



July 25, 2019

Dear Lutgert College of Business Dean Search Committee Members:

I am entering my fourth year at FGCU and have absolutely grown to love this university. I intend to spend the remainder of my career here (consequently, I am not searching for other jobs). I am applying for the position of Dean because I have previously led a business school at a similar stage in its lifecycle and was successful in transforming that school and generating many positive advances.

This position is one of the greatest jobs available in higher education. FGCU is still a dynamic and entrepreneurial university. Many aspects of our university's growth are not yet tapped. For example, if I am selected as Dean, we would dramatically increase the number of international students studying in the Lutgert College of Business (LCOB). Previously as Dean I helped establish a number of international partners so that we went from nearly zero to 80 students who spent two years on our campus. As Dean of the LCOB I would also advocate for restoring the Executive MBA program, which, for many universities is the most noteworthy academic program on campus. In *Attachment 2* I concisely list several major accomplishments during my previous time as Dean.

In short, the LCOB needs a leader who can create culture change, which I have successfully accomplished in previous leadership positions. As the search consultants heard in listening sessions, morale here is extremely low. There is a wide chasm between the 4th floor and the rest of the college. Faculty and staff are not enjoying their jobs nearly as much as they could. Seemingly arbitrary actions taken in secret have fostered a culture of mistrust. Some immediate actions I would take to improve the school include:

- Embedding the Associate Dean offices within areas of other faculty fostering more visibility and informal conversation.
- Bringing transparency to information and decisions. For example, I will

immediately make available to all the recent AACSB report, which has only been available on a physical, sign-out basis. I will also frequently communicate with faculty and staff information I receive and rationales for decisions.

- Making the culture more fun. We should do much more celebrating of the many ongoing achievements in LCOB and hosting social events. I will regularly have open lunches with faculty, staff, and students, and be visible in the building as well as in the community.
- Perhaps, most importantly, offering grace as a leader. This means that I assume everyone operates with the best of intentions, unless there is clear proof otherwise. It also means showing appreciation for employees when they begin or end employment here. The LCOB Dean should consistently provide acknowledgement for exemplar employee actions. My own style includes recognizing employees' birthdays and service holidays.

Among the long-term strategic issues I see addressing are salary equity (long-term employees here are paid far too little), class size (we significantly exceed a peer school such as Appalachian State University and consequently limit student writing and presenting opportunities), retiree involvement (my mentor at UNC Wilmington involved over 150 retirees in college activities), innovation (many of our procedures are outdated, such as requiring hard copies of a number of submissions), and graduate programs (which should easily have far higher enrollment).

I will end this short sketch here and next outline some of my credentials and experience. You will find that I meet or exceed all of the requirements of the job position as advertised.

Financial and Human Resources Management Skills

My background of business skills allows me to play a crucial role in financial and HR matters. I have personally met a payroll in the private sector. I have grown businesses and educational enterprises. The supporting field for my M.B.A. and my Ph.D. is Finance. I have developed a number of partnerships so that no one party has to completely fund an initiative. I have raised external funds to supplement state-funded activities. I have a track record of outstanding administrative and organizational skills. I received the Project Manager of the Year award at Macro International where I managed over \$10 million of contracts. As a corporate Vice President I led an organization which grew 68% in a two-year period. I founded a doctoral program and was commended for my organizational skills in doing so. I am proudest of my HR skills that were used to develop people in my previous college. Four of the department chairs and senior faculty during my five-year tenure as Dean have gone on to serve as Deans themselves.

Collaboration and Building Community

Historically, I have worked very hard to build community both on and off campus. I have developed relationships with as many people on campus as I can. In my time at FGCU, for example, I have been involved with the Colloquium program and the Honors College.

In 2005 a handful of others and I founded the Robeson County Community Foundation (RCCF) and I served terms as its President and in other offices. As Dean I maintained an active Dean's Leadership Council (with a required contribution minimum) of regional leaders to advise the college and university about the needs of the region. I also developed relationships with the two U.S. Congressmen who served my district over the years, as well as the State Senators and Representatives. Notably, some of them are Democrats and some are Republicans, so I can get good recommendations from both sides of the aisle.

In building a team, it is my style to begin by making sure that all of my colleagues realize that I care deeply about each one of them as an individual. People have to believe you care before they will go the extra mile for you. Then I work collaboratively on how each person can play a meaningful role in fulfilling the university's mission. The key to building a team is to be absolutely clear, up front, about expectations and assumptions.

We successfully fostered a collaboration between the SBDC and the faculty, staff, and students. We created dozens of win-win-win partnerships in which SBDC clients received free consulting from faculty-led student teams. Students received tremendous real-world experience and faculty received business community contacts for future speakers, research, and consulting. Better integration of the SBDC with the rest of the LCOB is a fantastic current opportunity.

