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Reference Florida Gulf Coast University Presidential Search

Dear Ms. Leske and Members of the Presidential Search Committee:

I am honored to have been encouraged to explore the position of President at Florida Gulf Coast University. My qualifications for this position emanate from over thirty years of successful leadership within major universities, including my most current service as President of West Chester University of Pennsylvania – recognized as a flagship campus in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education. My current and previous administrative positions have provided a broad range of experiences related to the role of President of Florida Gulf Coast University.

While I enjoyed the Presidency at West Chester University (WCU) and am proud of our tremendous success in moving the institution forward as one of the premier comprehensive regional universities in the nation, I was ready after more than seven years of service to provide leadership to new programs that address critical national and international needs. Although offered a new three-year contract as President of WCU, I resigned my position at the University to develop a national veterans' transition program, serving as the Chief Executive Officer of Troops to Education – a public/private non-profit corporation missioned to serve veterans and their families and America's schools. My goal of fully establishing this program should be accomplished prior to my assuming the presidency at FGCU. In addition, I am serving as President of the Global Foundation on Ethical leadership – a position that I was recruited to fill. The Foundation supports an international initiative to develop ethical decision making at all levels and across all aspects of society. I can bring this initiative with me to my university as it is not currently housed within another organization. I am also serving as the Strategic Advisor to the Board for ZAF Energy Systems, which is a private research and development company that has developed innovative energy storage and retrieval technologies.

Having spent nearly a year away from higher education, I am ready to assume a new and exciting challenge within the academy – a challenge that offers opportunity to work with another excellent campus community and enhance the reputation of my new institution. WCU gained status over my tenure as President as one of the most sought after public institutions in the middle Atlantic region, with over 20,000 first time applicants each year and enrollments on campus of nearly 17,000 students. This is an increase in enrollment of over 25% since I assumed the presidency in 2009. The institution is now the largest publicly owned university in Pennsylvania and the highest ranked public university in the Commonwealth on Consumer Digest's list of best value universities in the United States

(ranked 21st). My campus community is also proud of our efforts to elevate the University, including internationalizing the institution, achieving the Carnegie Foundation designation as a Community Engaged University, attaining Veteran Friendly status, being recognized nationally as a model for environmental sustainability, achieving two major capital campaigns, and successfully pursuing over \$300 million in campus facilities improvements. Most importantly, we are gratified to be increasing the life chances of the large number of WCU students who are first generation college students and those who come from families of limited means. These accomplishments and others have been achieved through a culture of shared governance and collaboration, but also within a highly regulated environment that is characterized by steep declines in state support.

My campus community and I developed strong mutual respect and have worked together very effectively on behalf of the University and those we serve. Our reputation, degree value, enrollment demand, and giving to the institution are at record levels. We have also achieved, or are making significant progress in achieving, the major goals that the campus community and I established for the university when I assumed the presidency. When I left WCU it was in the good hands of the highly effective leadership team that we assembled over the last few years.

Other positions that have prepared me for the Presidency at FGCU encompass prominent universities and include Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of North Dakota, Dean of the College of Education, Health, and Human Development at Montana State University, Dean of Education at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, and Associate Dean for Research at Clemson University. I also achieved my professorial promotions at the University of Washington, serving as a faculty member at the University for ten years prior to assuming the administrative position at Clemson University.

I am attracted to the Presidency at Florida Gulf Coast University for personal and professional reasons. My wife Sandra and I are fond of Southeast Florida, enjoying the culture and people of the area. We enjoy being highly engaged in the communities and organizations of our region and look forward to becoming involved in the regions impacted by FGCU. At the professional level I am excited about the opportunities that FGCU offers. I have been able to employ my entrepreneurial spirit and skills to enhance existing revenue sources and create new sources of support on behalf of my universities and to assist my faculty, staff, and students achieve their goals. I am ready to apply these skills in working with the Florida Gulf Coast University Board of Trustees, the greater FGCU community, alumni, and friends of the University to move the institution to the next level of prominence.

