

July 14, 2023

Dear UVI Presidential Search Committee,

I would like to express my interest in being considered for the President position at the University of the Virgin Islands; my alma mater. Becoming a President has been a longstanding dream and goal for many reasons including my love for interdisciplinary engagement and my keen ability to connect scholars, students, staff and others from different disciplines to foster collaboration and productivity. I have held several leadership positions, including academic institutional leadership, and made significant contributions in my various roles. I currently serve as Dean of Florida Atlantic University Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing, with approximately 1,400 students and programs on three campuses and oversee our college's two nurse-led health centers, which includes our Memory and Wellness Center and Federally Qualified Health Center Look-A-Like Community Health Center. Our college is the international leader in advancing caring science and I have established and built an incredible leadership team to help me lead our college. I am confident that I would be an effective President for the University of the Virgin Islands due to my astute, compassionate, collaborative, servant leader, transformational leadership style and my familiarity with UVI and the local and geographic regions from which it draws students. Those with whom I have worked and led have consistently described me as an effective, efficient, visionary, innovative, dedicated, authentic, caring, down-to-earth, level-headed, calm, servant leader. This is also evidenced by my track record of commitment to service, excellence and effective leadership. My top 5 strengths as a leader, based on the Clifton StrengthsFinder, are: (1) Relator, (2) Learner, (3) Futuristic, (4) Responsibility, and (5) Strategic. I take pride in my effective, collaborative, decisive, caring style as a transformational, servant leader which has enabled me to yield impressive results and high levels of productivity while working extremely well with people at all levels and in all sectors. Despite my productivity and accomplishments, I remain humble and grounded with a sincere desire to improve outcomes and the lives of students, faculty, staff, patients and community. I am a very organized and innovative academic leader and I have a unique mix of skillsets, including strong data analytical skills, and a solid track record in advancing academic success, research, innovation and efficiency. My previous successes as a research dean and my current successes as Dean and leader in general have prepared me well to serve as President of the University of the Virgin Islands. I have more than a decade of academic leadership and other executive level organizational leadership experience that would help to make me an effective President, in collaboration with other leaders at UVI.

I am particularly interested in advancing UVI's mission and vision and in developing a new strategic plan with all UVI stakeholders in order to build on the institution's past accomplishments and assets and to provide benefit to the local community and beyond. In addition to UVI's solid, long-standing track record in the areas of marine science (Marine Science Center), Eastern Caribbean Center, academic programs and other areas, I am very impressed by UVI's establishment of schools and colleges, its Free Tuition Program, Center for Student Success, Research and Technology Park, Research and Strategy Innovation Center, Community Engagement and Lifelong Learning Center, its cooperative agreements with Boston University School of Medicine, Columbia University Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science, and its investment into the establishment of a UVI medical school. Despite these amazing advancements and progress, I am also excited about the opportunity to help UVI make advancements in graduate education, including increasing the current number of PhD programs (from just one), establishing a master's of science in nursing program, enhancing recruitment and enrollment efforts, supporting student success, including the success of student-athletes, supporting faculty development and expertise in evidence-based, innovative teaching/learning strategies, and improving the school's history of poor first time national nursing licensure NCLEX-RN exam pass rates. In short, I love my alma mater, UVI, and would cherish the opportunity to invest my time and talent in helping UVI to advance, excel and thrive in various ways and to benefit all UVI stakeholders and the larger community.

I am well respected by my faculty, staff, fellow deans at Florida Atlantic University, Vice Presidents and its current interim President and previous President John Kelly who publicly said that I have what it takes to be a university President. I have loved serving as Dean of the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing at FAU. I am very proud of what I accomplished while at FAU, University of Alabama and Emory University and I welcome the opportunity to further elevate UVI. Along with my team, I have significantly elevated the local, national and international profile of my college which is tangible through our US News and World Reports Rankings, revised strategic plan, our excellent KPIs, our significant externally funded research portfolio and overall research productivity, our impressive philanthropy and relationships with our donors and the community, and our reputation in the state and nationwide. Below are a few/select accomplishments to highlight.

- **Fundraising/Friend-raising:** As of May 12, 2023, for fiscal year 2023, under my leadership our college

has already raised \$8,441,989 and exceeded our goal of \$7.5 million, which includes a 10 million dollar planned gift to name my deanship the **Holli Rockwell Trubinsky Eminent Dean in Nursing**. Although we are a small college, our fundraising for this fiscal year EXCEEDS that of ALL other colleges at FAU by up to almost 2 million. From January 2022 to March 2023, our college raised \$9,319,508.00 from 370 Donors. Since I joined the college as Dean in July 2019, I have helped the college raise a total of \$18,803,503.00 from 977 donors with the help of my Director of Development. Additionally, my personal lifetime giving to FAU and our college is over \$20,000.

