

Dr. Ken Smith, Chair President Search and Screen Committee  
Florida Gulf Coast University  
10501 FGCU Blvd. South  
Fort Myers, FL 33965

Dear Dr. Smith and Members of the President Search Committee:

Please accept my materials for the President position at the Florida Gulf Coast University. After reading the prospectus and the information on the FGCU website, I am eager to lead a university that promotes education that promotes accessibility, engaging learning experiences, and a focus on student success. Your emphasis on engagement and community also resonates with me both as a political scientist, and due to my institution's similar outreach perspective. In fact, we often use the term "communiversity" to describe the important connections between the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay and the greater Green Bay community. Higher education is clearly changing and I believe FGCU positioned to take advantage of these opportunities and prosper. You have an important educational vision, a committed campus, and local community eager to move forward. I believe that I have the experience, energy, skills and vision necessary to take advantage of these institutional strengths, and to work with your dedicated faculty, staff, and students to continue to enhance the Florida Gulf Coast.

I currently serve as the Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (CAHSS) at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay overseeing about thirty programs. For the previous nine years my title was Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences that also included our natural and human health sciences programs. We recently went through an academic reorganization moving from a two-dean to a four-dean structure. The University of Wisconsin-Green Bay is a comprehensive campus within the UW System with strong liberal arts tradition that stresses critical thinking and problem-focused education. As Dean, I serve on the Provost's Administrative Council that provides university-wide advice on decisions affecting academic and student affairs including enrollment management and retention issues, student life, program development, budgets, inclusive excellence initiatives, information technology, and adult education. I have experience in curriculum development, faculty development and support and have led strategic planning efforts.

I represent the College at internal and external functions, engage in planning and budgeting, advocate for the faculty, staff and students, and lead and support efforts on a wide range of issues such as program development, student success, and faculty and staff support and development. Presidents need to be strong advocates for their university, programs, students, employees, and facilities. This advocacy is important both inside and outside the institution.

I am an advocate for a liberal arts education for all students regardless of major, and the knowledge and skills such an education provides and have led and participated in efforts to further integrate these elements into our curriculum including innovations in developing first year programs, a campus Common Theme program, and general education reform. In addition, I strongly believe in the power of linking curricular and co-curricular environments in ways that make a university education truly transformative and inclusive. Public universities have an obligation to provide an empowering and transformative education since we often serve students who face geographic or financial limits to their college choice. These campus experiences require efforts and commitments from the entire university community. My experiences have included the entire university community and have helped to build collaborative relationships,

particularly between academic and student affairs. In addition, I have supported faculty and institutional efforts to promote inclusive excellence, multicultural and international goals.

Presidents must engage in many activities, and it is important to work with the campus and external stakeholders to set its direction, take advantage of its strengths, and pursue appropriate opportunities. Below I highlight some of my leadership successes that are noted in the FGCU prospectus and strategic plan. More information is available on my vitae.

- **Execute new strategic plan.** Discussions for the University's future must emanate from your vision and mission. Presidents work with the various stakeholders to achieve these goals and move the University forward. Given the strong ties with the Southwest Florida, it is very important to include this community in these discussions as one of these stakeholders. I have worked on strategic planning initiatives related to first year experience programming, general education, college-level planning, and working with university leadership on university-wide planning. I am a believer of data-based decision making and commonly use a range of information to develop options, evaluate alternatives, build consensus, make decisions, and assess progress. My feeling about data is that good data can help eliminate ill-advised choices, and can confirm the wisdom of good choices, but data alone is not going to tell you how to build a program. Great programs require lots of input, an open mind, and a willingness to take risks and possibly even fail a few times.
- **Increase revenue to support strategic goals.** The role of the president is to be a strong advocate for FGCU to the state legislature and governor. This means having an understanding of your incentive systems and aligning strategic goals in a way to address them. For example, retention and graduation rates are typical metric used. How can the university align itself to promote student success, which is what we all want as educators, but also supports the metrics used in the budget formula? Half of the UW-Green Bay student body is first generation, with a growing underrepresented population. We share a mission to support all students toward graduation and help them to thrive in their future lives. In the areas of persistence and success, I have led and helped develop programs associated with the first year experience, underrepresented, first generation and other at-risk students, undergraduate research and other high impact practices. Success is linked to our financial resilience and I have been responsible for my college's budget and working to build capacity. Efforts include growing our summer program and starting a January Interim session. I have served as co-PI on grant projects to support institutional goals, and have worked to support faculty in the development of grants for their research purposes.
- **Foster a strong sense of community.** As a political scientist, I value democracy and the processes we set to make decisions. As a higher education administrator, I understand that our most valuable resources are the people who work directly with our students to support their success. One of the most rewarding aspects of being a dean is the ability to work with smart, creative and committed faculty and staff and to help them realize their dreams and pursue their passions. You do this through open communication, getting to know the faculty, staff, students, and community members, develop relationships, and work together. In my positions as dean, I have been able to work with a wide range of disciplines and help make connections between people and programs to develop new ideas and programs. Throughout my career, I have demonstrated a commitment to shared governance and collaborative decision-making. My experience spans a range of areas and I have numerous experiences collaborating across campuses on substantive issues such as advising, developing shared learning outcomes, expanding and promoting undergraduate research, and advocating for the

