

August 20, 2019

Kim Morrison, Senior Managing Director
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Diversified Search

Re: Dean, Lutgert College of Business, Florida Gulf Coast University

I am writing to express my interest in the Dean position at the Lutgert College of Business at Florida Gulf Coast University. I am currently the Chair of the Department of Accountancy at Northern Illinois University. The NIU Accountancy Chair is unlike other Department Chair positions as I perform many tasks that Dean's accomplish. In my role as Chair, I am responsible for a B.S. program (700 students) and three graduate programs (175-200 students); I oversee a department of thirty-three full-time faculty and staff; I am responsible for AACSB accreditation; and I engage significantly with donors. I have enjoyed my fourteen years at NIU and believe that Florida Gulf Coast University shares similar characteristics. I am excited about the opportunity to join an entrepreneurial environment that focuses on student success.

Even though NIU's Department of Accountancy continues to be one of the top-ranked programs in the nation, I know that if we do not continue to grow amidst the changing landscape facing the accountancy profession and higher education, irrelevance will meet us sooner than we think. As a result, the Department has evolved significantly during my tenure as the Chair, including:

- Curricular changes to improve student success:
 - We added two required one-hour writing intensive courses that are delivered in the Department of Accountancy for juniors and seniors.
 - We require all students to test for Microsoft Excel Basic and Advanced Certification. In 2018/2019, 172 (91%) of students completed basic certification and 137 (77%) completed advanced certification.
- New programs:
 - We developed a new masters program, the MAC, for students who do not have an undergraduate degree in accounting.
 - We added two new graduate certificates in accounting to meet changing market demands.
- Created and expanded outreach programs for high school and community college students:
 - We hosted an Accounting Career Awareness Program for minority high school students in the Chicago area in June 2019. Twenty-five students resided on campus for 4 nights and participated in a variety of learning opportunities.
 - One hundred high school students competed in an accounting competition at NIU Naperville. Alumni from public accounting, corporate accounting, and the FBI participated in the event.

- Engagement/fundraising activities:
 - I worked with the foundation to receive a commitment from KPMG for \$500,000 to support innovation in accounting education.
 - We cancelled our traditional “golf outing” and now host an alumni event at Top-Golf. Almost 200 are registered to attend the event in August including many young alumni.

The leadership profile provided several qualifications and experiences that are essential for a successful candidate; I address how I meet these required qualifications below.

A Ph.D. or equivalent in business, economics, or related field from an AACSB-accredited institution. I have a Ph.D. in Accounting from Michigan State University.

Scholarly or professional accomplishments that merit appointment as a full professor in an academic discipline represented within the college. I was promoted to full professor in 2014 based on my record of teaching, research, and service at NIU.

At least five years of demonstrated managerial and leadership experience, including at least three (3) years of successful leadership at the Chair, Director, Dean, or equivalent leadership level. I became the Chair of the Department of Accountancy at NIU in January 2016. Prior to that time, I served as the Assistant Chair and the Director of the MAS program for four years. My evaluations from the Dean and Accounting Chair were 5/5 in each year.

Demonstrated commitment to the mission of a comprehensive, public university and business school. All of my experiences in higher education, both as a student and faculty, have been at comprehensive public universities. I earned my BS and MBA at Indiana University and my Ph.D. at Michigan State University. I have served as a faculty member at the University of North Carolina in Wilmington, Ball State University, and Northern Illinois University.

Strong external focus and demonstrated success over a sustained period in external fundraising, external relations, and community engagement with the necessary energy and ability to work effectively with the business community, donors, alumni and other constituents in resource development and advancement. I enjoy working with alumni to develop and steward relationships in the Department of Accountancy. I have worked with the NIU Foundation to accomplish the following:

- Received commitment from KPMG for \$500,000 to support innovation in accounting education.
- Worked with the foundation office and alumni to provide more than \$300,000 in scholarships for upper-level and graduate accounting students.
- Currently working to create an endowed scholarship with my Accountancy Executive Advisory Council for \$100,000.
- The summer Accounting Career Awareness Program was entirely supported by firm donations. The department also received \$15,000 to provide scholarships for students joining NIU from this program.