- **Engagement with State and Local Government:** I have also been able to leverage our college's reputation and solid plans to get an additional \$12,291,587 in state funding, including \$5.1 million to support two legislative budget requests that I wrote to expand programs and resources. I was also able to leverage my great relationships with clinical leaders to obtain an additional \$1 million dollars from three healthcare systems and a \$1 million match from the state to support nursing students and faculty. The successes in state funding are also made possible with the help of our legislative team and advocacy from stakeholders.
- **Additional External Funding/Research:** My college continues to thrive in research/scholarship, partly due to my strategic support and focus on enhancing our college's research portfolio by increasing resources and expertise available to support our faculty, staff and students. Our **Percentage of Research Expenditures Funded from External Sources** in 2021-2022 was 86% and our goal was 80%. This is increased from all previous years. In 2020-21 it was 82.0%; In 2019-20, it was 56.0% and previous to my tenure it was 43.0% in 2018-19, and 2017-18 and 34% in 2016-17. Our **Research Expenditures** for 2021-22 is significantly increased and is **\$1.9 million, with external funding totaling over \$5.4 million**. I served as Associate Dean for Research 2020- 2021, **in addition to serving as Dean** until I appointed a permanent Associate Dean for Research and Scholarship in 2021. Since I joined the college, our number of proposals submitted and the number of proposals funded has increased significantly. I am a researcher at heart, therefore, I keenly understand what is needed to be successful in the research enterprise and therefore I would support UVI's research goals. I was trained at Emory University and Duke University – both R1 universities – and I worked for many years at Emory University. I was also a research dean at the University of Alabama when we had a goal to become an R1 institution and I was part of the team that helped to accomplish this.
- **Student and Workforce Development/Key Performance Indicators:** As an academic leader, I am committed to student success and producing graduates that are equipped to meet workforce needs. To this effect, I invest resources in these areas by establishing student scholarships, emergency aid funds, academic support programs, including a formal and informal mentorship program and by creating several positions to support students including three key positions: a Student Success Coordinator, a Director of Assessment, Evaluation and Student Success and a Nursing Workforce Development Coordinator. My college continues to have among the highest Key Performance Indicators in academic progress rate, retention rate, median wages, DFW rate and other metrics. For example, we continue to have among the highest **4-Year FTIC Graduation Rate (FT)** at FAU: in 2021-2022 it was 85.2%; 2020-21 was 86.8%. Our current **Freshman Retention Rate FTIC (FT)** is the highest it has been in over 5 years; **93.5%**; 2021-2022 was 90.5% Our current **Academic Progress Rate (90.9%)** is increased from 2020-21 (88.1%), but down from the previous year at 91.3%. Our **Graduate Degrees Awarded** [first majors only] in 2021-2022 was 168; 156 in 2020-21, and 174 in 2019-20. **The number of Doctoral Degrees Awarded** in 2021-2022 was 44, and in 2020-21 it was 52. Our college awards a significant percentage of **Bachelors Degrees Awarded to Minorities (Black and Hispanic Students)**. It was 56.4% in 2021-2022 and 50.4% in 2020-2. Our college continues to have the highest **Median Wages of Bachelors Graduates Employed Full-Time 1-year After Graduation** at FAU at \$68,816 for the cohort that graduated in 2019-2020; \$64,084 for the cohort that graduated 2018019, \$64,980 for graduates in 2017-18 and \$63,032 for graduates in 2016-17. Our **Percent of Bachelors Employed (\$25,000+) in the U.S. 1 year after Graduation** for our 2019-20 cohort was 78.8%.. Our college performs relatively well in **Percentage of Degrees Awarded Without Excess Hours**, which is at 98.8% in 2021-22 and 99.0% for 2020-21 graduates and 96.3% for 2019-20 graduates. Additionally, I have worked with three high schools on annual health career fairs and with their Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) chapters to foster a pipeline of interest in health careers in general and to support workforce development. As a member of the Board of Directors of the Nursing Consortium of Florida and Chair-Elect of the Florida Association of Colleges of Nursing, I also co-lead discussions, initiatives and presentations on workforce development, including regular meetings with the Florida Hospital Association, the state legislators (i.e. Florida and Alabama).
- **Academic Excellence:**
 - Recently secured state funding to develop a new, Direct Entry MSN Program on the Jupiter campus.
 - Launched a revenue-generating/self-supporting, post-master's certificate in Dermatology that began in January 2021, which is a serious of 3 continuing education courses for Nurse Practitioners. It is/was the only such program in the country and we have partnered with the Dermatology Nurses Association and the National Association of Dermatology Nurse Practitioners and established MOUs with them.

