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Search Committee  
Florida Gulf Coast University Presidential Search  
Via Email to  
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Search Committee:

This letter is intended to supplement or replace my letter of intent dated December 22, 2016. Since the time of submission, I have been reviewing the leadership information carefully and I would now like to address more specifically how and why I might offer the consummate combination of experience, background, skills and passion to lead Florida Gulf Coast University to its next level.

The vision of preparing graduates to be civically engaged and environmentally conscious citizens with successful careers ready to pursue further education is a vision I wholeheartedly agree with. The mission of a grounded education in liberal arts and sciences employing instructional technologies is clearly a need for higher education today.

FGCU has an admirable history. It would be exciting to lead the next Strategic Plan and to seek solutions to the critical needs defined:

**Academic Excellence:** Transitioning to the Honors College will be an exhilarating challenge. This endeavor is exactly what higher education needs to provide to students today so that they can ultimately attain high wage, high demand jobs. It is innovative, experiential, student-directed and will be effective and successful.

The academic excellence would not be confined to the Honors College, of course. It must be a hallmark of all undergraduate and graduate programs at FGCU.

Additionally, many of the concepts of the Honors College (non-traditional approach to education, interdisciplinary training, community service, appreciative advising and research) are elements that will ultimately need to find their way into all curricula of the future.

Today's learner is very different from those who have come before and the University must be open to new methods of learning. FGCU has expressed its commitment to emerging instructional technologies. I daresay the snapshot today will be dramatically different than the snapshot 20 years from now. Only one item will remain unchanged: the ongoing success of FGCU.

I am passionate about the new learners and the need to transform traditional education (Parkhurst, A call for transformation in physician assistant education. *Journal of Physician Assistant Education*, June 2015, Volume 26, Number 2, 1-5).

**Entrepreneurship:** The Institute of Entrepreneurship is a brilliant concept. I applaud your response to the millennials in creating this marvelous adventure!

There is no question that the values of the millennials are very different than those of traditional students. Historically students chose education for the sake of knowledge. In this multi-tasking world of iPhone, iPad, instant messaging, Emails and immediate answers, there is little patience for the traditional methods of education as well as for education that will not lead to tangible rewards.

Before sending their children to college and before adults invest in further education, they consult such websites as College ROI reports (in which they can compare the total cost of a 4 year education, the graduation rate, the typical number of years to graduate and the 20 year net return on investment), Brookings site (in which they evaluate value added to institutions) and numerous other resources to determine whether the choice of a particular University would ultimately lead to a lucrative career return on their initial investment.

The focus for new initiatives, research and community outreach of the Emergent Technologies Institute will undoubtedly provide environmental sustainability for the future. I believe that contributing to future sustainability is a responsibility of all institutions of higher learning.

**Health Sciences:** FGCU has an impressive offering of health related programs. Clearly there is room for expansion with an emphasis on inter-professional collaboration and research. Life-long learning offers opportunities as well for certificates, online programs and individual advancement opportunities. Clearly my training and practice as a physician will be helpful here.

**Emerging Pre-Eminence:** Graduation rates, recruiting and retention of high quality faculty and increasing research are the focus of all institutions. One way to ensure success is to have a valid and effective self-study effort that will inform faculty and administration of the causes and reasons for success that need to serve as the criteria for future decisions.

When students encounter difficulties there should be safe guards in place to ensure that they will have vigorous advising and remediation as indicated. Referral to psychological counseling may also be indicated as well as referral for help with reading or writing if that is what is interfering with their academic success.

Students who are identified as at risk in advance of matriculation might also be offered a preparatory course.

But achieving pre-eminence will involve more than ensuring graduation rates. There is no question whatsoever in my mind that the existing vision at FGCU has led to outstanding achievements and that the University will become one of the pre-eminent leaders in the country, not just in the state of Florida.

In addition to my enthusiasm for what you have accomplished and for where you wish to grow, I should speak at least briefly of my own candidacy. I do believe that I can lead the University to achieve the highest quality academics and performance, establish strategies for student success, work collaboratively with K-12 and other state college institutions in the region, forge strong partnerships and inspire new donors and others for funding.