- Received support for the PwC Undergraduate Learning Suite. The suite includes faculty offices, two small conference spaces, and a large meeting space for our undergraduate students.
- Developed or renewed donor support for five professorships that will provide \$20,000 per professorship for four years.

In addition to fundraising, accountancy firms, corporations, and alumni are engaged with our students. Approximately 75-85 professionals present in classes in the Department of Accountancy every year. Executives present in our student organizations, serve as mentors to our students, and hire our students. During the past two years, more than 60 recruiters have participated in our department career fair and between 120-150 students received internship offers.

Ability to work effectively within a diverse and multicultural environment. I am a strong supporter of diversity and inclusion. One of our new assistant professors is originally from Kenya. We have two faculty members from Asia and more than 50% of the tenured/tenure-track faculty are women.

I introduced the Provost and University Chief Diversity Officer to the CEO Action Pledge sponsored by PwC. NIU joined the pledge and hosted the CEO Action Pledge diversity truck on campus. I also coordinated PwC Blind Spot training for the College of Business faculty and staff in August 2018.

I currently serve as the faculty advisor for ALPFA which hosted a Latinos in Business Day for high school students in the fall of 2017 and 2018. As discussed earlier, I worked with the Chicago NABA Chapter to host an Accounting Career Awareness Program for inner-city Chicago students in the summer of 2019.

Entrepreneurial and innovative skills in identifying emerging opportunities and positioning LCOB to create and implement new initiatives and foster entrepreneurial spirit; a vision for the use of information technology in the college and experience with online programs. I strongly believe it is necessary to envision long-term change to remain at the forefront of education. I believe one of my strengths as the Chair is the ability to think about new opportunities to move the department forward. As a result, we have added new programs and new certificates, re-envisioned existing programs, and offered new opportunities for students. I have worked to revamp the Accountancy Executive Advisory Council to be more reflective of the demographics of our students and to engage them more effectively in the department. The Department of Accountancy has aggressively pursued the inclusion of data analytics and technology skills in our program. Since I became Chair, we started to offer online courses; have increased from zero to four. A phrase in the NIU fight song is "forward, together, forward." I attempt to follow this phrase to position the department and the college for success in the future.

In addition to the essential qualifications, the position description includes several desired qualities. I discuss each of those below.

Exceptional leadership and vision: Evidence of ability to provide leadership in vision and strategic direction through the implementation of a new five-year strategic plan, in collaboration with faculty, and to operationalize these strategies and objectives in direct support of the university's strategic plan and objectives. A proven track record as dean of a college or leader of an academic unit. Shortly after beginning my tenure as Chair, the College of Business hired a new Dean. After the Dean developed his strategic plan, the department updated its vision, mission, and strategic plan to align with that of the college and university. We have three primary components to the mission with strategic objectives for each. These were developed with insights from faculty, students, and alumni. The department relies on our mission and the college mission to develop strategies that help us move forward.

As mentioned previously, I served as the Assistant Chair of the department for four years. I became the department Chair in January 2016. I have received outstanding evaluations from the prior Chair and the Dean of the college in both roles.

A commitment to student success and the capability to engage faculty and staff in pursuit of its attainment. A clear commitment to teaching and undergraduate and graduate business education. I am committed to providing superb learning experiences for both undergraduate and graduate students. Because of this commitment, I have engaged in the following activities (not inclusive):

- I developed a new business valuation course, the capstone course, in our MAS program. The course evolved over time to include a semester-long valuation project. Student teams work with a coach from the accounting profession (coaches have included partners/managers from Big 4 and many other firms including the national director of business valuation at KPMG, corporate controllers, and VPs of finance). I received two FSA/Mark Chain Innovation in Graduate Teaching Awards for this course.
- I encouraged the curriculum committee to think outside the box to develop new courses and experiences for all students. As a result, the department has added Excel Certification, expanded data analytics coverage, required two writing intensive courses, added an off-campus MAC for non-accountancy majors, and proposed two new graduate certificates.
- Changed the model for a graduate assistantship positions to increase tutoring access for our undergraduate students. Five MAS students now provide open tutoring for approximately 15 hours per week.
- Worked with the Access office on campus to provide Supplemental Instruction for students in the two principles of accounting courses and a course required in nine non-business degrees.
- Lead the Strategic Enrollment Management committee in the College of Business to consider new ideas to improve retention of students.
- Created a new experience to jump start entrance into upper-level accountancy courses with the junior kick-off. This event features several professionals who talk about various career options in accounting. In addition, I developed the MAS Launch for incoming graduate students in which they participate in a variety of team building activities and discuss leadership styles.

