GILBERT L. EVANS, JR., J.D., Ph.D.

June 1, 2025

North Florida State College 325 N.W. Turner Davis Drive Madison, Florida 32340

Dear Board of Trustees:

Please accept this letter of application for the position of President of North Florida State College. This letter and resume reflect how my 23 years of experience as Vice President for Student Affairs/Assistant General Counsel, Vice President of Legal Affairs/General Counsel in the College setting, Chief Legal Officer for Volusia County School Board, my college teaching and other college workforce administrative experiences, and my educational background, including a Doctor of Philosophy and Juris Doctorate from the University of Florida, qualify me for this position. Throughout my career, I have been a genuine, compassionate, ethical, and transparent servant leader, who accomplishes goals through diplomacy and building collaborative relationships, with the ultimate intention of equipping the students at North Florida State College with the intellectual, social, and cultural resources to be innovators and change agents for our region, nation, and world.

My degrees in English and Higher Education Administration have served me well as I communicate effectively and inspire confidence and trust with various internal and external constituencies about Volusia County School Board and St. Johns River State College's mission, accomplishments, challenges, and initiatives, constantly promoting the college. I am an administrator who exhibits excellent oral and written communication skills and enjoys positive interactions with individuals both inside and outside the college. St. Johns River State College has an operational budget of \$42 million and serves 10,000 students from very diverse area, one of both wealth and hardship. The Volusia County School Board has a budget of 1.2 billion and serves 62,000 students. I have developed the ability to move effectively and relate to students, faculty, staff, and various other constituencies and business groups in this diverse region with ease. As President of North Florida State College, I will transfer these essential skills as I advocate for the University and earn the respect of the faculty, staff, administration, and Board of Trustees. Moreover, my professional experiences have equipped me with the acumen to position North Florida State College effectively and positively with political, business, and civic leaders.

My transparent, collaborative, and servant leadership style promotes organizational commitment and participation. As an attorney, mediator, English professor, and administrator, I have worked

with executives, faculty, staff, and students in civic, professional, and educational organizations. Because I strongly believe in empowering others and encouraging open discussion, I use the talents and skills of other administrators, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders in a collaborative decision-making process in order to promote excellence in pursuit of the University's mission. Under my **strategic leadership**, the Division of Student Affairs worked extensively and collaboratively with other divisions of the College and the community to develop **policies and planning**, excellent student and academic support services, scholarships, and online education opportunities for all students, especially disabled and minority students, in order to achieve the mission of the College which is to promote excellence in teaching and learning to enrich the lives of students and strengthen the community. I have demonstrated success in building teams, assembling strong leadership teams from all walks of life, and mentoring my leadership team members, some of whom subsequently have attained senior level college administrative positions at St. Johns River State College and other colleges and universities across the nation.

My transparent and collaborative leadership skills were exhibited in the College's work not only with implementation of Florida Senate Bill 1720, which authorized the College to offer Bachelor degrees in Organizational Management, Early Childhood Education, and Nursing, which also included the College's successful level change with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, but also with the implementation of St. Johns River State College's Student Success Campaign, which strives to increase first-time in college student persistence by 10% over a five year period, in order to meet the College's graduation goals, which ultimately bolstered student enrollment, retention, participation, and completion. As President of North Florida State College, this same collaborative leadership style and **strategic leadership** will be utilized at North Florida State College to build upon the College's enrollment, retention, completion, growth, and organizational strength.

Having served as Vice President of Student Affairs/Assistant General Counsel and Vice President for Legal Affairs/General Counsel for the entire college district, which includes three campuses, I am visible and accessible to the entire College and the community. I make a point of visiting all campuses weekly, walking and talking with students, faculty, and staff, getting a feeling for how things are operating throughout the college district, in order to foster energetic, creative, and inspiring passion for the College. I held periodic meetings with small groups of faculty, staff, and students to hear their concerns. As Chief Legal Officer for Volusia County School Board, I collaborate weekly with teachers, board members, executive directors, cabinet members, and district administrators. Moreover, I enjoy developing meaningful relationships with the community. In the community, I have served on several boards, such as chairman of the Palatka Housing Authority and the Board of Directors for Putnam Community Hospital. Working constantly to promote the student and academic support services of the College, I have a track record of reaching out and working with various and diverse stakeholders in the service district. As President for North Florida State College, I will be committed, visible, and accessible to the entire College family and the communities it serves.

