

MITCH SHAPIRO, Ph.D.

January 28, 2016

Chair, Presidential Search Committee

Florida Gulf Coast University

Dear Dr. Smith:

After a thorough review of your announcement, the position profile and the university website, it is apparent that we may have an excellent fit between your institutional needs and my configuration of experiences in academic, business and nonprofit leadership. This could also be an opportunity for FGCU to utilize several decades of my organizational development and innovation experience for the benefit of your faculty, students, trustees and other constituencies. This fit is accentuated when we review each of the position requirements and map these to my experience. It would be a special pleasure to return to academia in a broader role where I could focus on advancing academic quality, fiscal integrity and community service, building upon years of expertise in cultivating relationships with philanthropists, government officials and business and civic leaders. Over the last twenty years, I have deliberately taken on projects and responsibilities that would prepare me to serve as an innovative source of shared governance leadership for academic institutions to successfully confront the complex challenges facing higher education. This preparation anticipated how the traditional responsibilities of service, teaching and scholarship would be increasingly focused on also enabling universities to become engines of economic, workforce and leadership development.

Challenges in academia are creating a new imperative for presidential leadership – academic leaders are now compelled to accelerate profound changes in their budgets, cultures, curriculum and technology at the same time that under a shared governance model, the faculty must own the new vision and pace of change. The new model of a university leader is one who can simultaneously address these imperatives and inspire, unify, embrace and enable the multiple constituencies who will together advance the institution, its enrollment, its innovative capacity and its brand vision. That is why we suggest that presidents, deans and provosts use a profound understanding of design and integrative thinking to carefully develop and execute change processes using our Academic Transformation Model. For an institution that seeks vision and its implementation, I would bring a collegial and collaborative leadership style based on high-quality academic training, enhanced by decades of process and problem solving experience, which can nurture, develop and implement unifying visions that are professionally fulfilling for my colleagues and create value for the constituent groups and communities we serve.

Curriculum Innovations, Enrollment Growth, Retention and Assessment

Considering the turbulence, uncertainty and challenges facing higher education, I would welcome the chance to be a resource for an institution that seeks to build brand strength and competitive advantage by seizing the unlimited opportunities to meet these challenges through innovation. I am eager to return to the excitement and challenges that would fit well to my capabilities as an energetic, entrepreneurial visionary who can passionately accelerate the brand enhancement process, raise significant funds for academic programs and lead the process of developing future leaders of business, nonprofits and government. I sense that your committee and faculty would be receptive to some very innovative initiatives. This would leverage my years of entrepreneurial experience in business, academia and in a variety of consulting and advocacy roles. It would also be a pleasure to replicate our success at the University of Indianapolis in accelerating enrollment growth at double digit compounded rates, while introducing initiatives that recruited more high quality students and improved our retention in the context of the Higher Learning Commission's continuous improvement and assessment initiatives. For the last several years, I have been facilitating transformations in academia reflected in new hybrid/online courses on Foresight and Future Studies, Architecting the Future, Innovation/Entrepreneurship/Creativity, Leadership and Success Modeling, Political Dynamics in Organizations; Design and Integrative Thinking and Decision Making; Ethics, Social Responsibility and Sustainability Imperatives.

Supplementing my two decades as a value accelerator and consultant/catalyst for implementing change is the media and brand development success when our team founded the innovative process-driven MBA Program at Northern Kentucky University. The program "built" by business leaders of the Cincinnati area was featured on local television as "The School for Success." Designed following the extensive involvement by Cincinnati's leading executives, the program incorporated leading edge components from some of the nation's finest executive MBA programs and had curriculum advances that eventually were adopted by many other universities.

Commitment of Service and Servant Leadership Strengths

When President Jerry Israel attracted me to Indianapolis, transforming the School of Business into a state resource for leadership, economic and workforce development was our major objective. The University needed a new style of servant leadership to galvanize the creative energy of our faculty. Within two years, we became a role model for engaging the business community and advanced the concept of a business school that serves the business and civic leadership of Indianapolis. I thus had the distinct pleasure of leading the team that achieved this goal in less than five years, using a "commitment of service," to provide value to our students and a wide range of external constituencies. Once our mission goals had been achieved and far exceeded, I had the opportunity to choose, groom and seamlessly guide the transition to a successor. This enabled me to take advantage of an invitation to become an investor, board member, strategist and consultant for a number of emerging global companies in alternative energy and sustainability technologies.

