

Dear Mr. Funk,

Thank you for your recent letter informing me of my nomination for the position of Chancellor for the State University System of Florida. Before I apply, I really need your honest opinion on whether or not you believe I have a legitimate chance in this process. The way I see it, is if I were selected it would be akin to the “bagboy” who eventually rises to the position of CEO of a major grocery store chain. To help give you a quick overview of who I am, I have highlighted a number of areas (below) including my familiarity with the System, my partisanship, my administrative experience, my work with Boards and my history in the three major areas emphasized by Universities . . . teaching, research and service.

### **Familiarity with the System**

To begin with, I am a product of Florida’s education system as a student, a faculty member, an administrator and as a parent. I have degrees from Florida Junior College in Jacksonville, the University of Florida and Florida State University. I have been actively involved in higher education most of these past twenty-five years. I understand the demands, standards and goals set by the Colleges and Universities in this state and how a quality higher education is necessary in preparing our young people for both their future careers and a lifetime of learning.

Currently I am an Associate Professor of Communication at Florida State University, specializing in mass media law issues and political communications and strategies. I have been a tenured member of the faculty since 1994. I believe that an active member of a University faculty would be most helpful in implementing and coordinating higher education in Florida and in focusing on high-level policy decisions which will ultimately help Florida students succeed in our Colleges and Universities. I feel I can give added insight to comprehensive educational objectives for higher education as well as assisting in the adoption of comprehensive plans and programs for the development of the State University System.

It was my privilege to serve for three years as the Associate Dean of Florida State University College of Law under Sandy D’Alemberte. I staffed the former Board of Regents study (1994) of distance learning in the State of Florida; and for three years, I also served as the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs at Florida State University. My service in these positions has exposed me to every aspect of management, supervision and governance faced by University administrators. Budget, personnel, admissions, appointments, planning, accountability and fundraising are all areas in which I have extensive experience.

All of my children graduated from public high schools and have enjoyed, or are currently enjoying, the benefits of publicly funded higher education. My oldest was a Bright Future Scholar and an honor student at the University of Florida. My middle

child is also a Bright Future Scholar enrolled at the University of Central Florida, and my youngest is currently a Bright Future Scholar and an honor student at Florida State University. I have seen and experienced, first hand, the quality and the various aspects of publically funded education, and I realize the great importance it is to the future of our citizens and our state.

### **Partisanship**

The best way to describe my partisanship (or lack thereof) is that when Democrats have been in charge, I worked for Democrats and when Republicans have had the leadership, I have worked for Republicans. While I have been registered as a Republican my entire adult life, I have served members of both parties, in what I believe to be an unbiased fashion. I have always considered myself a loyal staff person. As further evidence to my impartiality, I was asked to assist the *Miami Herald* in its annual ranking of the Florida Legislature for eight years.

My career began by working for such Democrats as Congressman Charlie Bennett, Florida Secretary of State Bruce Smathers, U. S. Senator Richard Stone, former Florida Governor Claude Kirk (when he was registered as a Democrat), Senate Presidents Dempsey Barron and W. D. Childers and rock-solid Democrat Sandy D'Alemberte. Former Democratic Governor LeRoy Collins recommended me as the replacement for Lawton Chiles as the Executive Director of the Collins Center for Public Policy.

In recent years I have served Republicans as a department head for Governor Bob Martinez, Chief of Staff to House Speaker John Thrasher and as a task force chairman at the request of Governor Jeb Bush.

### **Administrative Experience**

As mentioned above, I have extensive administrative experience. I have run a number of political campaigns (statewide, for both issues and candidates), successfully run my own businesses and served as the managing partner for the Tallahassee branch of the fifth largest law firm in that state.

My service in state government includes serving as the Secretary of the Department of Business Regulation with a budget (including revenues) of over \$1 billion, supervising over a thousand employees in more than fifty locations throughout the state. Communication between and among these offices and employees is not unlike what would be required to effectively communicate between and among the various colleges and universities within the state system. As a former department head, I understand the demands and dynamics of running an agency of state government

which would be most helpful in any deliberations involving the operations and supervision of the State University System.

During the 1999 and 2000 sessions of the Florida Legislature, I served as the first "Professor in Residence" for the Florida House. I was heavily involved in public policy decision making, including the area of education. In my position as the Chief of Staff to the Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives, I was ultimately responsible for hundreds of employees scattered in more than 100 locations around the state with an operating budget of more than \$45 million. The position required shared oversight and authority with my counterpart in the Senate for joint functions with hundreds of employees and a budget in excess of \$85 million. I have strong insights into the workings of both the Executive and the Legislative Branches as well as the budget process.

My university administrative experience includes my position as Associate Dean of the Law School, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Executive Director of two Centers located at Florida State University. During these times I became very familiar with all aspects of University administration for the unit, departmental, college and university wide levels.

### **Work with Boards**

During these past twenty-five years I have had the privilege of serving on, and for, Boards at various levels in both the private and public sectors. The experience as a member, officer and staff person gives me unique insight on the needs and demands volunteer Board members experience.

At various times I served as both the Executive Director and then later as the President of the Florida State University College of Law Alumni Association. For eight years I served as either the Board of Regents, or the Florida State University Board of Trustees' representative on the Direct Support Organization, the Seminole Boosters, and all eight years as a member of the Executive Committee.

In 1989, I was asked to succeed then former U. S. Senator and soon to be Governor, Lawton Chiles, as the Executive Director of the LeRoy Collins Center for Public Policy. It was my honor to serve as the founding Executive Director of the Florida Coalition for Family Safety and the Florida Association of Health Plans with budget, planning, staff and lobbying oversight. Governor Jeb Bush appointed me to the position of Chairman of the Governor's Ex-Offenders Task Force to investigate ways for former prisoners to successfully reenter society and make recommendation for changes to the Governor and the Florida Legislature. I am the immediate past Executive Director of both the Claude Pepper Center and the Claude Pepper Foundation. I currently serve as Secretary to the Claude Pepper Foundation, and I am a member of their Board of Directors.

## Teaching, Research and Service

My teaching career began in 1984, and I have taught more than a dozen different courses at both the graduate and undergraduate level. I have received a number of teaching awards at my College, won the Ross Oglesby Award (voted by the students) at Florida State and received an Excellence in Teaching Award (voted by the faculty) during my time at Florida State University. I teach well over 500 students each academic year in both large lecture classes and in small seminar-type settings. I estimate that I have taught between 7,500 and 10,000 students during my association with Florida State University.

Under the heading of "Research," my contributions would be best labeled "unremarkable." I was hired primarily as a classroom teacher, and my assignment of responsibilities normally reflect such (87% assignment to teaching for my next semester as an example). Any instructor will tell you that good teaching requires continued research but I am virtually unpublished. At the pedestrian level, I do write a regular column for a statewide, political and news website. However, I do understand the great demands research puts on the average faculty member and have contributed to debate and policy decisions regarding all aspects research requirements pose to Departments, Colleges and the University as a whole.

It is with great confidence that I can say that I have touched virtually every area of service at the University, local, state and national level, particularly with my service on various Boards and commissions. I have served on almost every committee at the division, departmental and college level. I have chaired the departmental committees on Curriculum and Academic Affairs, the College committees on Promotion & Tenure and Academic Affairs and served as the college representative on Promotion & Tenure to the university wide committee. I am also currently a member of the Florida State University Athletic Committee.

**I hope you found the above helpful and if you are able, perhaps we could discuss my potential candidacy by phone sometime soon. (850) 877-5492**

Cordially,  
Steve MacNamara