

July 21, 2019

LCOB Dean Search Committee
Florida Gulf Coast University

Search Committee Members,

The purpose of this letter is to express my interest in the position of Dean of FGCU's Lutgert College of Business (LCOB). My motivation to apply for this position is based on my understanding of the unique opportunities and challenges that we face and the fact that I care deeply about the institution.

I was fortunate to be a member of FGCU's inaugural faculty, arriving in Southwest Florida just before the campus opened for classes in the fall of 1997. During the 22 years since my arrival at FGCU I have enjoyed tremendous professional growth while becoming deeply engrained in our community. The perspective that this experience has given me is a tremendous asset to me in my current roles, and I believe it would be even more valuable to me as Dean of the LCOB.

I currently serve as the Chair of the Department of Economics and Finance and Director of the Lucas Institute for Real Estate Development & Finance in the LCOB. In these roles, I have developed a portfolio of skills that will allow me to be a highly effective dean. In addition to the typical internal duties associated with my roles, I work extensively with a wide range of external constituents. I enjoy these outreach activities and see them as a critical component of the LCOB's programs. They generate immediate and significant returns for faculty, students and external stakeholders. I am confident that the relationships we are cultivating will continue to positively impact FGCU and our students for many years.

As a regional public institution FGCU will always operate in a budget constrained environment in which fundraising and development efforts are critical to the success of the institution. For a variety of reasons, the LCOB has not been fully incorporated into the development activities of FGCU. This must change if we are to reach our full potential, and it will change if I am the next dean of the LCOB. During the past decade, I have been increasingly involved with the activities of the FGCU Foundation, and I have been fortunate to work with and learn from a number of very skilled development professionals. I have had significant success building relationships with community members based on their meaningful engagement in our programs. While some of these relationships have already resulted in financial support for our programs, their full value will be measured in future support for the institution.

Our region is certainly rich in terms of financial capital. However, it is equally rich in terms of human capital. This is the resource base that gives the LCOB the opportunity to be a truly special business school. I am constantly amazed by the number of

community members who have had incredible careers in all aspects of business who reach out to learn about FGCU and our programs. The characteristics that drove these individuals to great professional success often make it challenging for them to settle into retirement. This presents a tremendous opportunity in terms of potential engagement in the programs of the LCOB. I have learned that the key to successful engagement with these individuals is that the activities must be substantive and of direct benefit to our students. As the Dean of the LCOB, I will work to facilitate this engagement across our programs.

As a faculty member and administrator at FGCU, I have worked with a number of colleagues from across campus on a variety of programs and initiatives. These experiences have reinforced my belief in the importance of cooperation across the institution in the pursuit of common goals. I have enjoyed success as a direct result of teamwork involving colleagues from other units within the university in areas that include: community outreach, curriculum design & development, enrollment growth, fundraising, media relations, and recruitment of faculty, staff & students.

I am deeply committed to excellent teaching, scholarship, and professional development. I love teaching, and I firmly believe that maintaining an active research agenda and engaging in professional development are the most effective paths for business faculty to inform their teaching and maintain relevance in the classroom. While I continue to enjoy research and professional development activities, I have discovered that I also derive tremendous satisfaction from contributing to the success of my colleagues in these areas by garnering resources to facilitate their continued professional growth.

On a personal level, I find this opportunity attractive because of my family's connection to the region. My wife and I were fortunate to raise our family here, and we love living in Southwest Florida. I do not see this position as a career builder or stepping stone to my next job. Instead, I view this as an opportunity for me to have a more significant positive impact on FGCU and our community as whole.

I look forward to speaking with you about this opportunity as the search process moves forward. On the following pages I have specifically addressed each of the required and preferred qualifications for this position. If there is any additional information that I can provide that will assist you with the evaluation of my application, please let me know.

Sincerely,



H. Shelton Weeks, PhD
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Chair, Dept. of Economics & Finance
Lutgert College of Business
Florida Gulf Coast University

Required Qualifications:

- **Earned doctorate:** I earned a PhD in Finance from the University of Alabama.
- **Record Appropriate for Appointment as a Full Professor:** I currently hold the rank of Full Professor in the LCOB. I have an extensive publication record, have served in a variety of Editorial roles, and maintain an active research agenda (Scholarly Academic classification for AACSB-I).
- **5 years of Demonstrated Managerial & Leadership Experience:** I have been a department chair for 8 years and center director for 16 years. During the time that I have been in this role the staffing in the department expanded by 50% and the enrollment in our programs more than doubled. This growth occurred in a very challenging budgetary environment which required a number of creative solutions in order to maintain the upward trajectory of our programs.
- **Commitment to the Mission of the LCOB:** I am deeply committed to the role of the LCOB as part of a comprehensive, public institution. FGCU and the LCOB are having a tremendous impact in SWFL, and I derive great satisfaction from the role that we play in not only in the region's economy but across the broader community.
- **Strong External Focus:** Community outreach is one of my greatest strengths. I enjoy building relationships that connect our programs and students to the regional business community. I have been very successful doing this at the Department level, and I am confident that I can greatly increase the connectivity of the LCOB to the SWFL business community.
- **Effectiveness in a Diverse & Multicultural Environment:** FGCU continues to develop as a diverse and multicultural environment and the Department of Economics and Finance mirrors this larger institutional trend. The diversity within the Department in terms of ethnicity and gender currently more closely aligns with our region and student population than at any point in our history. I work well with a wide variety of individuals. Many of my greatest success at FGCU have been the result of collaborative efforts with partners across campus where I have worked to refine our existing programs as well create new ones.
Entrepreneurial and Innovative Skills: Many of the innovations that we have made in our programs at the department level are the result of entrepreneurial responses to opportunities and challenges. I believe we must be willing to try new and innovative approaches in order to make the most of the opportunities before us.