At UINDY, my team and I served on major boards and organizations such as the Governor's Transition Team and on the Governor's Commission to Redraft the Corporate Code of the State. We set the standard in responsiveness to the needs of the business community, nonprofits and even many faith based non-profits and churches. Some of our closest relationships have been with the Governor, with Indiana's Secretaries of Commerce, Secretary of State, and the Commissioner of Workforce Development. I also served as a policy and political advisor to Indiana's State Treasurer.

Passionate Evangelist, Fund Raiser and Brand Manager for the University

Your faculty and students can benefit directly from my strong interpersonal and communication skills that have been developed in external relations, media/broadcasting, sales/marketing, and lobbying/political activities. With a background in civic and political fund-raising it would also be a pleasure to lead an advancement team and trustees in the challenge of securing significant funds for academic programs from donors who would see the realization of their priorities in visions we can jointly develop. For several years, I was also the prime Cincinnati fundraiser and southwest Ohio grassroots representative for one of Washington's leading nonpartisan advocacy and lobbying organizations. I have served on the finance committees of several congressmen, senators and presidential candidates, as well as on the boards of local political fundraising organizations.

I easily identify with and connect to national and local corporate leaders. My experiences with the Greater Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce are especially relevant; I was the founding chairman of the Greater Cincinnati CEO Roundtable Program, which has been a valuable executive development mechanism for hundreds of companies in Ohio. I was especially appreciative of the recognition I received as my company was welcomed into the Greater Cincinnati Top 100 Largest Privately Held Businesses. Hundreds of individuals in Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana were active listeners to my radio shows over the years.

Liberal Arts Appreciation and Integrative Process Skills: Architecting the Future

With over fifteen years of academic experience, I bridge professional education and the liberal arts. At UINDY, we placed significant value on a liberal education and incorporating it in the transformative educational process we provide to our business students. We also set the standard for business schools by applying a student centric model that focuses on how our faculty actually INVEST in our students.

Complementing my years of conceptual and empirical scholarship activities is excellence in teaching at both the undergraduate and graduate levels as well as in executive development programs. As a dean, former tenured faculty member and graduate program director, I have fully internalized core academic values. As a specialist in organizational behavior and organizational development, I understand the dynamics of academic leadership and can easily identify with and integrate colleagues, concepts, and models in every discipline of liberal arts and all professional schools, including medicine, healthcare, education and engineering.

Together, we will be leveraging leading edge concepts in design and integrative thinking to guide transformational leadership for innovation and creativity. I would be pleased to present to your committee and faculty an innovative model of socially responsible leadership development that I refer to as **“ARCHITECTING THE FUTURE.”** This framework integrates multiple social science, business and liberal arts disciplines to provide students with an understanding of the real-world political dynamics, organizational politics and civic responsibility insights that can fast track them into the highest levels of ethical leadership. By guiding a transformative educational experience for students, this framework demonstrates “relevance,” of the liberal educational process, while elevating the value and recognition of liberal arts and professional studies faculty. One of the central pillars of the ATF includes the economic transformations that result from technological innovations and a “futuristic and proactive” study of major technological paradigm shifts. It is also especially timely, given the emerging mandate that is now driving colleges and universities to demonstrate that they can produce intellectual capital with high levels of commitment to ethics, social responsibility and sustainable community development.

Serving Faculty, Their Professional Fulfillment, Visions and Value

Although I have twenty years of business and corporate experience, I would suggest that any new president apply our successful Academic Transformation Model - whereby the president serves the faculty, is their advocate and provides the servant leadership that cultivates and nurtures a unifying process driven by faculty commitment to a vision THEY OWN. It is crucially important for any new president from industry to appreciate the complex and rich culture of academia and the imperative for transformational leadership to energize faculty, students as well as a variety of external constituencies. What is paramount is to facilitate, reward and celebrate faculty accomplishments that advance this unifying perspective. This is integrally tied to advancement, as we must continually seek to provide faculty with the resources they need to pursue the initiatives that will implement this shared vision of our academic community.

Recruiting and Serving Our Students, Their Careers and Their Success

I believe a president must set an example of our student centric commitment by her or his extensive engagement with student leaders who will become supportive alumni. There is no better forum for this than to teach on a regular basis. In 2017, a university president has an obligation to continuously INVEST in our students using social media as well as every opportunity to teach, engage, support and serve as a mentor for their success. I would strongly suggest that university presidents become personally involved in recruiting students by developing MOOC’s in which they team teach courses and use showcasing of faculty colleagues to creatively increase future enrollment. We are beginning to see a new generation of university leaders who understand social media and who can help encourage new technologies and paradigms for education and innovation for students born after 1995. Over the last several years as part of this new vision, we have strongly encouraged universities to develop new programs for student internships, co-ops and projects in building real-world companies.

