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President's Search Committee
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Dear Members of the Search Committee,

Enclosed is my application for the position of President, Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU). My business and academic experience, leadership and management skills fit very well with the vision of the university which states the following.

FGCU will achieve national prominence in offering exceptional value in high-quality educational programs that address regional and statewide needs. Our programs, firmly grounded in the liberal arts and sciences, will employ emerging instructional technologies. Possessing entrepreneurial spirits, graduates will be well prepared for productive lives as civically engaged and environmentally conscious citizens with successful careers, ready to pursue further education.

My entire thirty-year academic career has been with public universities that serve the region and the state. I have had considerable success advancing the missions and visions of these institutions which is documented in this cover letter and the attached vita and list of accomplishments. In particular, my private sector business experience coupled with academic business and marketing graduate study, instruction, research and publication prepares me very well to lead a public institution who desires graduates who will be instilled with an entrepreneurial spirit, prepared for civically engaged and environmentally conscious citizenship, successful careers and ready to pursue further education. I am a very experienced and respected academic leader with 20 years of experience as an academic administrator, five years as an associate dean, nearly seven years as a college dean and six and a half years as provost and vice president for academic affairs. At times these leadership skills have been exercised under highly adversarial and difficult conditions. I have led every institution served to notable improvements. In September 2016 I announced my resignation as provost and vice president for academic affairs for California State University (CSU), Stanislaus effective December 31, 2016 to allow the new president time to search for a new provost which was completed successfully. I am now on the faculty and searching for a presidential opportunity. The following addresses the opportunities and expectations for leadership and professional and personal qualities desired in the FGCU president as described in the leadership profile.

Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

Execute New Strategic Plan for 2016-2021

Having a new thoughtful strategic plan in place before the arrival of the new president is very positive from my perspective. I have extensive experience as a strategic thinker and planner. My objective in academic strategic planning is to make it relevant and useful to tactical decision making. For a variety of reasons, including generally decentralized organizations, a lack of understanding of the pros and cons of different approaches to strategic planning, and the differences between the planning environment of higher education and the private sector, strategic planning in higher education often falls short of its promise. At CSU Stanislaus I led the effort which resulted in a two-year strategic priorities plan. I also led the Strategic Plan Working Group to recommend to the President a charge to create a new longer term strategic plan as recommended by WASC (the regional accreditation body) in March 2015. Before leading the strategic planning effort at CSU Stanislaus I chaired the strategic plan outcomes reporting committee for three years at CSU Dominguez Hills and led the effort to create a strategic plan in the College of Business and Public Policy. My objective in all strategic planning is to create or facilitate, and ultimately implement a process that yields more effective strategic and tactical thinking about the future and the environment resulting in better planning and improved decision making. I have also always emphasized the importance of aligning strategic planning with the institution's mission and vision and the resource allocation process. The aligning process should serve to build consensus among stakeholder groups. Fundamental to good strategic planning and implementation are excellent information systems built on accurate data, the understanding of risk and the dynamic environment of higher education and how that impacts FGCU.

Establish and Promote FGCU's Distinctive Institutional Identity

The fact that the new strategic plan and the Board of Trustees (BOT) have identified the need to establish a "distinctive institutional identity" is also very positive. My background in marketing and strategic planning enables me to provide substantive leadership to achieve this branding goal. I was involved as a president's cabinet member with a brand creating study and implementation at CSU Stanislaus.

Increase Revenue to Support Strategic Goals

The addition of a performance based funding model to the state's support of FGCU has the advantage of identifying and measuring specific outcomes in order to receive new funding. To meet or exceed the metrics a new president will need to understand how to improve performance and ensure that effective personnel, processes and information systems are in place. I have had considerable experience improving graduation rates. Most recently California State University (CSU) has focused the Graduation Initiative 2025 plan on improving four-year graduation rates. A substantial university-wide plan has been developed to get more students on track for graduation in four years. Particular attention has been paid to students who are currently on track to graduate in four and one half years and move them to four-year graduation using winter intersession and summer school to complete the courses needed. A comprehensive plan is necessary to improve graduation rates including appropriate scheduling and the elimination of bottleneck courses, the redesign of courses as appropriate to reduce high DWF rates, adequate classroom capacity, intrusive advising (including an effective advising information system with an early alert mechanism and career and major advising early in a student's career), positively framed programs to support categories of students who traditionally have lower retention and graduation rates (first-generation, low income, underrepresented minority), a portfolio of high-impact practices (HIPs) that fit well with FGCU, and most important engagement with the faculty and the faculty's full participation in creating the plan to improve graduation rates.

