

David K. Coburn
P. O. Box 3003
Tallahassee, FL 32315

Dear Chairman Sasser and Search Committee Members:

I am writing to apply for the position of President of Florida State University. The University is at a critical juncture, and this position requires someone who needs little or no time to effectively assume these responsibilities. I have been committed to public service and to Florida State University my entire career, and I have had the opportunity positively impact my alma mater during those years. I have a genuine desire to lead this University, and my knowledge and experience provide precisely the background needed to assume this position at this time.

In my view, there are four main roles of a Florida State University president: leading the university on a day to day basis; working with the Board of Trustees shaping the vision for the University; generating government funding; and raising funds from the private sector. With those ideas in mind, my attached resume and the following thoughts support my application:

- I am committed to student success. I succeeded here as an honors undergraduate student and as a graduate student with a great deal of help from some wonderful faculty and staff, and that success was the foundation of my career, my marriage, indeed, the rest of my entire life. I want our current students to have similar opportunities for success.
- Having spent 34 years in that process, serving in a variety of leadership positions in the House of Representatives, the Senate, and the Governor's Office, I have a thorough understanding of how that process works, particularly the budget process. All of that knowledge and experience positions me to advocate immediately and effectively on behalf of the University in this particularly sensitive time.
- I have worked at FSU since 2012 in a variety of leadership positions, mainly as Chief of Staff to Presidents Barron and Thrasher. I have developed effective relationships throughout the university community, and an understanding of the people, the processes and the culture. For a university president to succeed, this is essential.
- During my time as Chief of Staff, I served as the liaison with the University Board of Trustees. This helped me gain a thorough understanding of the members, the processes and the culture of the Board of Trustees. It also helped me appreciate the importance of that relationship.
- Because of my broad knowledge and skill set, President Barron asked me to serve as the interim Vice President for Finance and Administration when John Carnaghi died. I served in that position for over eight months. That experience gave me a deep understanding

of the finances and budget of the University, as well as knowledge of personnel needs and the human resources systems. It also helped me understand the challenges faced by the staff of this institution and the needs they have.

- Since 2012, I have taught one or two courses each year as an adjunct instructor in the Master's Program in the Department of Political Science, and received favorable student evaluations in a highly regarded course. I have also taught in the College of Law. This experience helped me understand many of the demands of teaching at this University, as well as the needs of students. In particular, I understand the difficulties of converting courses to on line teaching in a way that promotes student success.
- As Chief of Staff and as Director of Intercollegiate Athletics, I have had the opportunity to meet and become familiar with a large portion of the University's donor base. I have also raised funds successfully on behalf of both the University and the Athletics Department, which will help me step into the presidency seamlessly.
- As Athletics Director I have managed one of the largest Auxiliaries on campus. I have dealt with serious budget issues, COVID-19, hurricanes, social unrest, and with very, very difficult personnel decisions. I know how to lead and manage in a challenging fiscal environment, and I know how to make tough decisions and I will. I have also learned how to represent this University at the conference and national levels and with many different stakeholders.
- I am committed to diversity and inclusion, and believe that diversity is vital to producing productive and successful graduates of this University. To be successful in these efforts requires commitment from the top, resources, and evaluation of administrators based on clear criteria. It also requires listening to the diverse elements of our student body, our faculty, our alumni and our staff, and acting on their input.
- I understand and value faculty governance, tenure and collective bargaining, with a clear appreciation of the role the faculty of this university have always played in its greatness. I am committed to faculty scholarship, research and creativity as keys to the University's future.
- I understand the relationship between FSU and the Seminole Tribe of Florida. I have dealt with representatives of the Tribe, and have a thorough grasp of the issues involved in that relationship.
- Mary and I have lived here all our adult lives. As a result, I have a thorough understanding of the Tallahassee community. I served on the Chamber of Commerce Board for almost four years. I am on the Board of Capital Health Plan. I have close relationships with the City Manager, the County Administrator, and many of the City and County Commissioners, and will be able to manage local relationships comfortably and seamlessly.
- I know the presidents of Florida A&M University and Tallahassee Community College. I also have working relationships with the Athletics Directors of those institutions. This

will allow me to manage those very critical relationships immediately and knowledgeably.

- My leadership style is very simple. I work very hard and share sacrifices and successes. I solicit and respect the opinions of those with whom I work, listen to their views, and make decisions that move the organization toward its goals.

I am very excited about the opportunity to serve Florida State University as its leader. I have believed this to be a great University since I arrived here as a freshman in 1969. FSU is only now gaining the recognition it has deserved for a long, long time.