As a relatively young university, Florida Gulf Coast has an exceptional history of accomplishments as acknowledged in its national reputation and accolades, yet has the capacity to continue to grow and elevate its standing among the top regional universities in the nation. I am very interested in leading a university community that strives to achieve an outstanding and exciting future - a future that leads others in addressing the challenges and opportunities of the twenty-first century. I am also pleased to find that FGCU is committed to student success, strengthening campus and community

engagement, protecting our fragile environment, advancing disciplinary knowledge and practice through valued research and initiatives, and providing a diverse learning environment that creates opportunities for all students to learn from one another. My leadership background aligns well with these areas of focus and will enable me to work effectively with the university community and its constituencies to ensure a very bright future for Florida Gulf Coast University.

I also understand that the values reflected across campus in such areas as trust, respect and engagement are very consistent with my personal belief structure. I look forward to cultivating a climate at the University that promotes these values on campus and enables the institution to similarly have influence locally, nationally, and globally. I am excited about the opportunity to lead the University into a future that continues to distinguish the institution, its faculty and students, and those who have invested in the institution.

In brief, my role as President is to enable all members of my institutional community to achieve their best work – that is, to create opportunities, provide support, and remove obstacles to success. I measure my own success by the success of those for whom I have responsibility as well as the institution as a whole. I look forward to advancing the agenda for Florida Gulf Coast University by implementing and building upon the institution's past successes and the strategic plan for the future.

I have provided brief descriptions of my experiences and background under a summation of the professional characteristics and personal qualities that are listed within the Leadership Profile. Hopefully, these brief descriptions will enable individuals to determine if I am a good fit with their expectations for the next President of Florida Gulf Coast University.

Leadership and Vision

Leadership background

In addition to establishing a national reputation for leadership in my discipline, I have enjoyed over 30 years of successful administration in higher education and have served as a professor at each professorial rank. These positions have provided me with a first-hand appreciation for the work done by many of the individuals in my institutions.

I have been responsible for complex, and often highly political, organizations requiring sophisticated planning, budgeting, and personnel management. As the next President of FGCU, I intend to draw upon my background to enhance and build revenue sources for the University, leverage the University's resources with those of our constituencies, and expand the already significant role of the University as a partner in economic and quality of life development.

My previous positions involved considerable exposure to the media and public scrutiny and have required leadership in strategic planning in both the public and private sectors. Perhaps more importantly I have worked effectively with others inside and outside my organizations to successfully implement planning. My approach to planning has been

broad based and participatory. Implementation has employed strategies that bring together complementing investments of resources, evaluation, and rewards.

An extensive academic background

I earned my doctorate with dissertation honors from the University of Kansas and was promoted through the professorial ranks at the University of Washington, Seattle. I was also reviewed positively for tenure at Clemson University, University of Colorado, and Montana State University, and was tenured upon hire at the University of North Dakota. Tenure is not available to university presidents in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education. I have been an active contributor to my disciplines. I have personally generated approximately \$24 million in grant and contract support, published over 70 articles and 4 books, led over 150 major consultations nationally and internationally, and delivered more than 200 keynote presentations. In recent years, my scholarship is increasingly focused on higher education and ethical leadership.

Demonstrated ability to serve as a spokesperson for higher education, locally, statewide, and nationally

During my career in higher education I have served as international president of my professional organization, drafted and walked legislation through Congress and state legislatures, testified at all levels of government, served on advisory committees to three US presidents, and published extensively on national and global issues impacting higher education. I have served as Chairperson for the World Bank Education Committee and recently chaired the AASCU Committee on International Education. As a consultant to the US Department of State, I led the reorganization of the system of higher education in the Republic of Moldova and I have served as lead negotiator in negotiations with former Soviet President Gorbachev. Local television and radio stations call upon me to do interviews ranging from international affairs to leadership. These are examples of the same skills that I have successfully employed to advocate for my universities and those they serve.

Ability to work effectively with the FGCU Board of Trustees and state political leaders.

As Chair of the Commission of Presidents in Pennsylvania, I represented 14 university presidents and their institutions to the Chancellor, Board of Governors, and the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Most important to our success is the development of a strong sense of trust that is built on mutual respect and candid dialogue while recognizing the authority of our governing bodies. This trust is reinforced by mutual consultation, honesty, and a strong commitment to working together for the benefit of the institution and those we serve. I believe my experiences as both a school board president and an nine-year member of the Board of Trustees of the American College of Norway, working with public school and university boards, as well as private profit and non-profit boards gives me a unique perspective on the relationship between boards and their organizations.