I have always been sensitive to and practiced respect for all employees, students, and community members. As I mentioned earlier, St. Johns River State College serves a very diverse area, one of rapid growth and of both extreme wealth and deep poverty. For over two decades, I have been privileged to work in higher education which has afforded me the opportunity to build a portfolio

of working with all types of students. I have assisted in the implementation of several academic programs, and student/staff workshops to help recruit, retain, and understand all individuals, so that all can be successful and understood. Moreover, As President of North Florida State College, I will bring my strong commitment to not only retention and recruitment, but also respect for students, faculty, and staff, and community members, which has been a hallmark throughout my career.

Having served successfully as a senior level college administrator for the past 23 years and served on the St. Johns River State College President's Executive Senior Leadership Team and currently serving on the Executive Cabinet for Volusia County School Board, I completely understand budget and financial oversight. I have a clear understanding of the educational funding system in an era of accountability. I understand how funding is tied to retention and completion. These Leadership Teams develop the operational budgets and works closely with the CEO's, state legislators, local education leaders, and the boards of trustees. I am sensitive to the critical importance of revenue streams and how funds are expended. Moreover, I understand the balance that exists between the need to reward employees while controlling increasing cost and expanding enrollment. The decisions behind the budget need to support the priorities of the institution with a focus on those things that promote student academic success, foster professional development, and enhance community relationships. In an era of declining appropriations and funding, the President must use the College's foundation to create strong public and private partnerships, strengthen alumni relations, pursue federal and state grant opportunities, in order to meet the financial needs of the College and students, which will promote outreach, increase enrollment, retention, and completion, and grow academic programs. As the next President, I will seek the necessary resources to accelerate the start and completion of construction projects, develop more academic programs, and create additional scholarships for student, all of which are crucial to the future growth of North Florida State College.

At St. Johns River State College, I have supported the College in fundraising initiatives which have yielded hundreds of thousands of dollars for scholarships and academic/student support services. My commitment to fundraising at St. Johns River State College include more than solicitation of donations from other individuals and organizations. I personally take pride in being a contributor to great causes. Believing in education and possessing a passion for student and institutional success, I give annually to the St. Johns River State College Foundation. As a college President, this type of philanthropy is necessary to attract and raise more funds for the North Florida State College Foundation.

As President of North Florida State College, I will be committed to **fundraising and grant** exploration. I will work to build productive relationships and partnerships with alumni, business and industry and other community agencies just as I have help build relationships as a Vice President at St. Johns River State College. The College has strong partnerships with the hospitals, healthcare providers, and law enforcement agencies in the area. The College has several Workforce programs, such as associate degrees in nursing, Criminal Justice, and Radiologic Technology in order to meet the demands of the community. Because of positive engagement with alumni, business and industry and community stakeholders, St. Johns River State College though its Foundation, just completed an \$18 million-dollar, state-of-the-art student housing complex. This new 175 bed facility will provide much needed housing for our

D1 athletic program for which I was responsible and arts student. The president and I, along with our community partner, worked indefatigably to bring this project to fruition for the benefit of our students and the economic development of our service area. It is our desire that this project serve as the model for student housing in Florida. Moreover, a \$250,000.00 gift was donated to the Foundation by a "friend" of the College. This donation caused us to rename the Library Building in his honor. Fundraising at this level can only be done through strong community relations and alumni engagement. In order for any collegey to be successful in securing resources, there must be a strong alumni association, naming campaigns, annual giving campaigns, and positive publicity and advertisement drives showcasing the academic success of the students and programs offered at the institution. As President of North Florida State College, I will bring my expertise and commitment to partnership developing and resources for the success of the institution.

Because of my extensive administrative and legal experiences in public higher education, I understand, appreciate and have worked to cultivate the critically important relationship between public higher education and elected state and local stakeholders. I am extremely familiar with the Higher Education system, for I have been a part of this system for over 23 years. As President, I will proactively engage the political process of the service region and state, for I know and have worked with several members of the Florida legislature. I will foster a strong sense of community for North Florida State College, so it will be a premier educational leader, providing high-quality, accessible, and affordable education, training, and services. I will invest my time, energy, and intellectual resources to ensure that North Florida State College is highly viable College, and students will select North Florida State College as their "first choice" institution.