liberal arts. In all cases, my management style reflected open and collaborative communication in the development of goals, accumulation of research/data, decision-making, and implementation. I relish the idea of working with an engaged Board of Trustees and the broader community on various academic issues and highlighting the value of a FGSU education. At UW-Green Bay, we engage with our local community in many different ways including our performing arts programs and center, Division 1 athletics, our Phuture Phoenix program that connects our students with students in local school districts, and the community research, volunteer, and outreach activities. It is clear that these relationships are also critical for the FGCU and the surrounding community. As public universities, we must continue to develop these connections and work to support economic development through our academic programs. Our Environmental Management and Business Institute, which I helped develop and launch, has a mission of working with local business, nonprofits, and government to find sustainable solutions to business practices.

- **Lead fundraising efforts.** I have also led and supported effort to generate additional dollars through grants and advancement efforts particularly to support program development and equipment needs. Development work begins with a strong and shared vision and mission. It is also important to take advantage of the knowledge and passions of those most affected and to build and maintain such a culture to be successful. In my current role, I work closely with our Advancement Office in helping to build program statements regarding academic programs within the College and presenting these ideas to donors. I also play a role in connecting the appropriate people to facilitate friend and fund raising and participating in stewardship efforts. One of my strengths throughout my career in academia both as a faculty member and as dean is relationship building. My ability to build relations, engender trust, and speak knowledgably and passionately about what the needs to improve academic programs has been critical in areas that I am most proud. I believe these strengths will translate very well transitioning into a position that requires an even greater external focus.
- **Build and lead a strong organization.** I have overseen between 30-40 programs and worked closely with the deans and administrators of the other areas as well. This includes many areas such as budget, personnel development, academic planning, assessment, and more. In addition, we have had to address decreasing levels of state support and develop alternative revenue sources to continue the important educational mission of the college and university, and make strategic decisions regarding programs. We engaged in strategic enrollment management focusing on issues of enrollment growth, retention, and student mix. I have worked closely with our enrollment office to highlight and grow applications and enrollments and led significant efforts to improve retention on our campus with our student life office. This has included developing programs to appeal to new markets, working with chairs and faculty to get them more engaged in recruitment and retention efforts, and developing programs to improve retention rates including programs serving underrepresented populations.
- **Ensuring and supporting diversity.** Universities need to be at the forefront of committing to diversity. During my career I have been fortunate to work with and support a number of such programs. These include a program targeting underrepresented and first generation students to enhance student success in the classroom and engagement with the wider university, providing financial and moral support for the development of a LGBTQ center on campus, and working to address inclusivity on our campus.

My leadership and management style is based on two basic principles. First, leaders should foster collaboration and avoid micromanaging. Second, an effective leader uses the range of expertise

available to facilitate good decision making. As someone who teaches the value of policy analysis, it is extremely important for me to use a variety of information when making decisions and to examine alternatives from multiple perspectives. I value input and recognize there are many good ideas and people willing to help solve common problems. My style is also rooted in my communication and interpersonal skills, which have allowed me to build relationships and be effective working with a wide variety of people during my tenure at UW-Green Bay. Organization and follow-through skills have always been my strengths as evidenced by my current work as dean and previous work in various positions.

My career has prepared me well for this position. Higher education is both a career interest of mine and also in my study of this public policy area. I have a high level of curiosity regarding the field of higher education and am well aware of the changing nature of public universities that are relying less on state support and more on tuition and other sources for revenue. My experience and actions have helped address these challenges while continuing to provide a high quality education. Universities need to pay more attention to issues such as enrollment management, grant development, and fundraising. Addressing these issues successfully allows us to support the core activities such as quality teaching and research, faculty and staff development, academic program development, and most importantly, supporting student success.

I have been fortunate to have a career that has allowed me to work with a tremendous group of smart and innovative colleagues that take their responsibilities regarding promoting student learning and success seriously. This is truly one of the advantages of working in higher education and I look forward to taking my experiences, building relationships, and working with a similarly committed group of people at the FGCU to continue to build on its great reputation.

In closing, I am excited about the opportunities of this position. I have a significant amount of knowledge and experience working at a comprehensive institution with a liberal arts, problem-focused education mission that embraces community and civic engagement as well as stressing the idea that learning occurs in many ways. This, along with my strong interests in supporting student success, academic planning, and my success in working across the entire university with a range of offices and people from Academic Affairs, Student Life, Enrollment Management, Outreach and Extension, Athletics, and Advancement, will allow me to be an effective and energetic President for Florida Gulf Coast University.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Scott R. Furlong, Dean, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences  
Phone: 920-465-2995    Email: [furlongs@uwgb.edu](mailto:furlongs@uwgb.edu)