

FAMU President Application for Florida A&M University - President

Gerald L. Hector



Central FL

CURRENT POSITION

University of Central Florida

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Supplemental Questions

Your current title and institution

Senior Vice President for Administration and Finance

What is your preferred email address and cell phone number?



In a few sentences, share why this opportunity is of particular interest to you.

This opportunity interests me because given my experiences, skills, and passion for higher education, I know I can lead an institution to realize its goals and objectives in a fiscally responsible manner. That leadership will create a culture of excellence that drives programmatic excellence in teaching, research, and public service, exceptional student learning outcomes, and impactful community and alumni engagement. FAMU is one of the nation's premier institutions of higher education with a storied history of producing world leaders. Observing the institution from within the SUS, I know that I can provide the leadership that can eventually get the university to preeminent status. All the ingredients are within the university, it needs a leader to bring it all together. That is what I know I can do for FAMU. I like a challenge and have been known to turnaround universities and colleges such that they have a firm foundation on which to build and maintain their legacies for many years to come.

Are you presently employed? If not, please explain briefly.

Yes.

To whom do you currently report?

Dr. Alexander Cartwright, President, University of Central Florida

If you hold an academic position, indicate your current rank

Not Applicable

Are you tenured?

Not Applicable

What are your salary expectations for this position?

\$450,000 to \$500,000

What is your current salary?

458350

Briefly describe the circumstances regarding your past three changes of employment?

Morehouse to UCF was an opportunity to work at the second largest university in the nation. It is my first public institution, and I endeavored to bring best practices across the higher education industry to help transform the financial and operational aspects of the university. I was recruited for not only my skills, but integrity, honesty, and accomplishments. They were core tenets coming off a public relations matter around the incorrect use of funds to renovate a building. Cornell University to Morehouse College was a move back to the southern United States and a mutual agreement on how to make that happen. Ithaca College to Cornell University was a Vice President position being created for me to assist Cornell with some of the transformative work they observed from me while at Ithaca College. Ithaca College is on South Hill, and Cornell University is on East Hill in Ithaca, so the teams at Cornell had insights into where Ithaca College was before my arrival, and where it was at the time they asked me to join them as a new Vice President.

Are you legally authorized to work in the United States?

Yes

Will you now (or in the future) require sponsorship for employment visa status, e.e., H-1B visa?

No

How did you become aware of this opportunity?

My president Dr. Alexander Cartwright.

Leadership, Vision, and Approach

Can you describe your vision for leading a higher education institution in the modern era, and how would you adapt your leadership style to meet the evolving needs of students, faculty, and the broader academic community?

My vision for leading in higher education is rooted in a "Culture of Excellence." That excellence will manifest itself in a strong commitment to shared governance with faculty and the academy, purposeful dialogue with students to ascertain their needs, and opening and closing feedback loops with staff. These groups are the engine that drive the university's teaching, research, public service, and learning outcomes. In our current dispensation in time, I believe in educating the campus on all facets of the operations of the university so that data driven decisions can be made in an extended planning time horizon for predictability of outcomes. This is critical because higher education today must become more efficient in operations while not sacrificing quality of instruction and research, nor the rigor of the curriculum that will lead to superior student learning outcomes for our students. My focus will be heavily focused on diversifying revenue streams to fund the current state, and expansion of the university. Philanthropic activities will become more pronounced. A utopian goal of mine is that no single revenue source exceeds 25% of the total. Such a metric, especially for a public institution, will provide the flexibility to be entrepreneurial in our thinking and execution of strategic priorities. Partnering with companies, foundations, and other business interests will be top of mind to drive innovation and research impact globally. My vision is a holistic one that takes into account the stark realities of the funding challenges that the higher education industry faces. I believe that a campus that is committed and empowered with information, will create the vision carriers necessary to inspire innovation and creativity that creates the spin effect that eventually leads to the "Culture of Excellence" I envision at all times. Finally, I manage by walkabout, when possible, because as a leader I am interested in all that takes place on campus.

Strategic Planning and Innovation

How would you approach strategic planning to ensure the university remains competitive and innovative in offering education that meets the future needs of the workforce and society?

My approach to strategic planning is undergirded by sensitivities to the needs of our faculty in their teaching and research, and students in their learning outcomes. Viewing these sensitivities through the lens of what job markets are demanding of higher education in terms of new knowledge for our world through research, job and career pathways that allow graduates to be gainfully employed, and technology that allows for business to be conducted more efficiently to redirect funds to the academic core, all provide the foundation for a robust strategic plan. I will ask the campus to focus on the balance that is needed between tradition and innovation for the future. There are times where institutions continue with programs and other traditions that they can no longer afford. At a minimum, they do not fit with where the higher education industry is currently going. As a leader who is thinking strategically, the onus is on me to seek out new funding sources and partnerships using the innovation and ideas from the faculty and researchers to make the case for funding. I must keep them close as their big ideas

drive big funding opportunities. A part of my strategic thought is to make the business of the university more efficient to save funds to redirect. That will require automation of manual processes and the "upskilling" of team members where necessary to do more with less resources given technological advances. For me, strategic planning will focus on both the programmatic and administrative costs holistically to ensure that current funding is allocated appropriately to meet the mission of the university, that in turn creates opportunities to fill gaps that will further expand the reach into new frontiers for faculty, students, and staff.

