

Ms. Lucy Leske  
Witt/Kieffer

November 8, 2016

Dear Ms. Leske,

I am writing in regard to the Presidential opportunity at Florida Gulf Coast University. FGCU has earned a reputation as a vibrant, supportive and mission-driven community with an unwavering dedication to students. It requires a transformative leader who possesses the vision, commitment and talent to guide it into the future. I am confident that I possess the skills necessary to lead FGCU.

Joining FGCU with its clear strategic direction and momentum, faculty leadership, strong board and commitment to innovation is very attractive to me. While I have served at a variety of institutional types, a regional, comprehensive university is most appealing to me. I have a solid understanding of higher education, a sound background in the strategic planning practices necessary for today's higher education challenges, varied experience in relationship building and community engagement and strong skills in enrollment management and retention. FGCU's emphasis on meeting the needs of the region for a skilled workforce that is civically engaged and whose members are excellent stewards of the environmentally sensitive region resonates with me. It would also be wonderful to be near our family in southern Florida.

My career has afforded me the opportunity to develop a unique skill set. I have extensive experience that has prepared me to effectively meet the leadership opportunities and expectations outlined in the FGCU Presidential Search position profile.

Moving forward with a sense of tradition is essential for FGCU's new president. Building upon the University's short but impressive history will require a vision for the future that is informed by the past and supported by an innovative strategic plan. Achieving ever-increasing levels of educational quality and student outcomes will require a bold vision that capitalizes on FGCU being a place for innovators, creative thinkers and hard workers. The vision must inspire the community to step boldly into the future. I have led my ECU team with a sense of urgency to serve the needs of the currently enrolled students. We are leading the campus in a paradigm shift to address the goals in the University's strategic plan. My work with strategic planning began as a member of the Planning for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Committee at Juilliard. At ECU, I was a member of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee while simultaneously serving on the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education's Strategic Agenda Committee and Diversity Planning Workgroup. Serving on all three groups provided me with the opportunity to align ECU's plan with the state plans while they were in formation. It also enabled me to work with ECU's budgeting office to align the Strategic Plan with the University budget. Creating a vision that can be properly resourced is key to a successful plan. Aligning

the day-to-day work of the University with the goals of the strategic plan has resulted in record enrollment, retention and graduation rates.

Financial sustainability is a key issue in Higher Education. State supported universities must be thoughtful stewards of public funds. To accomplish state performance funding goals careful alignment of strategic plans and budget are required. I have extensive experience in that process. Close collaboration between Academics, Finance and Student Success are required to create realistic, sustainable goals. I would engage the entire FGCU community in the process of telling the FGCU story. Creating a message that engages new donors will require a collective effort. Targeted promotion of unique academic and community programs can increase philanthropic and corporate support for the College. At NJPAC, by collaborating with other organizations we were able to obtain new support for our programs. By highlighting programs that were of interest to the broader community we were able to introduce new donors to NJPAC while also re-engaging some that had lost interest. Approaching relationships from a broader perspective enabled me to expand my programs to the community. FGCU's commitment to the region and the state is a compelling story that can be told in a new way to stimulate support in its exceptional academic programs.

My knowledge of academic business models has been strengthened by managing large complex budgets, collaborating with financial affairs and serving as the head of the administrative budget committee which was tasked with managing Kentucky's budget cuts to Higher Education. Teaching a graduate course in Higher Education Finance and Policy requires me to stay on the pulse of higher education financial models and how they are impacted by policy. Putting this to practice with the senior management team enables us to balance finances with the changing landscape of Higher Education. EKU has allowed me to hone my skills at innovating best practices to suit the needs of the University. Re-envisioning admissions and retention efforts has resulted in record enrollment, retention and graduation rates. Using data to inform our planning and decision-making has been a game changer for EKU. Implementing a net revenue tuition model for admissions has permitted the University to approach budgeting from a new perspective. This collaborative process has forged a closer alliance between Student Success, Academic Affairs and Financial Affairs. It was achieved by bringing the Board of Regents, faculty and staff together to re-imagine the University. I have been able to employ best practices and anticipate market demands by involving key constituents in decision-making and direction setting.

I am at my best when I can share my passion and enthusiasm with others. Bolstering engagement with both current and new stakeholders of FGCU would come naturally given the history and traditions of the University. Deepening ties to the greater community and across the state are familiar challenges for me. NJPAC provided me with a platform that permitted me to expand programs from Essex County in New Jersey into Bergen and Passaic Counties and beyond. Developing alliances with National organizations solidified NJPAC's place as a national leader in

arts education. Forging new partnerships and garnering sources of support on a national and global level has been an essential component of success for programs I led at Juilliard, NJPAC and ECU. Simon Sidek, author of “Start With Why” challenges each of us to begin with “why.” My “why” is college students. At Juilliard I created a revenue neutral international touring program that provided students with the opportunity to perform, facilitate workshop and tour domestically as well as to Asia, Australia, Africa and Latin America. I have been able to extend some of these relationships to benefit students at ECU. Global experiences enhance the educational experience for students while raising visibility for the institution. Conveying the message that FGCU changes with the needs of its community and global society will draw attention to the University. Every partnership I make, every challenge I overcome is for the benefit of students. I would be proud to continue my work at Florida Gulf Coast University.

Being a positive, engaging presence on campus and in the larger community and state is a role I welcome. I enjoy the rhythm of a college campus. Spending time with students, faculty and staff informs my work. I regularly eat in the dining hall with students, faculty or staff members to stay informed about life on campus. Faculty and staff need to feel supported so they can provide the best educational experience to students. Faculty must be encouraged to create innovative ways to educate students. The faculty is the heart of the campus. Their participation in the academic process is critical. Honoring shared governance and demonstrating a transparent leadership style is important to me. I have found that the more I communicate the easier it is to accomplish goals that best serve the larger community. I have learned a great deal about messaging while managing Marketing and Communications at ECU. How, when and why messages are conveyed must be carefully planned. Obtaining appropriate feedback prior to disseminating messages is also important. Promoting trust and nourishing the spirit of mutual respect requires care that I strive to provide on a daily basis. Balancing the need to spend a significant percentage of time fundraising with visibility on campus and accessibility to the faculty and staff requires thoughtful communication.

I have led complex organizations, increased international profiles, engaged stakeholders, cultivated friends and aligned strategic plans with financial resources within the context of Higher Education. My commitment to promoting shared governance in moving an institution forward guides my interaction with colleagues. I have a collaborative, transparent style and lead with integrity. FGCU is a high functioning organization that embodies excellence, seeks to enhance its national profile while engaging stakeholders, desires innovative ways to increase revenue and embraces curricular innovation and intellectual engagement. I welcome the opportunity to lead the team at Florida Gulf Coast University.

I look forward to discussing my candidacy with you.

Sincerely,  
Laurie A. Carter