategic plan with its focus on teaching and learning, expansion of community and civic engagement and emphasis on critical thinking skills underpinned by a foundation in the liberal arts are further reasons why I'm very interested in this position. The strategic plan has identified the right priorities to successfully address the university's critical needs and challenges at this time as well as take advantage of your most promising opportunities. I see evidence on campus of new program development in different areas and opportunity for expansion into the health professions, business, STEM, environmental education, coastal and marine science, environmental engineering and the renewable energy industry where research shows new and emerging fields of study and increasing opportunities for jobs.

I'm excited to see a focus on strengthening academic performance as I believe this will expand and promote FGCU's brand regionally and nationally for high quality education that is also affordable. Your growing interest in development of new clinically oriented programs in health professions and sciences will address key labor shortages in the health care and service industries in the region and state-wide. With respect to the importance of innovation your efforts to expand student opportunities for entrepreneurship will give FGCU's students not only an edge in finding jobs but also creating jobs in an increasingly competitive global and interconnected economy. And last but certainly not least, the goal of improving performance on student success as measured by retention, graduation rates and other metrics will strengthen the value proposition for students choosing to attend FGCU relative to your competition from peer and aspirant institutions. As you will note in my CV, the goals and actions described in your strategic plan are in areas where I have considerable experience and proven success. I'm confident I could successfully and enthusiastically engage the broader FGCU community and lead students, faculty and staff to achieve the goals and objectives of the strategic plan.

Florida Gulf Coast University is fortunate to launch its new strategic plan from a position of strength. Investments to date to improve academic quality, expand academic offerings, improve campus facilities, increase the endowment, and operate with financial stability have been significant. Few universities in the country have grown so dramatically over such a short period time and managed it so well. The campus landscape is beautiful and inspiring by design and your infrastructure and academic facilities are highly functional, welcoming to students, and energy efficient. Many universities build Leed certified buildings. But few have the foresight to

build a 15 –acre solar field to power the physical plant. Very impressive! Going forward I want to build on that legacy of success by improving academic performance, maintaining access, ensuring affordability and enhancing diversity, controlling costs while expanding the resource base for the college.

#### *Fiscal Management*

I believe in the old saying, no margin no mission. I will secure the revenue to sustain current operations as well as seek out and acquire new resources to support strategic investment and growth. I have acquired significant expertise in fiscal management procedures over the years. I've overseen preparation of financials for bond applications, new resident halls, field houses and other buildings and infrastructure. I pay close attention to such factors as net income, unrestricted reserves, annual cost and size of debt, cost of operations, return on investments and work to ensure that all these remain strong and balanced in relation to one another. I will allocate financial resources in ways that leverage long range academic goals as defined by the University's mission and vision.

#### *Fundraising*

Given the success of fundraising efforts to date, the university is well positioned for implementing a new capital campaign designed to meet the needs identified in the new strategic plan. I enjoy fund-raising and I am prepared to spend a significant portion of my time cultivating key donors and prospects with the assistance of the Vice President for Advancement. In the course of my career I've secured several million dollars in grants, gifts and contracts in support of student scholarships, faculty research and teaching, and new facilities. I've led or participated in successful campaigns to build marine science centers, cultural centers, biomedical facilities, writing centers, athletic facilities, digital libraries and most recently a new state of the art Engineering laboratory. Currently I'm engaged in a campaign for a new theater and music building. However, the benefits of fundraising go beyond money. For in doing so I strengthen ties to alumni and friends and make new and strategic connections for the institution. And in that vein I look forward to working closely with the Foundation Board and staff to develop the case for receiving generous support from the community at large, alumni and friends, private foundations, and local, state and national agencies.

#### *Strengthening Community Relations & Promoting Institutional Identity*

As a relatively young institution, I understand the sense of ownership by people on campus and in the community who were there at the beginning and worked tirelessly over the years to grow and support the university. There is considerable opportunity to build on these strong bonds and find new ways that people and businesses can connect to and support the university's needs going forward. I will encourage faculty and staff to be active in local organizations such as rotary, chamber of commerce and other civic groups as well as build connections to public schools, the mayor and city manager, economic development directors, local businesses and charitable and religious organizations. My wife and I will also be very active in the local community and throughout the state of Florida. Doing so will help in promoting FGCU's institutional identity. In the increasingly crowded market of higher education, it will be critical for FGCU to distinguish itself through concise messaging about its selected areas of academic excellence and the positive impact its graduates have on the communities they live and work within.

My experience at Doane University has been enjoyable and rewarding on many levels but I am eager to build upon my success. With much of what I planned to do here accomplished, my wife and I believe the timing is right for us to explore new career opportunities. Florida Gulf Coast University is an energetic, youthful, entrepreneurial institution well positioned to lead higher education in Florida and beyond. FGCU also offers me unequaled opportunities for significant professional growth and development beyond what my current institution can provide. For example, my scientific background and expertise is in the area of marine coastal tropical ecology and conservation, with an emphasis on coral reef and inland coastal fishes and their associated habitats. Given your geography and the unique mix of programs ranging from the health professions, to engineering, to marine and coastal studies and sciences, it is indisputable that FGCU could set itself up as a key contributor to sustainable life on the coastal waterways, lagoons and wetlands of southwest Florida! And given my scientific background and experience I would be well positioned and energized to provide the leadership for FGCU's commitment to a sustainable future for the region.

On a personal note, my wife and I have discussed the decision to apply for this position and move to Florida. We would relish the opportunity to cultivate new relationships and connections with members of the university community. We would enjoy participating in campus activities and events, being "out and about" including making our home cheerfully welcoming to all. And I would be remiss if I didn't mention we miss our connection to the sea! We raised our family by the sea in Kennebunkport Maine and both our children now reside on the east coast. The quality of life in Fort Meyers is enviable. We often take our family vacations in Sanibel and Captiva. We have many friends and colleagues in the region and throughout the state of Florida. I mention these things because it is important to not only be professionally prepared to lead the university as its next President, but it is also important to be personally prepared to invest in the people and culture of the region. I look forward to hearing from you soon!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jacquie Carter".

Jacquie Carter