Leading strategic planning

I have been engaged in leading strategic planning and the implementation of planning at several universities, including Clemson University, University of Colorado, Montana State University and West Chester University. I have also led strategic planning for the private sector, served as a facilitator for corporate planning, and as a consultant for municipal planning. Success in these roles has been based on a strong appreciation for the importance of developing trust and ownership in planning that is fostered by broad based engagement, transparency, consultation, and simply respecting the ideas of others. As the next President of FGCU, I look forward to implementing the current strategic plan and working with the greater University community to ensure that the plan remains current and relevant.

Ensuring student success in a supportive environment

As a first generation college student from a family of very limited means and education, I have focused much of my career on enabling students much like myself to achieve success in higher education and elevate their life chances through education. About 40 percent of the students enrolled in my recent institution are first generation college students, with many across campus coming from low to middle income families. We have established several programs at WCU to assist disadvantaged or underserved students to attain a university degree. Just one example is our Academic Development Program that is recognized as one to the most effective in the country and assists over 72% of the students from this program to graduate – a graduation rate slightly higher than the average for campus.

My commitment to student success is also reflected in emphasis given to supporting students in all aspects of their higher education experience, including academic, personal-social, psychological, health, and occupational dimensions. Through the use of such introspective efforts as the campus climate survey we have kept current with changing student needs. The end result has been achieving very high retention to graduation rates.

Valuing civic engagement

As is the case with FGCU, my current institution is committed to community engagement. We have created a culture of civic engagement that permeates the entire campus, encouraging faculty, staff, students, and administrators to invest their time and skills to improve quality of life in our region and beyond. Our students at WCU volunteer over 900,000 hours of service to our communities and reach as far as South Africa in assisting young AIDs patients and working in South America with those who lack the basics of life. Also like FGCU, we have established a campus culture of civility that guides how we interact with one another and serves as a model for the next generation of students we are preparing to bring value to their families, communities, nation, and the world as well as to their professional practice.

Promoting Diversity

We have been very successful in creating a culture at my institutions that promotes an environment in which all students, faculty, and staff are fully accepted, enjoy their institutional experiences, and can be highly successful. Expectations for this culture are established at the top of the organization and reinforced by my actions and those of our

leadership team. My support of events and organizations promoting diversity in all of its forms is very visible as are our policies and practices that reaffirm our commitment to diversity. These actions have resulted in significant increases in student and employee diversity as well as the success achieved by those representing diversity. These efforts extend beyond the University where higher education should assume responsibility for promoting positive societal values. We are also very proud of our designation as a Veteran Friendly University, providing necessary services to veterans and their families to ensure their success.

Commitment to the rapidly evolving academy

I have enjoyed opportunities to join others in impacting the future of higher education around the world. My leadership and service to international organizations has helped sharpen my vision for the future of higher education and the opportunities the academy faces as we operate in an environment that is too often characterized by diminishing resources and increasing expectations. I recently hosted and chaired the Global Conclave on the Future of Higher Education that addressed higher education's role in dealing with the most critical contemporary issues of our time. The Conclave was attended by presidents and rectors from around the world and issued a series of proclamations challenging higher education to action.

I believe very strongly in the educational mission of today's university and strive to enable my faculty to achieve success within a very rapidly changing and demanding environment. While technology enables us to employ new and exciting teaching strategies and delivery options, it also can be challenging for many. We have worked very hard at WCU to ensure that faculty are properly supported in their efforts to meet evolving student expectations and provide the very best teaching-learning environment for our students at the undergraduate, graduation and professional program levels.

