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Search Committee for Dean, Lutgert College of Business
Florida Gulf Coast University
Fort Myers, FL 33965

Dear Search Committee Members:

I just read with interest the position announcement for your next Dean of the Lutgert College of Business and wish to submit my application for your consideration. Although my academic CV provides a broad overview of my professional credentials and qualifications, I wish to highlight below some aspects of my background and experience that I believe align well with your expectations for the position, but which may not be obvious from my CV.

Successful Entrepreneurial Record of Academic Leadership and Corporate Engagement. Over my career, I've held numerous leadership positions that have prepared me well to serve as the next Dean of the Lutgert College of Business. The best evidence is my decade-long success as chair for a large, thriving and multidisciplinary academic department. In addition, I also have extensive experience engaging directly with the corporate world (e.g., as a co-founder and practice partner in several successful consulting businesses that focus primarily on leadership development and coaching), as well as 20+ years in key leadership positions with multiple nonprofit organizations (including periods as board chair) with significant fundraising requirements and success.

Major highlights as department chair:

- **Accountability:** Responsible for 11 degree programs, three academic Centers, and shared oversight for annual budget of approximately \$6M;
- **Strategic vision, people skills and team building:** As department chair, consistently received outstanding evaluations from subordinates, peers, and supervisor in the areas of strategic vision, people skills and team building;
- **Hall Center for Entrepreneurship:** Helped develop ongoing relationship with key donor and worked with development office to secure \$7M in Hall Center funding; teamed with faculty content experts to create and launch our Entrepreneurship Minor for non-business students;
- **Fundraising and donor development:** Long history of success and affinity for cultivating donor relations and fundraising achievements; helped procure two endowments totaling \$12M for my department's Supply Chain Management and Entrepreneurship centers; also played key role as board member over 20+ years raising approximately \$16M for multiple non-profits;
- **Community engagement and connectivity:** Successfully built active advisory boards in two key department areas, comprised of local community and business leaders; also partnered with local employers to establish for-credit internship courses across all department majors;
- **Increased Graduation Rates:** Systemically reviewed all curriculum maps to redesign pre-requisites and course scheduling, which we combined with proactive academic advising for a net increase of 23% in degree completion rates;
- **Collaborative, inclusive and transparent communication style:** 10+ years providing collaborative, inclusive and transparent academic leadership and communication for 24 full-time faculty and 32 adjuncts across seven diverse academic disciplines;
- **Recruiting, hiring and mentoring faculty:** Highly successful record in all aspects of faculty recruiting, staffing and mentoring—from new hires to mid-career and senior faculty (as well as administrative and support staff); I've hired a total of 19 new faculty and subsequently ensured their professional support, development and success across their various career stages;
- **Diversity and inclusion:** Recognized as diversity and inclusion champion (frequently identified as a "Male Ally"); leveraged hiring and retention opportunities to increase faculty diversity in my department (approx. one-third of my new hires—which is significantly above local trends—have

- come from underrepresented and minority populations); ensured their engagement and retention by creating a genuine culture of inclusion to safeguard their sense of connection and belonging;
- **Built and nurtured a culture of excellence:** When I started as chair, students saw themselves primarily as degree maximizers but education minimizers, while most faculty saw themselves as little more than community college instructors. Much has now changed—by enlisting several like-minded colleagues and numerous strategic new hires, I nurtured a culture change for excellence in both teaching and research; as a result, we now have a vibrant and engaged faculty, as well as students who understand the need to receive a high quality education along with their degrees;
 - **Accreditation:** Extensive involvement in all aspects of AACSB accreditation from implementation of initial accreditation to multiple subsequent successful maintenance reviews.

