MEMORANDUM

TO: Florida Gulf Coast University Board of Trustees Ad Hoc Committee on FGCU Strategic Plan 2015-2020
FROM: Ad Hoc Committee on FGCU Strategic Plan 2015-2020 Chair Tom Grady
DATE: April 3, 2015

SUBJECT: April 15, 2015 Committee Meeting

Trustees, I look forward to active and engaged discussion at our upcoming meeting on April 15, and as preparation, would ask that you please review the documents listed in the agenda packet, including pages 59 – 61 of the External Scan. Also, be prepared to discuss scope of work; the Vision and Mission Statements from 40,000 feet and also on the ground; and any draft proposed statements if you would like to recommend changes to the current statements.

As I have prepared for the meeting, there are some ideas and thoughts that may be helpful in framing our Committee’s discussion points and direction.

**What does FGCU want to be known for?** (Note: From discussion by FGCU Board at its January 20, 2015 meeting)
What does FGCU want to be known for? What is the “why?” that should be enshrined in the Vision Statement? What does FGCU stand for, and why does it do what it does? The discussion of the faculty/staff groups that reviewed the vision and mission revolved around the anticipated future state of the University, and concluded that, currently, FGCU is known as a comprehensive university. Now is the time to plan for what FGCU wants to be known for regionally/nationally. Should it focus on one to three programs that would create the foundation for a reputation as “the” prominent University in those programs? Should (can) FGCU be known as a comprehensive university and/or a university providing a prominent program? (Note: See UCF ad with its focus on Hospitality Management and 90% graduate employment rate).

**Other Board Committees.**
We should consider the impact of the Board’s other Committees (Special Committee for Review of Academic Degree Programs, and Ad Hoc Committee on Presidential Evaluation) on this Committee’s goals.

**Vision and Mission Statements.**
As we review the vision and mission statements’ history, status, and relationship with the overall strategic plan, we can look at suggestions for focus and improvement, and consider the following borrowed from online sources:
• Developing strong vision and mission statements can help stakeholders in your school reach a common understanding. A vision is FGCU’s goal—where you hope to see it in the future. The mission provides an overview of the steps planned to achieve that future. A vision is concise and easy to recall, whereas a mission is lengthier and more explanatory in nature. Your school may also want to establish targets along the way to measure progress toward its vision. We begin this chapter with developing your school’s vision, because you need to know where you want to be before you can determine how you plan to get there.

• Mission statements are the “how-to” statements or action plans that help schools achieve their vision. They prompt change and growth.

• Without a vision, a school lacks direction (Roman philosopher Seneca: “If a man knows not what harbor he seeks, any wind is the right wind.”). Absent a common, agreed-on destination, everyone is left to his or her own devices to imagine one—a scenario that results in unexplained and unfocused efforts, with everyone believing that what he or she is doing is right. A common understanding of the destination allows all stakeholders to align their improvement efforts.

• An obstacle in creating a powerful vision statement is that they are often created perfunctorily, end up documenting consensus and the lowest common denominator. (Lady Thatcher: “To me consensus seems to be the process of abandoning all beliefs, principles, values and policies in search of something in which no one believes, but to which no one objects - the process of avoiding the very issues that have to be solved, merely because you cannot get agreement on the way ahead. What great cause would have been fought and won under the banner ‘I stand for consensus’?”)

Questions to generate Dialogue.

• What patterns do you see in the statements?
• What do you like or dislike in the statements?
• Are the statements easy to understand?
• Are the statements too vague, or are they specific enough?
• Are they too long? Too short?
• Do the statements express an idea or a hope for the future?
• Are they too unambitious? Too “pie in the sky”?
• If in a vision statement, do they contain adjectives or goals that are more appropriate for a mission statement?

Thank you.

c: Wilson G. Bradshaw, Ph.D., President
Susan Evans, Vice President and Chief of Staff