Entrepreneurship courses and training in innovation, design and sustainability are now some of the most exciting developments in higher education and often of significant value in attracting students who might be majoring in non-business disciplines.

Managing the Challenges of a University Presidency: Balancing Multiple Roles

I very much appreciate how the value drivers, reward systems, and organizational/cultural dynamics of commercial enterprises cannot be superimposed on the more complex, collegial norms of academe. I also recognize that the requisite levels of interpersonal and visionary leadership skills necessary for a President's external success may be just as vital to manage the multiple, often conflicting pressures, expectations and roles thrust upon her/him internally. One of the most valuable benefits from my years of confronting entrepreneurial challenges is a personality characterized by resilience, positive attitude and very high tolerance for ambiguity/uncertainty. These strengths reinforce an exceptionally tough hide, which may be an excellent preparation to successfully confront the unrelenting frustrations which characterize academic administration in an era of conflicting role priorities and resource constraints.

Facilitating Economic and Workforce Development

For years, I have served as a "Triborough Bridge," linking and integrating business, government and academia, including leadership, board and consulting roles with statewide economic development initiatives. From 2002 until October of 2004, I served as an active board member of OMERIS (now BioOhio) which has the responsibility for accelerating all state activities in Biotechnology commercialization, entrepreneurial development and recruitment of talent and companies to Ohio. While serving as a member of the Board's Finance and Audit Committee, I also chaired the OMERIS Advocacy and Brand Convergence Committee, executing a comprehensive marketing and advocacy process that initiated a re-branding of the State of Ohio with regard to BioSciences. In 2003, we launched a focused, unifying vision that energized Ohio's already significant Life Sciences infrastructure to become a source of economic development and high value jobs. Ten years later, Ohio has tracked the thousands of jobs that have been created and related economic benefit for the state and its economy.

I am especially eager to use this background to achieve the economic development goals associated with innovation and the readiness of students to contribute value as members of the future work force. I can make available extensive presentations on the process of how universities can serve as supportive engines of economic development. I have been privileged to serve two states in economic development leadership positions, especially focused on high technology commercialization, tech transfer, innovation, strategic marketing, incubation/acceleration and business development. I am especially comfortable in relating to engineers, as most of my career has been in high technology pursuits, including medical device vision systems and neural nets, industrial automation, MEMS and nanotechnology. I would be eager to help enhance the university's role as an engine of economic development and encourage the advance and commercialization of innovative new technologies.

Extensive Global Program Experience, Contacts and Diversity Commitment

My responsibilities have included traveling to India, China, Greece, and Israel in connection with establishing and monitoring our programs around the world. I am especially comfortable in lobbying and advocacy roles with governmental and regulatory body leaders and religious leaders as well. Our team developed a new strategic vision and a new board for our program in Northern Israel which includes the Christian Arab leadership of Israel and top executives from Microsoft, Intel and a range of Israeli and Arab companies. We met with and secured the personal blessing and support of Shimon Peres. After assembling a unified steering committee of Christian Arab Leaders of Israel and the National Security Council, we successfully approached the Vatican for vital assistance via a summit meeting with the Vatican Ambassador in East Jerusalem. We have corporate relationships in China that involve the US Department of Commerce and some of my colleagues are currently working on a project with the US Commercial Service that has significant geopolitical implications for the US-China trade relationship. Other colleagues have high level contacts with the top leaders of China and major investment banks there.

While dean at the University of Indianapolis, I spent considerable time at our campus in Athens, Greece. UINDY there has relationships with ambassadors from several dozen countries; these ambassadors visit with and teach our students there. Our campus is located at the foot of the Acropolis in Plaka, the embassy center of Athens. This adds an international dimension to our students' familiarization with the public policy process and integrates their study of public policy with geopolitics, economics and international trade. Our Athens campus, in fact, is the benchmarking example suggested by our accreditation agency for how American business schools should set up their overseas branches and campuses.

Considering my active involvement in governance and management of multinational public, private and entrepreneurial businesses, I could also serve as a corporate leadership resource, enhancing board relationships on behalf of the university. With my public corporation and audit committee experience, I provide a perspective that is timely considering the governance changes impacting major corporations in the wake of the global economic crisis.

I would welcome the chance to discuss this with you and your colleagues. I have listed my home number below and my personal email address is: mshapiro@cinci.rr.com. I can be reached by phone at the number below or via my office phone, 317-417-9700. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Mitch Shapiro

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