A record of fostering excellence in instruction, research and service; a commitment to strengthening and broadening the concept of research across the college, to actively supporting and encouraging faculty, and to promoting faculty success and ensuring opportunities for their growth and development; an understanding of AACSB accreditation, assessment, and learning outcomes. I have worked diligently to support faculty excellence in teaching, research, and service. I meet regularly with assistant professors to help them develop as strong members of the faculty. I encourage them to attend teaching workshops on and off campus to improve their instruction. If faculty are having difficulties in the classroom, we work together to identify opportunities for improvement including working with the university development center, observing other faculty courses, and developing strategies for improvement.

I support faculty research by encouraging and providing financial support for attendance at research conferences and workshops. All have participated in AAA meetings, AAA section meetings, and other professional development activities. In the spring of 2019, we hosted our first research workshop from an outside professor. We are planning to host two outstanding researchers in the fall of 2019. In addition, the department purchases data bases requested by faculty, pays for subjects, and provides significant summer research funding. Faculty also present and participate in college-wide research presentations and engage in writing groups with faculty in other departments.

The faculty in the department are evaluated for service (to the university) and professional engagement activities (outside the university). This includes providing funding for them to commit to serve on various groups across the country including members of the American Accounting Association Council, service to various discipline specific events, and attendance at professional organization meetings (American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, Illinois CPA Society, and many others).

The NIU College of Business and Department of Accountancy completed their Continuous Improvement Review visit in October of 2018. I was responsible for the Accountancy report and was engaged in discussions regarding the COB report. I was also significantly involved in the AACSB Maintenance of Accounting Accreditation visit for the Department of Accountancy in 2013-2014. I served as a visit team member in the spring of 2019 and am scheduled to serve on two additional teams during 2020. While serving as the Assistant Chair, I coordinated the assessment of learning outcomes in the department.

Organizational, management, and team-building skills; a strong sense of fiscal accountability; a commitment to transparency; a willingness to delegate; and experience in leveraging limited resources while achieving innovative results. In my role as Chair, I am responsible for a B.S. program and three graduate programs. The graduate programs are offered in different locations with very different target markets: a full-time, day-time MAS program on campus; a 30-hour evening MST program for working professionals; and an evening MAC for students with an undergraduate degree outside of accountancy. During my term as Chair, we added the MAC program and redesigned the MST program. I also oversee the EY Leadership and Professional Development Center as well as an undergraduate learning suite. I enjoy managing a variety of programs, initiatives, faculty, and opportunities. It is critical

to understand the demands of the market, the needs of students, and the culture of the university and department when considering opportunities for growth and improvement.

As I transitioned from the Assistant Chair/Director of the MAS program roles, I believed it was important to realign my management team. As a result, I now have the support of two Assistant Chairs: one for graduate programs and assessment and one for undergraduate programs. The department previously had one Assistant Chair, a Director for the MAS program, and a Director for the MST program. Selecting one person to oversee all graduate programs provides the opportunity for synergies in course development, opportunities for students, and marketing efforts. Separating the Assistant Chair duties allows each to focus on the unique programmatic needs of undergraduate and graduate education.

I am responsible for the department budget that allows us to support research, faculty development, and new program initiatives. Our budget from the university is approximately \$3.5 million, 99% of this budget is dedicated to salaries. I also manage approximately \$1.5 million in resources from differential tuition in the department. We use these funds to provide supplemental salaries to faculty (base salaries are inverted), fund research projects, develop faculty and staff, and provide students with creative learning experiences.