**Professional Characteristics and Personal Qualities that FGCU seeks in a President:**

**Professional Characteristics:** I am a visionary. I am a strong leader who is task oriented. I never question “is this possible?” Instead I ask “how can we achieve this?” I believe in the motto of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in World War II: “The difficult we do immediately. The impossible takes a little longer.” I am tireless with a strong work ethic.

My management style is to enable people to achieve higher levels. I am not a micro-manager but I do expect people to perform with a strong work ethic. I am committed to team behavior and to groups abiding by team rules that they agree upon. My management ideals are based in large part upon the many concepts described by Patrick Lencione in his management books. Although written for business, the concepts apply to higher education as well.

My track record in academia should stand for itself. I joined Barry University as an adjunct faculty member in January of 1999. By July, I had joined the University full-time as Medical Director and by the Fall had accepted the position of Program Director of the Physician Assistant Program.

This rapid rise was not so much because of my own ability as it was a manifestation of an infant program in need of serious nurturing to survive and succeed. The Program began accepting students in 1997. When I arrived on the scene, there were 28 students in the class of 2000 and 31 students in the class of 1999 (first graduating class). The Program was confined to the Miami campus. Strong leadership was needed.

Since then, I have accomplished a great many things on behalf of the PA Program. We first achieved nationwide visibility when we inaugurated student collection of clinical data electronically. Though it’s hard to remember those days, students were actually recording patient data on paper logs.

We were approached in the early 2000’s by St. Petersburg College. At the time, there were no PA programs on the west coast of Florida. There were many place-bound students there (who could not leave home to obtain a PA education). We applied for and received a federal HRSA grant to underwrite expansion. We instituted the relatively new method in the mid-2000’s, of interactive videoconferencing (IAV) and accepted students to our Program, hosted by St. Petersburg College. Faculty and staff were also hired to be in residence there. Most didactic classes were conducted by interactive videoconferencing. All course materials were subsequently available electronically including testing.

After five years or so and successful re-accreditation decisions, we considered how to meet our mission further. Barry University’s mission has the core components of knowledge and truth, inclusive community, social justice and collaborative service.

We learned that there were less than 10 practicing PAs in the United States Virgin Islands. We established an advance team and visited St. Thomas and St. Croix frequently to meet with stakeholders (members of the medical community, government, hospital staff, Board of Trustees, etc.) and confirmed that the need was great. This is an extremely high poverty area with a high level of medically underserved people.

We applied for another HRSA grant and were awarded 2 grants totaling approximately \$1.5M for expansion to the USVI. Faculty and staff were hired for residence in St. Croix and students recruited (many initially from the mainland). Classes are now conducted between the three campuses by IAV.

Over the years, while I maintained the position of Program Director, I advanced to Associate Dean. I also had promotions in rank from Assistant to Associate Professor and am presently at the rank of Professor. Barry University does not have tenure but I have been on a continuing contract for many years.

In the time that I've been with the University, I've seen the Program grow from 59 students on one campus to 300 students on 3 campuses. I've brought in over \$2M in grants and have successfully led multiple re-accreditations (the most recent last year when we were granted another 10 years which is the maximum).

I have been instrumental in curriculum renovation. Our attrition rate is less than 2% (graduated 99% of our matriculates in past 5 years). Our graduate first-time performance on the national certifying examination has been 90-95% over the past 5 years (average of 94%). Our graduates are highly regarded by the medical community and their patients.

My role at Barry University has been to oversee the entire Program including recruitment, admissions, curriculum, partnerships with clinical entities, overall budget, program and outcomes evaluation and every other aspect of the Program.

**Personal Qualities:** There is no question that I embrace innovation and inspire people to lead them from where they are to where they have never been (to paraphrase Henry Kissinger about the task of a leader). I am committed to the environment and to our obligation to sustain it. I am also strongly committed to social justice, inclusion, equity and diversity. I believe in a transparent leadership style. There is more to say but I shall stop here. I would appreciate an interview to fill in any gaps. Thank you for your attention.

Respectfully,



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