I have worked directly with the board of trustees and President at St. Johns River State College and Volusia County School Board and have served on many boards. I understand and am committed to an effective relationship with the entire College and Board of Trustees. I presented to St. Johns River State College's President and board of trustees and Volusia County School Board monthly and to other boards on which I serve. I have a record of functioning effectively and promoting a continuing positive relationship with Boards of Trustees. This positive relationship will be transferred to North Florida State College.

To promote excellence in teaching, learning, and research at the University, I will support professional development for all employees. I believe that the faculty and staff are the heartbeat of both the student body and the College. One of my most important duties as Vice President at SJR State was supervision and oversight, including the tenure and promotion processes, of all teaching faculty within the Division of Student Affairs. At St. Johns River State College, I have always encouraged faculty to participate in professional development activities in order to support their growth as faculty and improve their overall teaching ability, which leads to student success. I was an English and Social Science Professor at the College level and understand the significant of professional development and student completion and success. As a President, teaching, learning, and research, along with student success will remain my top priority.

Finally, with respect to the opportunities, challenges, and characteristics the search committee

has provided, I believe that I possess the necessary qualities and talents that will build on the already abundant successes of North Florida State College, as well as forge a new path of educational excellence, fundraising, and community partnerships. Also, I have an abiding conviction that I am uniquely suited for the position of President of North Florida State College, owing my 23 years of experience, including administration and teaching in academic and workforce education programs in the Florida college system, K-12 legal affairs, supervision of faculty, my deep understanding of higher education, and my impeccable academic credentials. It would be my honor and privilege to serve as the next President for North Florida State College. I ask that the search committee and the Board of Trustees please consider me for the position of President at North Florida State College, so that we can continue to be "an exceptional college dedicated to an individualized and supportive academic atmosphere, accessible education, lifelong learning opportunities, and professional growth for our students and communities."

Sincerely yours,

/s/

Gilbert L. Evans, Jr., J.D., Ph.D.

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SUMMARY OF CAREER OBJECTIVE

As a Senior Administrator with over 23 years of experience in higher education, **I seek to serve as the next President of North Florida State College**. As the Chief Executive Officer, I shall work in harmony with the Board of Trustees to execute the University's strategic plan, mission, and values, while serving as a visionary leader who advocates for preserving historically black colleges and university and sustaining access to quality educational opportunities for students.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE

2024- Present	Chief Legal Officer/General Counsel for Volusia County School District & School Board Attorney Volusia County School District, Deland, Florida
2020 – 2024	Vice President for Legal Affairs/General Counsel St. Johns River State College, Palatka, Florida
2003 – 2020	Vice President for Student Affairs/Assistant General Counsel St. Johns River State College, Palatka, Florida
1996 – 1999	Workforce Development Administrator St. Johns River State College, Palatka, Florida

EDUCATION

University of Florida College of Law | Gainesville, Florida Juris Doctorate (J.D.), December 2001

University of Florida | Gainesville, Florida

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), Higher Education Administration, 1996

Florida State University | Tallahassee, Florida Master of Science (M.S.), Educational Leadership, Minor: English Literature, 1993

Florida State University | Tallahassee, Florida Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), English and Education, 1991

St. Johns River State College | Palatka, Florida Associate in Arts (A.A.), 1989

- 2017 American Council on Education "Advancing to the Presidency Leadership Program"
- **2010** Florida College Chancellor's Leadership Program (Florida College System)

EXECUTIVE AND MANAGERIAL EXPEREINCE

Chief Legal Officer/General Counsel Volusia County School District & School Board Attorney, 2024-Present, Volusia County School District, Deland FL

The Volusia County School District is the 14th largest school district in Florida. There are 67 traditional schools in the district, and it serves 61,000 students. The number of employees is 8,200, and the annual budget is 1.2 billion.

Chief Legal Officer/General Counsel & School Board Attorney: As General Counsel and Board Attorney, overseer and manage all legal affairs that relate to the school district and school board.