I am committed to dealing with the challenges that we all know are coming. I am very confident that with our incredible alumni, students, faculty and staff, we can deal with those challenges and continue to make this an exceptional place for students to live and learn.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "David K. Coburn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David K. Coburn

References

Dr. Eric Barron, President, Pennsylvania State University

Ms. Lillie Bogan, Former Colleague

Mr. Ashton Henderson, Former Colleague

The Honorable Al Lawson, United States Congressman

Dr. Laura Osteen, Assistant Vice President, Tulane University

Mr. David Struhs, Former Student

Dr. Gary VanLandingham, Professor, Florida State University

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Education

Juris Doctor – 1977
Florida State University College of Law

Master of Science in Planning – 1977
Florida State University, Department of Urban and Regional Planning

Duke University School of Law - 1973 – 1974

Bachelor of Science with Honors – 1973
Florida State University
Magna Cum Laude

Professional Experience

Legislative Experience

1977 – 2010 Held various staff positions in the Florida House of Representatives, the Senate and the Governor's Office that included: Chief of Staff of the House of Representatives under Speakers Mills and Wetherell; Chief of Staff of the Senate under President Pruitt; Director of the Governor's Office of Planning and Budgeting under Governor Lawton Chiles; Staff Director of the Appropriations Committees in both the House and the Senate; Staff Director of the Rules Committees in both the House and the Senate; and Legislative Analyst in the House Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Health and Rehabilitative Services.

Higher Education Administrative Experience, Florida State University

2012 – 2018 Served as Chief of Staff to Presidents Barron and Thrasher, Florida State University; also served as Interim Vice President for Finance and Administration in 2013, and as advisor to the Chairman of the Board of Trustees and the Chair of the Presidential Search Committee during 2014; served as primary liaison to the Board of Trustees and staff to the Board Committee on Governance; provided operational management and administrative direction to support the Presidents, including planning and staffing responsibilities, allocation of resources, oversight of work of the employees within the office, and anticipation of and response to specific issues at the direction of the Presidents; also served on or chaired various

search committees at the university, including the searches for the Inspector General, the Dean of the College of Social Sciences, and the President of Seminole Boosters.

Teaching Experience, Florida State University

2011 – 2020 Taught as adjunct instructor at Florida State University in the Master’s Program in Political Science as well as in the College of Law; with Richard Herring, have taught one or two courses each year on the Florida Legislative Process and the Florida Appropriations Process; in addition, in the late 1970’s taught courses on Land Use Law and Environmental Law and Policy with Dr. Richard Klosterman in the Master’s Program in Urban and Regional Planning.

Athletics Administrative Experience

2018 – Present Served as Interim and now as full time Director of Intercollegiate Athletics at Florida State University; lead and direct all activities and programs of the Department of Athletics; also manage a budget of approximately \$100 million, fund raise, and build relationships with university alumni and supporters; sit on the President’s Cabinet, and represent the university in the Atlantic Coast Conference and the National Collegiate Athletics Association.

Consulting Experience

2010 – 2019 Provided consulting services on budget and taxation issues to various associations, lobbyists, and corporations; served as point for President Barron in the acquisition of the Donald L. Tucker Civic Center by FSU.

Academic Honors

University Fellow, Florida State University	1974-75
Fellowship, Duke University School of Law	1973-74
Phi Beta Kappa	1973

University Honors

Westcott Medal	2009
Circle of Gold	2010
College of Social Sciences and Public Policy Distinguished Alumni Award	1992

Community Service

Capital Health Plan - Board Member, Treasurer
Dick Howser Center for Cerebral Palsy - Former Board Member
Florida State University College of Law Alumni Association - Former Member, Board of Directors
Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce – Former Board Member

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

I believe in the dignity and worth of every human being. I have tried to live my life in accordance with that belief, and in my view, any effective, values-based institution must reflect that belief.

Universities are places where students, faculty and staff are exposed not only to new and different ideas, but also to people new and different from themselves. In order to prepare our students to thrive, lead and succeed in this rapidly changing world they must interact with and learn from a diverse community of students, faculty, and staff.

Ultimately, responsible leadership in a university creates an equitable environment in which all students, faculty, and staff can succeed; helping them improve both the institution and society at large. I have had the opportunity, both in the legislature and in athletics, to recognize and identify gaps in our practices of hiring for a diverse community. I have tried to close these gaps with recruiting, mentoring and retention.

To improve the diversity of our community, aggressive recruiting is required. This involves commitment from the top, setting goals, creating metrics, providing intentional search committee training, and holding supervisors accountable. It also requires resources, and a commitment from leadership to provide those resources.

I believe that developing, mentoring and training a diverse student, faculty and staff community will not only ensure the realization of our university mission, it will sustain and support our future as an equitable, inclusive university where everyone succeeds. Being known for this will attract students, faculty and staff committed to an educational environment grounded in the dignity and worth of every human being and the university we all envision.

My brief time in athletics has taught me many lessons. One of the most valuable is how much leaders must care about diversity and inclusion. A wise man once said, "The opposite of love is not hate, it is indifference." I believe that if you care, you try. It is my personal, ethical, and moral responsibility to try every day.