Working with administrators, faculty and staff, and across division lines with Student Affairs, I have been at the center of some impressive student success gains. For example, the First-Time-Freshman (FTF) six-year graduation rate has increased from 49.5% (cohort 2003) to 57.4% (cohort 2010). Additionally, the underrepresented minority (URM) FTF six-year graduation rate improved seven percentage points from the 2005 cohort to the 2007 cohort. The 2008 URM six-year graduation rate is 52%, which is up 1% from the 2007 cohort. The gap between URM graduation rates (51%) and non-URM rates (53%) has improved six percentage points from the 2006 to 2007 cohorts and remained at two percent for the

2008 cohort. This compared to 14 percentage points for the CSU system for 2006 and 2007 cohorts. The 2009 cohort has regressed to the mean and the gap is now six percentage points. Stanislaus State has received national publicity for “best in class” value-added outcomes. An NPR *Planet Money* study ranked CSU Stanislaus fifth with Harvard, MIT, Stanford, and UC Irvine as the best five in the nation for increasing student’s upward mobility based on five measures. A similar ranking in *Money* magazine ranked CSU Stanislaus as the top public university/college in the nation in value-added and top 3 including publics and privates. Most recently, the *Hechinger Report* summarized a Department of Education study that ranked Stanislaus State among the top 13 four-year public institutions with large Pell recipient student populations and high FTF six-year graduation rates.

I have significant experience partnering with community foundations such as the Stanislaus Community Foundation where we worked to improve the numbers of students attending either community college or a four-year institution and supported the Stanislaus Education Partnership which consists of the Stanislaus County Office of Education, Modesto Junior College, the Stanislaus Community Foundation and CSU Stanislaus.

As a faculty member and associate dean at the University of Akron I had extensive experience conducting corporate training programs and building revenue from such programs from nothing to \$500,000 per year with customers such as the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company and First Energy. I built an advisory board at the University of Akron to support the information systems program that consisted of companies such as Accenture, Goodyear, Timken, First Energy, Omnova, Advanced Elastomer Systems, Sprint, Enterprise, Smuckers, and KPMG Consulting. I built an advisory board to support the College of Business Administration and Public Policy at CSU Dominguez Hills from inactive for 18 months with six members to 56 members meeting three times per year with representatives from Toyota Motor Company, Fox Entertainment Group, the Port of Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department, the Los Angeles County Supervisors’ Office, The Aerospace Corporation, and the IRS to name a few. I also have some experience building applied research relationships with local firms such as Dustbowl Brewery.

Foster a Strong Sense of Community

I am adept at building good relationships with individuals and groups who work at or otherwise support the university. In all institutions I have worked for, I have taken the time and improved the relationship between my office and the relevant stakeholder groups resulting in more collaboration, creative problem solving, innovation and student success. The work I have done at California State University, Stanislaus, to rebuild the relationship between faculty and the president (including senior administration) is an excellent example of working constructively with a key stakeholder group under difficult circumstances to improve the university. I am an extrovert and would embrace the president’s community role and build a strong relationship between the university and community stakeholders. I am also highly collaborative and transparent and these two attributes are the basis for these very strong relationships with all stakeholders. I have the skill set and motivation to build a highly collaborative working relationship with the Board, as I have done with the Foundation Board at CSU Stanislaus (a philanthropic board not a governing board).

Lead Fundraising Efforts

The work done to date in fundraising at FGCU to date is impressive and provides an outstanding platform to build on. I began my career in sales and marketing as a practitioner, and these have also been my academic fields. Both backgrounds will help me lead alumni and development offices. I also have a background in development in academe. For six months, I served as the Executive-in-Charge of the CSU Stanislaus Division of University Advancement which housed both alumni relations and development, as well as communication and government relations. The division and university benefitted from my leadership as EIC. I have established a partnership with university advancement, so that academic affairs and advancement could work as a team in improving alumni relations and development. I established bi-monthly meetings

between development officers and deans to improve coordination and build a knowledge base for a group of deans that were very inexperienced in fundraising. I was part of the planning and call to the donor that resulted in the final payment (\$180,000) for an endowment for a food safety program. I was a member of two searches for AVPs of development at CSU Dominguez Hills. I had a development officer report to me at CSU Dominguez Hills and worked closely with the development officer in the business school at the University of Akron. I am very knowledgeable regarding the principles and practice of university development and fundraising including planned giving. I have no doubt I will be an unusually effective fundraiser in the role of president. I established very strong advisory boards at both the University of Akron and CSU Dominguez Hills as mentioned above. The development office at the University of Akron gave me a Certificate of Achievement award for my work establishing an information systems advisory board and raising money and engaging influential organizations in the region. I was part of the team that brought in the largest gift in the history of the CSU Dominguez Hills College of Business Administration and Public Policy and established a very successful college awards luncheon, which is still operational. This luncheon was a public relations centered effort.