Responsibilities:

- Supervise all legal staff at the College.
- Serve as school board attorney and handles all legals pertaining to the board.
- Assist with negotiations related to Volusia County Instructional and Non-Instructional Bargaining Units.
- Review, draft, and negotiate all district and board contracts and leases.
- Responsible for the negotiation and drafting of the Superintendent's contract.
- Review, research, interpret and prepare written and oral opinions on legal issues affecting the district and board.
- Select and retain outside counsel to assist in handling ligation.
- Responsible for all workers compensation claims.
- Draft, update, review all board policies and procedures.

Vice President for Legal Affairs & General Counsel, 2020-2024, St. Johns River State College, Palatka, FL

St. Johns River State College (formerly known as St. Johns River Community College): A Florida comprehensive community college with three campuses, serving 455,000 residents in Clay, St. Johns, and Putnam counties; unduplicated headcount of 10,000 students 67% part-time and 33% full-time; total budget of \$44 million; 125 full-time faculty and 180 adjunct faculty,186 additional employees.

Vice President of Legal Affairs & General Counsel: As Chief Legal Officer, oversee and manage all legal services to the institution to ensure maximum protection of its legal rights and maintain its operations within the limits prescribed by law.

Responsibilities:

- Supervise all legal staff at the College.
- Anticipate and identify legal issues and counsel officers of the institution and upper management in order to develop legal strategies and solution.
- Provide legal counsel and guidance to officers of the institution and upper management on a variety of legal and policy matters relevant to the College that relate to students, faculty, and staff.
- Review, research, interpret and prepare written and oral opinions on legal issues affecting the college.
- Select and retain outside counsel to assist in handling ligation.
- Review and contracts, leases, and other legal documents and recommend revisions as necessary. Draft contracts and other legal documents where appropriate.

Selected Accomplishments:

- Developed and assisted with the contract negotiations and serves as one of the two leads for St. Johns River State College \$16 Million New Student Housing Project.
- Served as the Chair & Lead Negotiator for the St. Johns River State Collective Bargaining Agreement.
- Developed and assisted with updating of all St. Johns River State Board Rules and Governing Policies.

Vice President for Student Affairs & Assistant General Counsel, 2003-2021

Vice President of Student Affairs/Assistant General Counsel: As Chief Student Affairs Officer, responsible for all Student Services Fund 1 and Fund 2 budgets; supervises nine (9) deans/directors and all student affairs support staff. Supervise all teaching faculty with the Division of Student Affairs.

Responsibilities:

- Supervise and responsible for providing leadership, program review, revision, and development to the following departments: Career Services, Athletics, Counseling/Advising, Student Services, Admissions, Records, Testing, Academic Success, Financial Aid, Student Government, and Student Activities, SJR State Cares, and Student Orientation.
- Supervise all teaching faculty within the Division of Student Affairs.
- Assist the Board of Trustees, College President, and General Counsel with St. Johns River State College's legal matters, including, but not limited to, employment issues, student rights, sexual harassment/discrimination claims, student academic/disciplinary appeals, and Workforce/Nursing admissions decisions.
- Serve on Executive Cabinet/IPC, which works collaboratively with the College President in order to create and implement all college goals and initiatives. This Cabinet ensures the college's compliance with all state and federal college regulations and the Southern Association of College and Schools, the regional accrediting body. The Cabinet is also

- responsible for policy development.
- Serve of St. Johns River State College's Special Budget Committee, which works closely and collaboratively with the College President and Board of Trustees to provide leadership with regards to college-wide resources and budget management, strategic planning, and professional development.

Selected Accomplishments:

- Implemented on-line registration for all credit students at St. Johns River State College.
- Implemented an early alert system, which identifies students who are academically at-risk. These students are offered academic support services to ensure academic success.
- Created SJR State Testing Department, which serves the entire college district.
- Designed a comprehensive student support and tutoring program for all college athletes, to increase academic success and retention of all college athletes.
- Designed Student Success/Academic Support Centers on all campuses.
- Developed a "Men of Standard" Program at to recruit, retain, and graduate African American and other minority male populations.
- Selected by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to serve on Accreditation Onsite Review and Reaffirmation Committees.
- Implemented SJR State Cares. The student assistance program that assists and monitor atrisk students and students of concerns.
- Implemented "Boys Can, too." An annual recruitment event for special populations. This event is for all high school males in the college district.
- Implemented "Coffee and Conversation." A Quarterly collaboration between Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, and Workforce Development, regarding academic and student support services.
- Provided leadership in the promotion and reclassification of management and staff positions within the Division of Student Affairs.
- Provided leadership in developing student affairs priorities and strategic plan.
- Planned and presiding over all St. Johns River State College Graduations for 18 years.