We have been successful at WCU in significantly building and recognizing our dedication to student success through all of what we do. This was achieved through the development of a top quality support system, strong reinforcement, and collegial support. As a result of this dedication to student success, annual first-time applications to WCU exceed 20,000, graduate programs are growing, and the institution has achieved persistence to graduation rates that are among the highest nationally for comprehensive regional universities

I have also worked to achieve an appropriate balance between teaching and scholarship that reflects the values and goals of my institutions. As a prominent university, Florida Gulf Coast University is advancing their disciplinary knowledge and impacting professional practices. I understand the importance of this work. I also understand the supporting structures and incentives that are fundamental to the success of an institutional research and scholarship agenda. I look forward to having the opportunity to lead an institution that has achieved excellence in teaching while at the same time contributing important research and scholarship that enhances the mission of the University. Given the proper support and context, these two important parts of our mission can be mutually reinforcing.

Management

Maintaining an Effective Management Team

We have created working conditions that have allowed my institutions to attract and retain excellent senior, mid-level, and entry leadership. Our focus has been on enabling leadership to find both success and gratification in their work. Our culture encourages and rewards initiative, creativity, and innovation within a nonthreatening environment. Since I assumed the Presidency at West Chester University, we have not lost a single senior administrator to another institution even though our salary schedule lags far behind many of our colleague institutions. The working conditions that we created have attracted and retained top administrators who want to be part of a winning team.

Respect and work within a tradition of shared governance in which faculty, staff, and students each play a critical role

I have been committed as a professor and as an administrator to creating cultures of shared governance in which participation in planning and decision making become an institution expectation. I believe it is extremely important to create an environment, as well as ample opportunity, for students, staff, and faculty to engage in deciding their futures as knowledgeable decision makers. Successful implementation of a philosophy of broad engagement must be based on shared information, transparency, and frequent dialogue, acceptance of diverse thinking, respect, and most importantly trust. I have found that it is also important to agree upon a decision making process that is perceived as fair and provides for broad-based input. This needs to be accomplished before institutions are confronted with difficult and potentially divisive decisions. In summary, I believe those who are affected by decisions should have a role to play in the process of deciding, while at the same time decisions need to be made decisively and in a timely manner.

Evidence of ability to communicate effectively at all levels

Effective horizontal and vertical communication within the institution is critical to successful leadership and the cultivation of trust throughout the organization. However, effective communication can be one of the most difficult goals to achieve in higher education because of busy and complex schedules. To overcome the challenges inherent to communication in higher education, we initiated a philosophy of “distributed leadership” at WCU in which we expect engagement in decision making and accountability at various levels of the University. Knowledgeable participation and transparency in decisions is highly dependent on information being shared both up and down the chain of command. Therefore, we have developed multiple tools to achieve a consistent flow of information that informs participation in decision making at all levels. Among these tools for communication are an electronic idea box to solicit input from across campus (a paper version for those less comfortable with technology), regular newsletters and news notes from the President and Provost, town meetings around critical decision points, special group meetings, lunch with the President, and campus walk arounds. The development of the WCU strategic plan is a good example of employing

multiple communication tools to achieve high levels of participation in planning and to ensure a strong sense of ownership in the outcomes.

In an effort to become informed about my new campus and to kick start two-way communication, I have held listening sessions upon taking a leadership position at a university. I have found that continuing this process throughout my presidency has paid high dividends in helping me keep in touch with my campus community and make informed decisions. We also use this strategy with our communities so they have greater ownership in their university.

I have taken great pride in the aggressive marketing campaign that my team has established on behalf of West Chester University. Our television commercials are noted as among the most effective in the region and, with other marketing, has resulted in WCU being recognized as a “top of mind, first choice university” in the Mid-Atlantic region. Our marketing efforts were guided by strong marketing research and focused on building a reputation for quality to accompany our existing reputation as an affordable higher education option.

As to my abilities as a communicator, I am a frequent speaker at major events throughout the state, nationally, and internationally. I am also a frequent guest on talk radio and TV as well as conduct town meetings on and off campus. I have found that sincerity, honesty, and passion are essential ingredients in persuasive communication.

I have considerable experience in situations requiring diplomacy and political sensitivity. These experiences range from high level international negotiations to resolving extremely sensitive disputes within the institution. My experiences in international diplomacy have included leading negotiations in the public and private sectors. I have also served as a mediator for labor disputes, developed contracts nationally and internationally, drafted and successfully walked legislation through the Congress of the United States, and worked effectively with very divergent groups as a facilitator.