Build and Lead a Strong Organization

As discussed above, my private sector background in marketing and university experience in marketing and business both as a faculty member and as administrator for 20 years prepares me very well to “build and lead a strong organization.” In fact, this is my greatest strength. I am an excellent recruiter of talent and they enjoy working for me because I value their expertise and input and empower them to make decisions. I am also an excellent mentor for subordinates and students and take that role very seriously. Strong working relationships and an esprit de corp are hallmarks of my teams. I am also very familiar with the tradeoffs in organizational structure and management processes and I am not enamored of fads but embrace effective innovations.

Professional Characteristics

Bold thinker . . .

I am an excellent strategic thinker and decisive when the appropriate opportunity presents itself. I am not, however, impulsive. It was a bold plan to reduce the number of colleges from six to four during the budget crisis which is described in more detail on my vita. Creating active advisory boards at the University of Akron and CSU Dominguez Hills were bold decisions. Hiring the current athletic director at CSU Stanislaus and empowering him to transform the department of athletics was a decisive action. Increasing the number of discipline specific academic programs delivered through university extended education was decisive and entrepreneurial and departed from the culture of the institution at that time.

Experienced leader . . .

My record shows success at every institution I have served. At each institution my tenure has been substantial in time and in achievements.

Practices and promotes environmental sustainability and values the unique role FGCU plays in local, community, and state conversations.

I believe in and practice environmental sustainability and my record demonstrates a commitment to the local communities surrounding the universities where I have been an administrator.

Effective communicator with a polished, professional demeanor who advocates for FGCU and earns the respect of the Florida Legislature and Governor, as well as the Florida Board of Governors.

At the core of my leadership style are very strong communication skills. I know how important communication is and how hard it is to do well. I began my career as a salesperson and those skills have been extremely useful in my academic and administrative career. I have significant experience teaching negotiation and have conducted research and published on the subject. I have decades of experience as an effective communicator in many different types of situations. In order to be an effective communicator one must actively listen, observe, come to understand the situation, and then offer positive direction and action in ways that responsible and committed others can accept. A good communicator has something meaningful to say. I have experience calling on legislators in the California Assembly and Senate, working with the Chancellor's Office, and meeting with CSU BOT members.

Tireless spokesperson who possesses the political acumen to position FGCU effectively and positively with political, business, and civic leaders.

I look forward to this role. My strong positive political skills were on display during my tenure as provost at CSU Stanislaus when I was able to reduce conflict between faculty and the President (including senior administration). The level of conflict in spring 2010 was of such concern that WASC (the regional accreditation body) in the summer of 2010, charged the campus with a special visit in fall 2011, to force efforts to improve relations. The WASC special visit in November 2011 revealed progress but WASC called for another visit two years later in fall 2014 to ensure continuing commitment to an improved relationship. The relationship has improved significantly since November of 2011, and the visit in fall 2014 was very successful relative to shared governance (and other criteria), and WASC commended the University for the improvement. It took significant political skill to work with the faculty and the president to reduce conflict, especially in the period from May 2010 to June 2012. I have discussed my experiences working with political, business, and civic leaders above.

Commitment to play a central leadership role in the economic and social development of the region by creating and developing strategic community partnerships and fulfilling workforce demands with graduates.

All of my experience has been with regional state universities and each one played a significant role in the economic development of their regions. I understand how important that role is and am fully committed to increasing the university's development of the region by building the partnership with all the stakeholders in the region.

Ability to balance the strong executive leadership needed to ensure that decisions are made in a timely and fair manner with sensitivity to the culture of shared governance, and academic freedom at FGCU.

The method to effectively manage these possible conflicts is through high levels of trust which may be achieved with transparency, communication, and consistency. Shared governance can be slow process but if the faculty and administration agree on an issue that needs to be expedited faster decisions will result. I am committed to academic freedom and my view is that there is less disagreement over the definition of academic freedom than there is regarding shared governance, although the two concepts are closely related and intertwined.