Academic Excellence and Program Development

How would you ensure the maintenance and enhancement of academic excellence within the university, and what strategies would you implement to develop or expand academic programs in response to emerging trends and opportunities?

The university's survival depends on its ability to attract students to enroll and matriculate. In order to attract students of the highest caliber, the academic offerings must be first class. However, maintaining academic excellence is not only germane to the teaching that happens in the classrooms. As president, working with the provost, deans, faculty, and students, I would like to have a robust view of all variables in the academy. That information will include, (i) course offerings, (ii) marginal costs and revenues for offering those courses, (iii) faculty teaching load as it pertains to release time for them to meet their research obligations, (iv) advising methodology to assist students in their matriculation to meet graduation rate requirements, (v) the condition of labs for research, and classrooms for instruction, (vi) funding agencies success rates for federal, state, and local, and (vii) professional development for faculty to remain cutting edge in their respective fields of study. After assessing all the information on hand to evaluate the overall teaching and learning environments, the needs of the academy will be folded into a rolling five-year strategic planning process for the university. This is a necessary step to ensure that they are known at the time budgets are being built over a five-year planning horizon. Having this information in the discussion about resources will lead to a better understanding of where there are funding gaps for the academy in either the physical plant, or programmatic needs. We will engage companies in the market to have them inform us of what they are looking for in our graduates, and whether or not they are meeting their expectations. That is always a hard step to take because of tradition, but we have to be courageous to invite assessment and criticism to get better. That assessment must challenge us to take a look at our program offerings, and where possible make adjustments to keep programs competitive.

Fundraising and Financial Acumen

Describe your experience with fundraising and obtaining funds for an institution. How have you successfully engaged alumni, donors, and external partners to secure financial support, and what strategies would you employ to enhance the university's financial health and sustainability?

My experience with fundraising has been varied and ever increasing from my time at the United Negro College Fund, Inc. onwards where I was given the responsibility by President William H. Gray, III of building the financial framework for the \$1 billion Gates Millennium Scholars Program and being a part of the team that transfers over \$800 million to fund the program in its second year. At Johnson C. Smith University, working alongside Dr. Dorothy Cowser Yancy, using a combination of philanthropy and efficient operations we created a \$10 million unrestricted cash reserve fund in four years. At Cornell University, I had to provide data and strategies on how to receive multimillion gifts that included a \$50 million gift to name the Chemical Engineering building that was received in stock. At Morehouse College we had transformational gifts from Reed Hastings, McKenzie Scott, Oprah Winfrey, Robert Smith, and other benefactors. In each instance, I was a part of those conversations alongside the president. Engagements with alumni were done via townhalls and joint calls where the president and I made fundraising appeals. I led several initiatives to engage external partners on transformational gifts and partnerships while at Morehouse College, the pandemic thwarted several of these opportunities, however, Dr. David Thomas continued on this fundraising strategy and has raised more funds than all his predecessors combined. I will employ the same tactics utilized in my prior roles to bring the same level of resources to FAMU. The main strategy will revolve around: (i) What is the Big Idea? based on the programs in the academy and student life that are germane to what society needs today, (ii) Using data and other information to cultivate donors to leave legacy gifts funding the Big Idea that have tangible outcomes that will extend their contributions, and (iii) create partnership opportunities in research for companies to share in the cost of educating our students.

Community and External Relationships

How have you previously worked with external community stakeholders, including local government, businesses, and nonprofit organizations, to enhance the reputation and contribution of a higher education institution within its local community and beyond?

I have been involved in "town and gown" relationships at all my previous institutions. My involvement augmented the reputation and relationships with the community surrounding those institutions. At Johnson C. Smith University, I served on the Northwest Corridor Community Board. That organization oversaw how the community would develop parcels of land around the university. At Ithaca College I was involved with an initiative that sought to have the university be a partner in tax free zones being promoted by the Governor at the time. That was in addition to being the liaison with the local city of Ithaca and Cornell University to establish a business incubator. That was the first such partnership with all three entities, and the first business incubator in the city. At Morehouse College I was the college's lead on trying to revitalize properties that it owned within the residential neighborhood of the West End where the university sat. At the University of Central Florida I serve on the board of the Winter Park Institute that hosts intellectual speaker series that continue to challenge the citizens about the importance of engagement and the power of community. I have also made presentations for the university to the House and Senate of the Florida legislature about concerns

affecting the university's finances, and by extension the university community in Orlando. Wherever I go off campus, the university comes with me. Given my senior level role at my current and former institutions, I am often invited to serve on boards. I currently serve on the Board of Visit Orlando which oversees the branding and reach of the hospitality industry in Orlando. I enjoy serving in these various roles because they give me an opportunity to not only expose my institutions to new audiences, but in turn I also get a chance to recruit both students and new donors.