As a president, provost, and dean I have represented the interests of my universities to governing boards, state legislatures, and various types of constituencies. We have been very successful in obtaining approval and support for many of our capital development and programmatic initiatives. We have also been successful in convincing others to leverage their resources with ours in support of the university and those we serve. My work locally, nationally, and internationally has been formally recognized through awards received from local officials, my professional organizations, from presidents of the United States, and from foreign leaders.

My wife, Sandra, and I are very involved in our communities. While at WCU, we hosted over 100 events at the President’s residence each year, including many events for government and business leaders in Southeast Pennsylvania. We sit on various boards and support our communities by attending social and philanthropic events. As a result of joint committees and collaborative projects between the Borough of West Chester and the University, we have achieved significant outcomes in areas from mitigating alcohol abuse among our students to improving our environment. We now enjoy one of the most

successful town-gown relationships in the country and are asked to speak nationally on how we achieved this level of success.

Increase visibility and perception of the institutional brand

Within a very short period of time, my leadership team and campus community at WCU have moved the institution from a “safe” school to one that is ranked among the best in the country within its classification. We have achieved this level of success through elevating our quality and value proposition, carefully crafted marketing, and development of a strong sense of pride in the institution. Opportunities have been created to tell the story of the institution as one of the top comprehensive, regional universities in the country. As a result of these very thoughtfully planned and intentional investments of our time and resources, we have transformed WCU into one of the top higher education destinations in the Mid-Atlantic.

Successful promotion of a university necessarily begins with a good story – that is, facts, figures, and case studies around which an effective marketing campaign can be developed. Florida Gulf Coast University has already generated the material for effectively promoting the University. Using this material (the good story) effectively in continuing to elevate the visibility and brand of FGCU will be the responsibility of the institution’s next president. I look forward to this opportunity.

Resource Development

I have recognized that enhancing existing revenue streams and developing new sources of institutional support are multidimensional. Therefore, we have focused at my institutions on expanding entrepreneurial activities that are consistent with our mission and bring value to our constituencies, including distance and other off-site venues, increasing extramural sponsorship of faculty and student initiatives, and continuing to pursue higher levels of giving to the institution. In each of these areas we have achieved success.

Embrace a prominent and sustained role in fund raising

My ability to work with alumni and friends of the institution is reflected in our terrific success in generating external investment in our institutions. I have been involved in all aspects of development, including heading up major campaigns. As a result of the efforts of many people, these campaigns have been very successful. With gifts of several million dollars, we have been able to pursue important initiatives on behalf of those we serve and have given unique opportunities for alumni and friends to invest in their university. While at the University of North Dakota I was highly involved in a \$300 million capital campaign and completed one campaign at WCU by over 10% and two years ahead of schedule and initiated a second campaign that has achieved 80% of its goal. In both cases we developed powerful case statements throughout the campus that provide great investment opportunities for our prospective donors.

My wife and I enjoy interacting with alumni, listening to how they are living their lives, and telling the story about their time at the university. We especially enjoy helping

alumni take great pride in their university. Of course, we are also very active in providing opportunities for alumni and friends to invest in the future of their university and become more highly involved in that future. Over the last 7 years, alumni engagement in WCU has risen dramatically as has the number of alumni (and other) donors and the total of alumni giving. Sandra and I have traveled coast to coast interacting with the 90,000 living alumni of WCU and entertained extensively at our home in West Chester. We have also forged a strong relationship between the Alumni Association and the WCU Foundation, with each providing important and complementing roles on behalf of the University. Moreover, we have established new programs that engage alumni more closely with our current students. The efforts of our Foundation and Alumni Association have enabled WCU to more than double its endowment over the last 5 years.

I believe my background and experiences over 30 years of leadership in higher education and in business have prepared me to excel as President of Florida Gulf Coast University. If selected as the next President, I will be honored to work under the Board of Trustees and state political leaders to further an agenda of excellence on behalf of the University and those it serves. Moreover, I look forward to working with the university community, institutional alumni, our greater communities, and friends to build on the considerable accomplishments of Florida Gulf Coast University.

Sincerely,

Greg R. Weisenstein

Greg R. Weisenstein