

Karen M. Kedrowski  
3071 Wimbledon Lane  
Rock Hill, SC 29732  
[kedrowskik@gmail.com](mailto:kedrowskik@gmail.com)  
(803) 524-2259

The Presidential Search Committee  
Florida Gulf Coast University  
C/O Witt/Kieffer  
Oak Brook, IL 60523

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Dear Colleagues,

Please accept this letter and the accompanying materials as my application for the position of President of Florida Gulf Coast University. I believe I am well qualified for this position for several reasons.

**Academic Qualifications:** I hold a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Oklahoma and hold the faculty rank of full professor. I am formally trained as a legislative scholar, knowledge that would be especially helpful when dealing with elected officials. Most of my scholarly work has focused on women's health policy and activism; however, of late I have focused on civic engagement.

**Administrative Experience:** As you can see from my CV, I have spent my career at Winthrop University, a regional, public, Master's-level university in Rock Hill, South Carolina. I have held administrative positions for 15 years and I am currently the Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences (CAS). CAS encompasses the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, and several professional programs. It is also chiefly responsible for general education delivery. I oversee administration and management of 14 departments; 18 undergraduate majors, 33 minors, and nine graduate programs; 150 full time and 90-100 adjunct faculty, and a budget of \$16 million. I am also acquainted with SACSCOC accreditation standards from my time as the Global Learning Initiative Director, Winthrop's first Quality Enhancement Plan.

**Being an Advocate and Change Agent:** In my role as Dean, I am called upon to represent the College before external audiences, be it the news media, parents, prospective or current students, or donors. This includes advocacy for the liberal arts and liberal arts-based general education and for professional programs housed within the College.

As Dean, I also strive to be a change agent. I see academic administration as a means to create environments in which faculty and students can thrive. In this vein, I have sought to formalize processes, promote faculty diversity through a Diversity Committee, recognize faculty work mentoring student research, share resources, and advance the University's strategic plan. In addition, the College is working to develop degree programs, certificates, and other programs to appeal to adult students and to offer courses for high school students through a new dual enrollment initiative.

**Commitment to Civic Engagement and Diversity:** In recent years, my energies have turned increasingly to promoting civic engagement, primarily through the John C. West Forum on Politics and Policy. The mission of the West Forum is to train the next generation of South Carolina civic leaders. It does so

through campus programs; the NEW Leadership Institute, which encourages college women to consider careers in public service; internships; and voter education. In addition, I have worked closely with the Vice President for Student Life to co-chair two campus task forces. The first have inventoried civic engagement initiatives on campus and developed a plan for the future, developed an academic minor, and is creating a co-curricular record. The second is engaged in the National Survey of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) and embarked on an ambitious agenda surrounding the 2016 election cycle. These experiences will translate well to a presidency, which leads a University's "town and gown" relationships to create partnerships for mutual benefit.

Winthrop University boasts a diverse student body (over one-third minority, mostly African-American) and enhancing the diversity of its faculty and professional staff is an institutional goal. To this end, under my leadership, the College of Arts & sciences has created and trained a Diversity Committee, representatives of which serve on each faculty search committee starting in Fall 2016. The College has also worked to formalize its search committee processes, use best practices for faculty searches and to be especially mindful of diversity. Next on the agenda is to develop best practices for faculty retention, with a special focus on the needs of faculty from underrepresented groups.

I will also note that I have an undergraduate major in a foreign language (French) and have traveled and lived abroad. These experiences have made me globally aware and have shaped my outlook as a citizen of the world. They will serve me well should I join the diverse, global community of South Florida.

**Engagement with Trustees and Donors:** Historically, Winthrop University kept fundraising strictly in the purview of the President's Office and the Development Office. Nonetheless, the West Forum has provided an opportunity for me to build a relationship with a key donor family and to gain some fundraising experience. Initially funded by \$25,000 annual gifts from the West Family Foundation, Winthrop University recently received a \$500,000 gift to permanently endow the West Forum. This would not have happened if the family was not pleased with the success and achievements of the West Forum. The West Forum is now embarking on a fundraising relationship with a public relations firm to create an endowment to support the NEW Leadership program.

In addition, I have built relationships with Winthrop trustees over time. Initially, these contacts were informal. Several trustees were active in state politics and liked to chat about politics with an academic. As Dean, I attend Board meetings as a representative of the College, ready to answer questions as they arise. I also interact with trustees socially at University ceremonies several times each year.

**Collaborative Leadership Style:** By instinct and intention, I adopt a collegial and collaborative leadership style. My formal titles aside, I consider myself a member of a team. I am surrounded by intelligent and insightful individuals – faculty and staff – who have good ideas and important perspectives on issues that need to be considered. Similarly, I also work to delegate and empower my colleagues whenever possible.

The Dean's Council (department chairs and dean's office professional staff) meetings is an example of my collaborative style. Previously, Dean's Council meetings were occupied with marching orders and to-do lists. We rarely discussed policy or university initiatives. When I moved into the deanship, I took my colleagues' advice to use electronic means for routine business and reserve Dean's Council meetings for substantive discussions. The Dean's Council now regularly engages in policy development, discussion of strategic initiatives, and chairs' professional development. Moreover, the group has developed a healthy *esprit de corps*.

An example of how I empower others is my relationship with the Undergraduate Research Committee. Undergraduate research is a signature program in the College. Yet faculty who engaged in such mentoring often did so in addition to their regular responsibilities and were uncompensated. I asked this committee to develop a proposal whereby the work could be tracked and faculty could earn reassigned time for this effort. While I set some general parameters, I empowered the Committee to work out the details. The policy was adopted by the Faculty and is now being implemented.

***Interest in Florida Gulf Coast University:*** I am interested in Florida Gulf Coast University for several reasons. First it is a public institution that focuses on serving its local community. Not only am I a product of public higher education, I am first-generation college student who survived on Pell Grants, work study, and student loans. Consequently, I am a passionate advocate of public higher education and the opportunities it affords students with backgrounds like mine. Working at public institutions also is a way that I can repay the debt I owe to those who invested in me when I was a student.

In addition, I am also attracted by FGCU's incredible record of success in just 20 years: its rapid growth, its excellent retention and graduation rates, its innovative degree programs, and its successful athletic programs. FGCU has clearly developed a successful formula for overcoming the enrollment and funding challenges facing higher education today. I would like to be a part of building upon this record of success.

Finally, I am attracted to the University's commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility. Clearly, this is important, given its proximity to the delicate ecosystems of the Everglades and the Gulf Coast. This is not only a growing area for employment, it's the right thing to do for the sake of our planet.

Thank you for your consideration. I wish you the best in your search.

Sincerely,

*Karen M. Kedrowski*

Karen M. Kedrowski, Ph.D.  
Dean, College of Arts & Sciences  
Winthrop University  
Rock Hill, SC