Preferred Characteristics

- **Exceptional leadership and vision:** I have the combination of leadership skills and vision to operationalize the strategic plan for the LCOB. I believe my track record as department chair provides clear evidence of my ability to move an academic unit forward. My vision for the LCOB is shaped by the needs of our students, faculty, and region and informed by experience with and connection to them. There is tremendous opportunity for continued growth and development

within the college, and I am confident that I can successfully balance the interest of all of the LCOB's stakeholders as we reach new milestones of success.

- **Commitment to Student Success:** As department chair, I have consistently supported a wide array of faculty initiatives to improve student success. I believe it is our obligation to do everything possible to maximize the probability of success for our students while maintaining academic standards that will ultimately make our graduates competitive in the job market. I have worked closely with our faculty to refine our programs in ways that enhance their value to our students. Examples of these efforts include the incorporation of Bloomberg terminals as a key element of the Financial Policy Capstone, development of the new Financial Service concentration which will allow students to sit for the CFP immediately following graduation, facilitating student participation in a wide array of industry events so that they can start forming a professional network prior to graduation, and the development of programs to enhance student's soft skills.
- **Record of Fostering Excellence in Instruction:** I have worked with Department faculty to develop and deliver programs characterized by excellent instruction which emphasize the skills that our graduates will need in the workplace. As a result, the performance of the Economics and Finance majors has consistently been at the highest level in the LCOB as measured by performance on the ETS exams.
- **Record of Fostering Excellence in Research:** As Director of the Lucas Institute for Real Estate Development and Finance, I have employed the resources of the Institute to support a wide array of faculty research activities. This support has included conference travel & registration, data purchases, participation in educational seminars both on and off campus, and research presentations by leading scholars from other institutions on the FGCU campus. As Department Chair, I have always prioritized faculty research and development.
- **Record of Fostering Excellence in Service:** At the Department level, I have worked with faculty to identify faculty service opportunities that align the interest of the individual with the needs of the institution, our students and the regional business community. Examples of success in this area include the identification of faculty liaisons for the CFA Society of Naples and the SWFL Financial Planner's Association. The resulting relationships with these key stakeholder groups are great assets for our programs.
- **Organizational, Management, and Team-building Skills:** My current roles have provided an excellent platform for the development of these skills. I regularly organize events both on and off campus and manage one of the largest and most diverse departments in the LCOB. Much of my success in these efforts is the result of having built a strong team of faculty, staff, and community contacts that work efficiently for the benefit of all stakeholders. Throughout all of these efforts, transparency and effective delegation have been keys to our success.
- **Collegiality:** My collegiality allows me to work effectively with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders. I strive to create collaborative environments where individuals engage and freely provide input in pursuit of our common goals.

- **Strong Communication Abilities:** In order to be an effective leader, I believe you must be a good listener. My communication skills allow me to build productive relationships with a wide array of stakeholders. I think my passion for the mission of the LCOB is one of the factors that helps to draw our diverse stakeholders together for the benefit of the institution.
- **Fair and Just Decision Maker:** I hold myself to a high ethical standard and strive to operate in an open and transparent manner.
- **Collaborative and Team-oriented Leadership:** My leadership style focuses on facilitating effective collaboration and teamwork. I am a strong believer in leveraging the talents of individuals across the organization in order to maximize performance.
- **Outstanding Interpersonal skills:** I have the confidence, creativity and energy to be an effective dean. I enjoy the challenge of getting things done that advance the goals of the unit. My experience as an academic administrator has taught me the value of always being willing to learn, remaining patient, and perseverance. I have also learned that having a good sense of humor is key to maintaining perspective.

Additional Important Qualifications

- **Track Record of Successful Fundraising:** Fundraising should be an important element of any business dean's job, and I have had significant and consistent success in this area. A key element in my success as a fundraiser has been the identification of giving opportunities where the donor is passionate about a project and clearly understands the benefit to the institution and our students.
- **Familiarity with AACSB-I standards:** I have extensive experience with AACSB accreditation and a solid understanding of the requirements and processes. Attaining AACSB International accreditation was a goal established at FGCU before the first classes were offered. As a founding faculty member, I was fortunate to be involved with this process from day one. As I moved into an administrative role, my involvement with AACSB International has steadily increased.
- **Significant experience recruiting, retaining, and mentoring faculty:** As a faculty member and administrator at an institution that grew from 2,500 to 15,000 students in two decades, I have had extensive experience recruiting faculty. The growth trajectory of the institution mandated that the energy and emphasis placed on recruitment be matched by our efforts to nurture and retain faculty. As a result, I continue to place significant emphasis on faculty development and retention. I find the returns from these efforts extremely satisfying and firmly believe they are key elements in the future success of any academic unit.
- **Effective Public Relation Skills:** I regularly give presentations to a wide array of community groups and make frequent contributions to print and broadcast media on behalf of the university and the college of business. I enjoy these activities and appreciate the value they add to the unit by strengthening linkages with the community.