As additional evidence of my collaboration skill, in my first year after stepping down as Dean, I was elected to an at-large Faculty Senate seat in a university where the small number of Senate seats are highly sought. This election was a great testament to my respect across campus because to be elected I had to receive most of the votes from the faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences. Within days of assuming office, I was asked to serve as the Chair of the Committee on Committees and Elections and became a member of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. Most other former business school Deans would have a hard time generating a majority of votes from Arts and Sciences faculty. ☺

External Focus and Fundraising

A great business school Dean fulfills many of the external roles that mirror the President's - maintaining community relationships, raising money, establishing community-serving functions such as an Agribusiness Center, fulfilling speaking

engagements, and so forth. Business school Deans also have a unique fundraising opening to potential donors. I helped raise an amount of money nearly as large as the university's entire endowment when I started at the University of North Carolina Pembroke (UNCP). I would look forward to that challenge at FGCU. To put the previous figure in perspective, though, UNCP is in the third-poorest county in the *country*, so the university's endowment was under \$4 million when I arrived. SW Florida has vastly more resources, more like my hometown of Boca Raton, and I feel confident that I could be successful in raising large sums of money here. I have also raised a significant amount of money for organizations such as the Robeson County Community Foundation.

In my current role as the Uncommon Friends Endowed Chair in Ethics, I provide a number of services externally such as sponsoring a high school ethics competition in the region, speaking and serving on panels, helping match students and employers, and conducting a business ethics award for regional organizations. I already have in place a substantial number of external relationships and would hit the ground running if selected as Dean.

Ability to Work Effectively within a Diverse and Multicultural Environment.

Prior to joining FGCU in 2016, I spent the previous 16 years at universities that were all predominantly minority-serving. The last four years were at Fayetteville State University, one of the HBCUs in the North Carolina University system. A particular piece of evidence for my ability is that I was elected Faculty Senate Chair at an HBCU, a rare accomplishment for someone who is not a person of color.

As Dean, I helped lead the college in aggressively pursuing growth in faculty diversity. In only two years, when I had direct responsibility for hiring, the percentage of female part-time faculty went from 16.7 percent to 25 percent. The percentage of white full-time faculty went from 82.4 to 70.8. Before I was Dean there was no full- or part-time African-American faculty. In those two years I recruited one full-time and three part-time African-American faculty. These are dramatic changes in diversity and they have had an incredible impact on the stature and reputation of UNCP.

Fostering Excellence in Instruction, Research, and Service and Dedication to Supporting Faculty

My commitment in this area begins with my personal commitment to instruction, research, and service. As you can see in my CV, I have been the recipient of substantial awards in all of these areas. For example, I have been the recipient of the Governor's Award for Service to the state of North Carolina, and I received the Peter Frost Award, provided to one organizational behavior professor internationally. I have also twice been the recipient of my field's most prestigious international conference award for best paper.

I believe the environment I fostered as Dean played some small role in the excellence of the Business faculty as demonstrated by the university-wide awards they won. In two years for which data are readily available, Business faculty won the Research and Creative Endeavor award both years, the Service Award one year, Outstanding Teaching Awards both years, and the Advising Awards both years. That is nearly a clean sweep by business faculty of the awards offered at that university. My commitment to teaching excellence and high academic standards is what prompted my wife, Amy, and me to endow a faculty award at UNCP for precisely this purpose.

Promoting Student Success

At a regional university, our primary mission is to support students. More than 10 years ago, before it became fashionable, I created the position of Assistant Dean for Student Success and Enrichment, to help emphasize this important mission. I ask all of my students to connect with me on LinkedIn and I support their careers after they have been graduated. I have encouraged as many out-of-class enrichment experiences as possible such as having a class at my house for breakfast last fall to working with an Enactus team to serving as the faculty advisor to a sports team. Students will be more successful if they can connect with the university and its faculty and staff in ways beyond the classroom.

Final Thoughts

As a leadership professor I would offer two observations. One of the largest studies on leadership is documented in the book *Good to Great* by Jim Collins. His massive research project found that the most effective people who can provide sustained excellence in leadership have two main qualities – strong professional determination and personal humility. These findings match perfectly with my own leadership style and accomplishments. Secondly, if FGCU truly wants a “dynamic, entrepreneurial, and collaborative leader,” such a candidate should meet at least two additional requirements: s/he should have led in such a way that her/his leadership was not only noticed within the organization, but acknowledged externally. Also, s/he should be able to provide evidence that s/he has led an organization from one level of excellence to a qualitatively higher level of excellence, however that is measured (student retention, profits, quality metrics, etc.).