Collegiality as reflected in a commitment to an environment of shared governance and participatory decision-making; capability to work collegially to build relationships and connections across colleges and disciplines, to motivate and energize others to work together, and to collaborate with multiple stakeholders; the ability to understand and encourage diverse viewpoints and approaches. During my time at NIU, I have been engaged in several important roles in the university:

- Served as the Curricular Dean for the College of Business (we did not have any Associate Deans in the spring of 2019).
- Served on various university search committees; chaired the search committee for the President's Chief of Staff.
- Served as a member of university council.

Perhaps my most challenging university task was serving as a member of a team of twenty faculty who were responsible for the prioritization of academic programs across the university. This team met weekly for an entire semester to bucket 227 programs into one of five groupings that impacted decision-making throughout the university. I developed significant friendships across the university as a result this task force including the Director of Visual and Performing Arts, the former Chair of the math department, and a wide-range of faculty. Several of us still meet for breakfast to discuss various issues on campus and to understand other viewpoints.

Strong communication abilities to include listening skills and a passion for communicating the vision, mission, strengths, and aspirations of LCOB; excellent negotiation and diplomatic skills. I am a strong communicator and work to develop relationships with a wide-range of constituents. Several alumni who were previously not involved with the department are now supporting scholarships and presenting in our courses as a result of me reaching out to them, making them feel like important members of the NIU family, and recruiting them to participate in the Department.

I am very energetic and am dedicated to motivating faculty through open communication, transparency, and encouragement. I provided the faculty a summary of the Department budget at my first faculty meeting; several commented that they had not seen a budget in more than 10 years. I write personal thank you notes for faculty members who go above and beyond and acknowledge successes at the beginning of faculty meetings. These small efforts are essential to maintain morale in a budget-constrained state.

A proven record as a fair and just decision-maker with a reputation for transparency, personal and professional integrity, and high ethical standards, who will equitably and vigorously promote excellence and uphold quality in the college while understanding that “one size does not fit all”. I have a strong moral compass that I rely on as the leader of the Department of Accountancy at NIU. This leads me to carefully consider what I believe is “right” when making decisions that involve faculty and students. I endeavor to consider various aspects of a decision and communicate the logic behind my answer. Maintaining the trust of your team and colleagues is critical to success as a leader.

Further, I push myself to excellence in all aspects of my career and personal life. I developed this drive as the daughter of a Marine fighter pilot and a mother with a strong faith and the desire to succeed in any endeavor. Both my mom and I were the valedictorian of the same high school. Their example, and those of many others, have led me throughout my professional career.

Collaborative and team-oriented leadership style; good judgment in recognizing talent and assessing where improvements are needed; the ability to make appropriate connections and build synergies; an open-minded, flexible, and creative approach to problem-solving. I enjoy collaborating as a leader with the tremendous faculty in my department, the four other department Chairs in the college, and the Dean. Recently, I have started coordinating monthly lunches for the five department Chairs in the college. This gives us the ability to share ideas, support each other, and consider new opportunities for the college.

I am also willing to share my faculty and staff with the COB to serve all. As an example, the MAS Student Advisor and the Assistant to the Chair, was tremendous in her role in the Department of Accountancy. However, I knew that she was capable of accomplishing so much more. As a result, when the Director of Operations & Financial Strategy position opened in the Dean’s office, I strongly encouraged her to apply. She was very indecisive about this new opportunity as she loved her position in accountancy and she enjoyed working with students. She did apply for and was named to the position based on my support. While this was a significant loss to the department, it was a tremendous gain for the college.

Outstanding interpersonal skills, creativity, a high level of energy and confidence, a “can-do” and enabling attitude, combined with patience, perseverance, a willingness to learn, empathy, and a good sense of humor. I love what I do. As the Chair of a nationally recognized program, I utilize my communication skills to share the successes of my faculty and students with alumni and business professionals. I am driven to try new ideas to keep moving the department forward; I do not believe in maintaining the status quo just because that is the “way we did it in the past”. I pass this energy and can-do nature to my faculty, staff, and

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students. We may not get everything right the first time, but with perseverance, we move forward together.

I am excited about the possibility of serving as the Dean of the Lutgert College of Business at Florida Gulf Coast. The opportunity to work at a young university that focuses on student success and practical education experiences is intriguing. Thank you for considering my materials. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rebecca Shorridge". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rebecca Shorridge