- Collaborating with College of Business to develop executive/concierge, revenue-generating programs, including DNP/MBA and DNP/MHA program.
- **Impressive National Rankings** in U.S. News and World Reports that are among the highest at FAU colleges and Florida universities and across the US. Our College of Nursing remains ranked in the top 10% of US nursing schools/colleges of nursing: FAU is #93 in Nursing for the Best Colleges rankings; Best Graduate School (#54 in 2023 for Master's and #67 in 2023 for our Doctor of Nursing Practice); Best Online Programs – Nursing administration program #11 in 2021 and #17 in 2023; Best Online Master's in Nursing Programs: #31 in 2023 and #7 in 2020.
- **Community Engagement:** I engage regularly with our donors, state representatives, our College of Nursing Advisory Board and with our clinical partners through our *Dialogues with Colleagues* luncheon meetings with Chief Nursing Officers (CNOs), held once per semester. Additionally, I personally engage with the community at large through meetings, presentations at community meetings including the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, etc. and attendance at community events as part of my ongoing commitment to engage with and support the larger community. Additionally, I nurture new strategic partnerships with foundations which resulted in a new gift of \$1 million dollars to support our programs and students on the Davie campus. I also fostered our partnership with Cross Country Healthcare, the nation's second largest healthcare staffing agency/network, which resulted in collaborative webinars, a joint national survey and report, and a donation to establish the Cross Country Nursing Scholarship. Additionally, I am an active community leader and serve on several Board of Directors, including the Nursing Consortium of Florida, Boca Helping Hands, Inc. and I am Chair-Elect of the Florida Association of Colleges of Nursing. Additionally, I lead our college in operating two community clinics, in collaboration with two Directors: our Memory and Wellness Center that includes a memory disorder clinic and an adult day center and our two Community Health Center (CHC) sites. The FAU CHC sites are located in a Medically Underserved Area (MUA) and designated Primary Care, Dental, and Mental Health Healthcare Provider Shortage Areas (HPSAs). Annually, our CHC provides approximately 3,654 primary care visits and 841 behavioral health visits to 1,188 patients. Overall, 46.7% of the population in the clinic's area live below 200% of poverty and 20.6% live below poverty. More than 20% of the population is uninsured, compared to 15% in Florida and the County and majority are underrepresented minorities. Our patients are drawn from this community and reflect these demographics. Our Memory and Wellness Center annually serves/evaluates approximately 1,000 patients in over 2,500 encounters. 9% from Ethnic or Racial Minorities (Hispanic, Black or African American, Asian American, and others), 88% 65-years or older, 48% 80-years or older, 43% Female; 57% Male. Our students also learn from/serve these communities.

I would be delighted to work with all of UVI's academic leaders, including its current Provost Dr. McKay, to achieve UVI's mission, vision, strategic plan and goals. As President, I would help to enhance the national rankings of UVI's academic programs and ensure the highest standards of quality and excellence to maintain accreditation standards and adhere to federal and other guidelines. I would help to strengthen and establish any policies needed to support student success and be fair across colleges and academic programs/units and would do my best to improve efficiencies and outcomes across Academic Affairs. I welcome the opportunity to demonstrate effective shared governance with UVI Board of Trustees, administrators, faculty, staff and students and to collaborate with donors, legislators, partners, stakeholders and the community to develop and implement a robust, innovative, bold, sustainable strategic plan for UVI's next phase of greatness – similar to what I have done before. I would also prioritize inclusive excellence to support: (1) access and success, (2) institutional climate and intergroup relations/collaboration, (3) education and scholarship, (4) institutional infrastructure, and (5) community engagement. Additionally, as a researcher and previous Dean for Research, I would be instrumental in helping UVI to enhance its research efforts, in collaboration with the rest of the leadership team, faculty, staff and students. As President, I would also commit to modeling and fostering **Authentic Leadership and Courageous Caring**, which would entail: (1) encouraging authentic leadership/presence and moral courage; (2) working with leaders, faculty and students at UVI's professional schools such as the School of Business, School of Nursing, School of Education and the College of Science and Math and College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences to expand collaboration with other organizations and cross-sector collaboration to enhance the educational experience and outcomes for students; (3) enhancing leadership development opportunities for faculty and staff; (5) enhancing multi-focused support for and deeper engagement with students; (6) supporting innovation and interdisciplinary research; and (7) leveraging artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, and data-science to develop innovative, evidence-based research and active learning models.

Sincerely,



Safiya George, PhD, APRN-BC, FAAN, FAANP, FNAP
Holli Rockwell Trubinsky Eminent Dean and Professor