In my life and career, I have a track record of success with both of these requirements. At UNCP we were able to submit an accreditation plan that AACSB found so noteworthy (among hundreds) that they used it as an exemplar (see *Attachment 1*). I have received numerous awards for leadership, scholarship, teaching, and service. I have raised funds about equivalent to an entire university’s endowment when I arrived. We founded a sustaining non-profit organization in the community. I have led organizations to rapid levels of growth (not just in numbers, but in reputation, quality, and stature). I have the ability to develop relationships with societal figures that included bringing to campus Carly Fiorina when she was CEO of Hewlett Packard, Vance Coffman when he was

CEO of Lockheed Martin, John Allison when he was CEO of BB&T and Cheryl Bachelder, former CEO of Popeye's Louisiana Kitchen. We currently have a commitment from former Florida gubernatorial candidate Alex Sink to speak next spring.

I would welcome the opportunity of making big and innovative actions happen in the role of Dean at FGCU. I thank each of you on the search committee for the hours you will spend on this vital selection for our college and university. If I can provide any additional information, please let me know.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric B. Dent". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "E".

Eric B. Dent, Ph.D.

Attachment 1: AACSB accreditation plan kudos

----- Original Message -----

Subject: accreditation plan

Date: Thu, 2 Aug 2007 15:43:27 -0400

From: Lucienne Mochel <lucienne@AACSB.edu>

To: Eric Dent <eric.dent@uncp.edu>

Dear Dean Dent :

When the committee discussed your accreditation plan the committee was very impressed with the quality of your plan and found it well written, complete and concise. In an effort to provide our members with appropriate guidance in their accreditation effort, we are currently looking for quality documents that we can use as examples to share with schools. We would like to ask you for your permission to allow us to share your accreditation plan with schools upon their request.

We are currently also looking at a variety of accreditation plans to be posted to our resource site and would like to ask you to consider allowing us to post your accreditation plan as one of the example on our website. This website has open access. Of course we are sensitive to issues such as confidentiality and competition and would certainly offer to take out all sensitive information, such as faculty related information and financial information.

We look forward to receiving your response to both requests, the use of your accreditation plan as example upon requests of individual schools and the use of your (modified) accreditation plan on our resource site.

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or would rather discuss this by phone.

Kind regards,

Lucienne Mochel
Assistant Vice President for Accreditation Services
Phone (00) 1-813-769-6525
lucienne@aacsb.edu
www.aacsb.edu

Attachment 2: Dean, School of Business, 2003-2008
Major Accomplishments

- Initiated pursuit of AACSB accreditation. Submitted an accreditation plan that AACSB featured on its website as the “model” plan
- Grew full-time faculty by over 50 percent
- Made huge strides in faculty publications, faculty with terminal degrees, female faculty, minority faculty, and credentials of part-time faculty. Led a significant culture change to position the School of Business for AACSB accreditation.
- Established an Entrepreneurship Center supported by an endowed gift. Selected an off-campus site to be “close” to the community. This Center thrives still today.
- Wrote a successful \$225,000 entrepreneurship grant
- Was instrumental in obtaining contributions about equal to the university’s entire endowment when I started as Dean. Added several endowed chairs and student scholarships. Raised gifts about equivalent to the university’s entire endowment when I arrived.
- Oversaw major increases in faculty activity in university governance, scholarship, and interaction with the local community
- Established and oversaw many international joint ventures. The number of international students in Business rose from nearly none to about 80.
- Expanded program offerings to Ft. Bragg (competitive bid) (BSBA and MBA), Sandhills Community College (MBA), Cape Fear Community College (BIS), and a local hospital (graduate certificate)
- Administered approximately 100% growth in majors
- Oversaw curriculum additions in Information Technology Management, International Business, and Entrepreneurship
- Launched an initiative for faculty to lead student projects in area businesses. This extremely successful effort grew into an entrepreneurship center.
- Administered great advances in student placement with major employers
- Oversaw a building renovation, including vacating the building for a summer

- Assisted an extremely successful Students in Free Enterprise (now Enactus) team, for which SIFE gave me an award.
- Was a team player working collaboratively with others on campus (as evidence, was elected to an at-large Faculty Senate seat the first year after stepping down)
- Started and maintained throughout my Deanship a Dean's Leadership Council of community business leaders
- Interacted regularly with employers, local Chambers of Commerce, and other stakeholders
- Negotiated a Biotechnology agreement with business and education partners
- Participated in (university-wide) and led (School of Business) major strategic planning activities