

January 30, 2017

Mr. Robert W. Luke
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Dear Mr. Luke:

I am submitting an application for consideration as the next president of Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU). I have reviewed the position profile and information on the official website. I believe that there is a strong fit between my leadership attributes, skills, and experiences and the mission, strategic vision and leadership needs of the university. Specifically, my 16 years of progressive administrative responsibilities attest to my ability to commit my passion for the public mission and vision of higher education, to leverage my intellect and experiences to achieve meaningful outcomes, and to promote professionalism and caring respect for all members of the institutional team serving students. In addition, my tenure and promotion as a faculty member reinforce my understanding of the support needs and professional goals of faculty in their critically central role in the delivery of high quality educational experiences. Above all, my work effort and ethic are faithful to continuous advancement toward the actualization of strategic goals that embody an institution's mission and vision.

Although my vita provides a summary of my own professional development, experiences and accomplishments in public higher education, I would like to highlight a few that speak directly to my potential as a leader for the future of Florida Gulf Coast University. Preparing competent, confident, caring, ethical students for real-world personal and professional opportunities through high quality academic program; connecting and integrating co-curricular and experiential learning into the academic curricular core; managing fiscal responsibility, student affordability and faculty professional development; diversifying and promoting an enriched teaching/learning experience; and engaging regional partnering for public stewardship are central to FGCU'S role in supporting "the ethical, social, cultural and economic wellbeing of the region it serves and beyond."

Below are a number of significant accomplishments to which I contributed while serving as Assistant and Associate Vice Chancellor in the Office of the Chancellor of Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) and as Provost/Senior Vice President of Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania (BU):

- Academic Excellence for 21st Century:
 - Revision of PASSHE 14 universities' teacher preparation curricula to align with substantive grade level reforms mandated in 2007 by Pennsylvania Department of Education (known as Chapter 49-2). Gifted Resources: A \$2 million gift created the McDowell Institute for Teacher Excellence which delivers curriculum, experiential

learning, workshops, seminars to pre-service education majors, in-service teachers and educational leaders in order to facilitate the use of the Positive Behavior Support (PBS) framework for the creation of constructive learning environments for students, teachers, administrators and families.

- *MyCORE* is BU's innovative general education program which recognizes that much learning and teaching occur outside of the traditional classroom. The program is comprised of 10 faculty-designed General Education Learning Goals (GELGs) for which points, not credits, are earned. The General Education Points (GEPs) enable students to meet some of the GELGs through faculty vetted and recommended Co-Curricular Learning Experiences (CLEs) which can be proposed by any unit on campus. However, all CLEs must be vetted through the university-wide curricular process over which faculty preside. An Outcome: Student Affairs Division's GEPs and Level I and II Certificates in leadership and engagement through its Center for Leadership and Engagement.
- PASSHE 2015 approval of BU's interdisciplinary Supply Chain Management (SCM) major in the Zeigler College of Business. An *outside-in* educationally designed program utilizes specialized software as the backbone for innovative instruction; program is self-monitoring and relies on regular gap analyses that aid in the alignment of academic offerings with current and future regional high-growth occupations; actively pursues strong relationships with senior management at regional business and professional organizations in order to integrate professional competency-based standards; and a curricular plan that enables students to schedule testing for pre-designated certifications prior to graduation. Gifted Resources: \$2.5 million gift to establish the Nicholas J. Guiffre Distinguished Professor in Supply Chain Management and the Nicholas J. Guiffre Center for Supply Chain Management.
- Development of new academic programs to meet institutional responsibility to state's workforce development needs: Doctor of Nursing Practice (\$1.9K Breiner Professorship), Certificate in Rehabilitative Justice (to serve BU's inside-out initiative and our grant in the US federal Second Chance Pell Program), Certificate in IntraOperative Monitoring, Certificate in Medical Genomics and Counseling, Certificate in Digital Rhetoric and Professional Writing, International Business major, (self-designable) Interdisciplinary Studies Major, and a Concentration in Professional Selling and Marketing.
- Workforce Development for Region and State: BU's extended the 2006 Pennsylvania state legislated transfer course equivalencies and program articulation requirements between 2-year and 4-year public institutions to include applied associate degrees for technical programs. BU's interdisciplinary Bachelor of Applied Science Degree in Technical Leadership (BAS-TL) was launched in 2012 and is the only such program-to-program articulation with multiple entry-exit-reentry points in PASSHE and the state. The partnership now includes six (6) community colleges and their technical high school feeder partners. Resources: \$349K in institutional funds with additional resources of facilities, academic support and advising services provided by community college partners largely at their cost.

- Educational Investment, Student Affordability and Fiscal Responsibility (Recognition of need to offset historically sustained decline in state appropriations, typically accompanied by tuition and/or student fee increase and rising student debt):
 - Support of faculty excellence in teaching, research, service and mentoring, Academic Affairs Division has an ongoing budgetary commitment of approximately \$250K annually to support faculty professional development and travel. Presidential Strategic Planning Grants amount to an additional \$200K.
 - Supporting the public mission of an affordable education. Gifted Resources: \$13.3M in academic scholarships have been secured through work of the Advancement Division, with annual institutional budgetary commitment of \$1.2M annually.
 - Providing students with at least one high quality integrative career-related experience per year in order to enrich skills competencies, build confidence, and enhance competitive advantage in the work environment is overseen by *Professional U*, the career development unit that coordinates programming, activities and services with the colleges. Gifted Resources: \$5.7M have been raised by the Advancement Division; the Academic Affairs Division commits approximately \$400K annually to experiences under the institutional career development umbrella of *Professional U*, which is connected to BU's 67,000 alumni and resides in the Advancement Division.
- Faculty Diversity and Inclusion: Relocation of the faculty diversity initiative, along with new faculty orientation, annual programming and expanded scholarly support, under the Dean of Graduate Studies. An Outcome: 12 Frederick Douglass Teaching Scholars (FDTS) in four (4) years with three (3) tenure-track hires in three (3) different departments in three (3) of four (4) colleges.
- System, Institutional, Divisional and Departmental Accountability: Established the Office of Planning and Assessment as the cornerstone for communication of our strategic and annual goals, relevant measurement of them, and the development of practices for adjustment, attainment and sustainability. Resources: Institutional funding of nine (9) staff members and the BU Testing Center, with the Academic Affairs Division committing \$350K to support assessment software and faculty and staff training at all institutional levels, accreditation efforts, faculty assessment fellows, program review and curricular development.

I genuinely believe that my leadership style, commitment to advancing the public mission of higher education, and strategic orientation to the use and development of all resources would serve the students, faculty and staff of Florida Gulf Coast well. If I can provide additional information, please contact me. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

 Recoverable Signature

X *Ira K Blake*

Signed by: Ira K. Blake

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