Thorough understanding of current trends in the evolving higher education marketplace accompanied by a vision for how FGCU can successfully adapt to that marketplace.

A keen understanding of the dynamics of the external environment that impacts on higher education is a prerequisite for effective strategic thinking and planning. The current environment is the most challenging higher education has faced in many decades, if ever. The opportunities and need is also at an unprecedented level. Challenges, opportunities, and an increase in the competitive environment for higher education have resulted because of the following trends: a relatively

poor economy since the 2008 financial crisis reducing resources for all stakeholders; the high cost of education and tuition; the general defunding of public higher education by states and the federal government; exploding student loan debt; a well-established consumer society requiring Starbucks or Google level service; tremendous advances in the availability and digitization of information and a resulting increase in expectations; globalization and the need for higher education which has created enrollment pressures in some parts of the country and increased overall capacity; increased competition from for-profit institutions also increasing capacity; increases in efficiency and implementation of lean methodologies in most industries inviting comparison to higher education and a call for improvement; a much greater focus on accountability by state governing bodies and other similar entities; implementation of performance based funding metrics by state governing bodies; criticism of low retention and graduation rates which is especially problematic for regional state universities; concerns about the safety of campuses especially regarding Title IX requirements; concerns about diversity, equity, elitism (not a problem for regional state universities), and free speech; an alleged skills gap between what the job market needs from graduates and the skills they possess at graduation, some regions of the country have a declining high school graduate population and enrollments have declined causing financial problems; criticism of many K-12 districts especially in underserved areas for not adequately preparing students to be college ready creating remediation costs and negatively impacting retention and graduation rates. The president needs to be cognizant of all of these trends and how they impact FGCU in terms of competitiveness and implications for resource allocation.

Demonstrated talent and enthusiasm for fundraising, including the personal and social skills and a passion for FGCU's mission.

I discussed my preparation for fundraising above. As an extrovert, excellent communicator and strong advocate for public higher education I will passionately and effectively advocate for FGCU's mission. My references and colleagues who have worked with me will attest that I am passionate about student success and the university I represent.

Proven ability to relate to diverse communities and stakeholders.

I am very comfortable and effective communicating with diverse students. I was a member of the board of directors for the Millennium Momentum Foundation (MMF) for five years and served on the scholarship committee. MMF awards scholarships to students of color who are pursuing degrees in public policy disciplines. I also served on the board of directors of the International Trade Education Program (ITEP), which provides international trade programs to Banning High School students (Los Angeles Unified School District). These students are almost all underrepresented minorities and are socially and economically disadvantaged.

A successful track record as a leader and implementer of institutional change.

I changed the environment of dysfunctional conflict at CSU Stanislaus to one of normalcy. I significantly increased the focus on student success at CSU Stanislaus resulting in significantly improved graduation rates and national recognition. I made substantial progress in achieving AACSB accreditation in the business program at CSU Dominguez Hills changing the culture of the program. I managed serious budget cuts at CSU Stanislaus and hired over 130 new faculty, most of whom I interviewed and discussed how they needed to participate with other stakeholders to continue the university's growth and development especially related to student success.

Experience in managing the financial and budgeting operations of a complex unit or organization.

I am very experienced and effective in the process of planning and allocating of resources. I was involved in serious cuts in the stateside operating budget (22% in July 2009) at CSU Dominguez Hills as a dean and at CSU Stanislaus as provost. At CSU Stanislaus the 2015-16 budget for Academic Affairs was \$50M stateside (including cost of benefits) and \$5M in

auxiliary budgets. In 2010 and 2011 CSU Stanislaus faced serious cuts and I worked with the president's cabinet, deans, and unit directors to reduce and reallocate resources. In 2010, I led the effort with the academic senate and provost's advisory council to write the "Holistic Program Review" plan that established a committee to consider reducing the number of academic programs and other dimensions of instruction that could yield savings with minimal impact on achieving the mission. This was a sophisticated and thorough plan that was written with significant collaboration. Fortunately, program elimination was avoided when the state began to restore some funding. Reduction of the number of low enrolled sections and scheduling improvements were implemented. I am very aware of the relationship between enrollment and financial stability, the cost of programs and the intricacies of the cost of instruction. I have some background in accounting and finance which is very helpful in knowing what questions to ask and the need for an effective cost accounting structure. I am a realist regarding resource allocation and believe in openness regarding tradeoffs, effective planning, and the responsibility (and the occasional reluctance) of stakeholders to take a university perspective. My experience has been that campuses do not engage in nearly as effective resource allocation planning (i.e., budgeting) as they should for a variety of reasons including trying to avoid conflict. Effective resource allocation is imperative in the current higher education environment. I am comfortable with the conflict that surrounds resource allocation and recognize the need for stakeholders to understand the tradeoffs inherent in the process. Through the allocation process and other communications, the president needs to lead the campus community to a reasonable level of consensus in support of the final budget.