Responsive Student-Centered Leadership. As chair, I proactively and collaboratively worked with faculty to drive and implement evidence-based student-centered curriculum innovations, which made us more relevant and aligned with the needs and expectations of our students and key stakeholders. My department's more noteworthy innovations include:

- Created multiple strategic plans for key areas of accountability (specifically for the areas of Supply Chain, Entrepreneurship and MIS), which have since become targeted areas for enrollment growth as “destination” programs;
- Spearheaded college-wide revision of our undergraduate quantitative methods requirements to integrate Data Analytics into our core; through a collaborative consensus building process, I brought together key stakeholders and decision makers from all college departments for unanimous final approval of our proposed revision;
- Initiated revisions of our Management, MIS and SCM majors to increase experiential learning and soft skills development in our students;
- Partnered with faculty content experts and key stakeholders across campus to create a new Entrepreneurship Minor for non-business students;
- Collaboratively designed new Leadership Minor through interdisciplinary campus-wide partnerships (by bringing together all other academic units on campus that teach leadership content in their programs);
- Revised our Supply Chain Management (SCM) curriculum to align more closely with professional certifications in the field and national standards for SCM education;
- Revised our Information Systems & Technology curriculum by moving it away from its original focus on technology to its current emphasis on Cybersecurity and Big Data (along with a formal name change from IS&T to MIS);
- Revised Marketing curriculum to align more closely with the demands our graduates face when working in that field;
- Revised undergraduate HRM concentration to more closely align with the demands our graduates face when working in that field;
- Elevated the disciplines of SCM, MIS, Finance and Marketing from concentrations within the general Business Administration major to their own degree majors;
- Collaboratively worked with our campus School of Engineering and Computer Science programs to create interdisciplinary Data Science Minor for their students through our MIS program;
- Collaboratively worked with our campus Engineering and STEM programs to create interdisciplinary Supply Chain Management Minor for their students through our SCM program;
- Currently pursuing interdisciplinary partnerships with our campus humanities and liberal arts programs to more effectively infuse the competencies of critical thinking, communication and character education into our management curriculum.

Some Final Personal Observations. On a personal note, I would like to point to some additional aspects of my background and experiences that may be of value for search committee members to know:

- I have lived a life of diversity, starting with significant international experience while growing up (in Spain and South America); because of this, I was a “Third Culture Kid” (TCK), which refers to people raised in a culture other than their parents’ or the culture of the country named on their passport (I often find it challenging to answer when people asked me where I’m from). I consider myself to be multicultural, am fully bilingual (Spanish and English), and have spent a large part of my career at minority-serving institutions;

- I have spent the past 20 years professionally engaged in collaborative cross-cultural education and research aimed at assessing and developing intercultural competencies, which has proven especially useful for informing diversity, inclusion and equality initiatives; my interculturalist worldview thus greatly informs my core values and undergirds much of my global perspective, as well as my innate commitment to diversity, inclusion and equality.
- Leadership cultivation in students has been at the heart of much of my teaching career; using a deeply immersive experiential approach, I've worked to grow a new generation of business leaders by providing a character and soft skills-based approach for building better company cultures and communities, both locally and globally (specifically, I adapted an innovative corporate "Leadership through People Skills" seminar, which uses social learning methods to raise self-awareness and build interpersonal skills—students often refer to this class as a "game changer" for them).
- I have combined my academic career with 20+ years of corporate training and executive development work across a wide variety of organizations and industries; this has not only served to inform my teaching philosophy and motivate my commitment to experiential and applied learning, but has also enhanced my connections with the business community in deep, relevant and meaningful ways.
- I was recently named a Brady Distinguished Presidential Professor at Weber State University, due to my career achievements as a scholar and teacher. I have a Google Scholar h-index of 21, with more than 3,800 citations to date (and a most recent 5-year citation rate that exceeds the average rate for my career); I have also created and validated several cross-cultural competency assessments used to date by more than 175,000 individuals in business, nonprofit and educational settings, in nearly 200 different countries, and in nine major languages.
- Finally, I am passionately dedicated to sustainability in all its forms—not just environmental but social and community sustainability as well. I am more convinced than ever that business schools must transform how they educate and engage in ways that foster meaningful, ongoing conversations and policy debates about the nature of global economic development and the role of business enterprises to advance human flourishing and well-being.

Given my many years of successful leadership experience, and the core values I live by, I believe I would be a valuable member of the leadership teams at Florida Gulf Coast University and Lutgert College of Business. I look forward to exploring this opportunity with you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Stevens, Ph.D.