Personal Qualities

An innovative and entrepreneurial spirit that supports new ways of approaching problems and opportunities and has the courage and conviction to encourage change in an exceptionally diplomatic way.

I offer three examples of this quality. One, the work I did greatly reducing conflict between the faculty and the president at CSU Stanislaus, which I have discussed. That process took creativity regarding conflict resolution and relationship building. Two, with my leadership academic departments, working with the office of extended education programs, created many more full-tuition programs such as the ASBSN (a second bachelor's of science degree in nursing for students who hold a first bachelor's degree in another field), Master of Social Work (hybrid), RN to BSN degree (online), Online MBA, Master of Fine Arts (in progress). There was significant resistance by some faculty when I arrived in 2010 regarding whether full tuition programs offered through extended education programs were appropriate and I had to build trust that they would be administered properly and serve all stakeholders. This has happened. Three, growing the international student population and programs. The attitude prior to my arrival was focused primarily on study abroad and not recruiting international students and changing this attitude took time and persuasion.

Environmentally conscious with a passion for promoting and practicing environmental sustainability.

I am environmentally conscious and believe that sustainability is critical to society and the economy. This is a particular signature identity for FGCU and should be integrated throughout the strategic plan and operations.

Superior relationship-building and communication skills.

A cornerstone for the success I have had in my career is superior relationship-building and communication skills and I have discussed examples of how those skills have led to successful outcomes. Good relationships are created through effective communication which creates trust. Trust is the lubricant of decision making. When it is present the gears operate smoothly and many effective decisions are made. When it is absent, the gears bind and progress slows to a crawl.

An inspirational leader who will galvanize the community behind the strategic plan for the University's future and the execution of that plan.

An inspirational leader has something meaningful to say. The leader may have the best ideas and superior plans for implementation, but if he or she cannot communicate it in ways that resonate and is compelling to the audience those good ideas and plans will lie fallow. Creating a shared vision on a university campus is a challenge. Most stakeholders can embrace high level vision, such as “student success,” but the disconnect comes in operationalizing the vision especially relative to resource allocation and the disappointment many feel when they perceive inadequate funding for their unit or project. The president should use the university’s mission and values as a touchstone for shared vision. He or she should then create trust around the processes necessary to implement the mission and vision. That trust is created with transparency and authenticity; even when the campus community does not want to hear the message. In those cases, the tradeoffs and alternatives need to be laid out by the president and the cabinet.

Active listener who is able to build trust and integrate feedback across different constituents.

Active listening is a core component of my communication skills. Additionally, I am very adept at integrating information across constituencies who do not speak the same language. Starting my career as a salesperson in industry and then coming to academe prepared me to be able to function in multiple worlds which have very different cultures and communication styles. I always try to adjust to the communication style of the individual or group I am communicating with to make it easier for both to understand each other’s message.

Commitment to an environment where teaching and student success remain the top priority.

I am committed to teaching and the success of all students. Excellent teaching, learning, good advising, student engagement, and appropriate schedules result in student success. This commitment has shown excellent results at CSU Stanislaus. Working with administrators, faculty and staff, and across division lines with Student Affairs, I have been at the center of some impressive student success outcomes improvements. For example, the First-Time-Freshman (FTF) six-year graduation rate has increased from 49.5% (cohort 2003) to 57.4% (cohort 2010). Additionally, the underrepresented minority (URM) FTF six-year graduation rate has improved seven percentage points from the 2005 cohort to the 2007 cohort. The 2008 URM six-year graduation rate is 52%, which is up 1% from the 2007 cohort. The gap between URM graduation rates (51%) and non-URM rates (53%) has improved six percentage points from the 2006 to 2007 cohorts. The cohorts of 2007 and 2008 hit an impressive two percentage point gap compared to 14 percentage points for the CSU system (approximate).

Promotion of progress and successes and recognition of excellence in all dimensions.

It is very important that the university recognizes and celebrates excellence and success as a means to reinforce those values in the community.

Energetic, creative, and inspiring passion for an institution with FGCU’s strengths and characteristics.

As president I would be the most passionate advocate for FGCU and fully embrace its strengths and characteristics recognizing that the campus community and other stakeholders are appropriately proud of the institution. I would build on that pride and commitment and work together to further advance the mission.

Genuine desire to engage with external and internal stakeholders especially students with an accessible, inclusive personal approach.

Colleagues and students that I have worked with will attest that I am a warm, personal, relationship oriented individual. I

make time for people especially students. I was an excellent instructor who had very positive relationships with my students. As provost I had strong relationships with the students I worked with and I would function that way as a president.

Strong interpersonal skills with a commitment to supporting and cultivating the development of others.

I entered academe because of a desire to develop students. I have that same commitment to the development of my colleagues and as mentioned I have been a mentor to many colleagues over the years.

A demonstrated commitment to diversity, inclusion, equity, and international education and the ability to articulate a strong rationale for their importance to effective learning.

For most individuals, the greater the diversity of cultures they interact with and are deeply aware of, the broader and more sophisticated will be their skills and ability to function in diverse environments. This appropriately increases tolerance, deepens the understanding of the complexity of human behavior, builds character and improves decision making. Students need to be exposed to diversity in many manifestations, with meaningful hands-on engagement being the best, even if some students resist or ignore the exposure. Diversity in groups if managed properly leads to diversity of thought, which leads to better solutions and a higher level of group member commitment to the solution, the group and the superordinate goal(s). International education is a key component to the educational experience of all students. I have worked hard to grow this program at CSU Stanislaus and would do the same at FGCU.

A transparent and collaborative leadership style encouraging open discussion.

I am committed to transparency, open discussion, and achieving the mission. I am aware that the leader may often stifle opposing points of view from being expressed, sometimes inadvertently. On appropriate issues I make a point of asking those who have not spoken if they have a point to offer. I keep my door open figuratively and literally to encourage colleagues to bring their concerns to me and react carefully so as to never discourage them from “speaking truth to power.”

Honesty, integrity, and a strong moral compass.

My ethics are at the highest level. My colleagues at the institutions I have worked at will all attest that I am very honest and have a “strong moral compass.” The university is held to the highest standard of integrity which the president must embody.

A willingness and interest in regularly being “out and about” through attendance at campus academic, cultural, and athletics events, with an equal investment of time spent externally in community.

To be an effective leader one has to be present. Absentee leadership does not work. To build relationships you need to speak face-to-face with stakeholders. That cannot be done without investing time which includes being in the community and attending events. I was well known at CSU Stanislaus for attending all events that I was invited to and fit my schedule. Very rarely did I miss an event and the opportunity to support my colleagues. I also attended many athletic events, in fact the department of athletics honored me for my support at halftime of a December men’s basketball game.

Values participating in a campus community that honors tradition while still having the courage and conviction to make the necessary decisions to ensure FGCU’s long-term success.

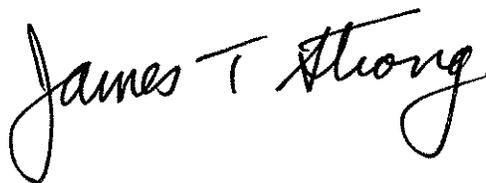
Honoring the good work that was done to build the university strengthens the fabric of the campus community.

Additionally, nothing manifests the president's commitment like the willingness to make a tough decision. In my career I have always been willing to make tough decisions and take on difficult tasks that could be avoided but would hurt the institution and students if they were ignored.

Conclusion

I would serve Florida Gulf Coast University well as president, would be honored to be selected, and appreciate being considered. I value and understand academe and I am well aware of the challenges and opportunities facing the academy. The last few years have seen an unprecedented level of criticism and pressure on higher education from society. Some of the criticism is deserved and some is unfair and reflects misunderstanding of the dynamics at play. What is clear is that generally the public and government continue to believe in the growing importance of higher education to a well-functioning economy and society. The academy must effectively react to the perceptions and beliefs of the public and government. These responses need to be presented appropriately to stakeholder groups to build a cohesive and consistent base of support. The president must provide leadership and build strong relationships with stakeholder groups motivating them to collaborate with and support the university. Students are the *raison d'être* for the university and thus the cornerstone for all strategies, tactics, and decisions. Excellent institutions will find leaders who have the appropriate experience and good judgment that leads to clear communication, the creation or reaffirmation of an authentic vision, appropriate strategies and tactics and effective and efficient operations. I very much appreciate the consideration given to my application and wish you the best of luck in the search for a new president.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James T. Strong". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J" and a distinct "T" before the last name.

James T. Strong