Workforce Development Administrator, Director of Occupational Support Services, St. Johns River State College, Palatka, Florida, 1996-1999.

Responsibilities:

Supervises teaching faculty within the Division of Workforce Development. Responsible for curriculum development. Responsible for the following areas: Apprenticeship Education, Special Population Programs, and Post-Secondary Vocational Education (PSAV).

Selected Accomplishments:

- Provided leadership in the development of the Automotive Technology Program.
- Provided leadership in the development of the HVAC Program.
- Implemented Minority Student Population Initiatives to increase minority student enrollment.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Attorney, Lowndes, Drosdick, Doster, Kantor & Reed, Orlando, Florida, 2001-2003. Practiced in Bankruptcy Litigation, Real Estate, Family Law, and the Wills & Trust Divisions.

Professor of English and Social Science, St. Johns River State College, Palatka, Florida, 1993-1996. Taught Composition I, Composition II, Developmental English, & College Success/Study Skills.

STATE LICENSURES AND CERTIFICATIONS

Member, Florida Bar

Bar Number: 0591815

Middle District Court of Appeals (Federal Court)

Florida Supreme Court Certified Family Law Mediator

Florida Mediator Number: 40454F

SELECTED EDUCATIONAL HONORS AND ACTIVITIES

- MPLE Scholar at University of Florida College of Law
- Outstanding Educational Services Award
- Nominated for Dissertation of the Year by the University of Florida
- Outstanding Achievement Award, University of Florida
- Recipient of Graduate Minority Fellow Award, University of Florida
- St. Johns River State College Student Hall of Fame
- Putnam County Cultural Arts Leadership Award
- Teacher of the Year Award for Gadsden County Florida Middle College Centre
- Putnam County Hall of Fame Award for Outstanding Leadership in Education
- Recipient of Florida State Colleges Chancellor Leadership Award

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS MEMBERSHIPS

- Florida Bar
- United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit (Federal)
- Middle District Court of the State of Florida (Federal)
- Putnam County Bar Association
- American Bar Association
- Rotary International
- Kiwanis International (Former)
- Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.
- Association of Florida Colleges

SELECTED LEADERSHIP ROLES

- Chairman/Appointed Executive Board Commissioner, Palatka Housing Authority
- Executive Board Member, Florida Institute of Education
- Board Member, School-To-Work Consortium of SJR State College
- Executive Board Member, Florida Developmental Education Association
- Board Member, Communities in Schools of Putnam County, Florida
- Executive Board Member, United Way of Putnam County
- Executive Board Member, SunBiz Early Learning Coalition of Putnam County
- Executive Board Member, Putnam Community Hospital
- Executive Board Member, Putnam County Preservation Board
- Executive Board Member, Florida Council of Student Affairs
- General Counsel, House of God Churches (Nationwide)
- Member, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC) Peer Evaluator
- Executive Board Member, United way of St. Johns County
- Executive Board Member, Community Partnership for Children

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

- Evans, Jr., Gilbert L., (2022). "A Legal, Inadept Analysis of Florida House Bill 233 and its Effect on Teaching and Student Life," Presentation to All faculty and staff in the College District.
- Evans, Jr., Gilbert L., (2021). "Public Records Law in Florida," Presentation to Florida Chief Financial Officers.
- Evans, Jr., Gilbert L., (2019). "The Student Code of Conduct at Florida State Colleges," Professional Development Day at SJR State College.
- Evans, Jr., Gilbert (2018). "Legal Issues in Higher Education," panel members, Florida Council of Student Affairs State Conference.
- Evans, Jr., Gilbert L., (2017). "Bridging the GAP between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs"
 Round Table Discussion with Student Affairs and Academic Affairs Leaders.
- Evans, Jr., Gilbert L., (2017). "Effective Leadership in the 21st Century," Keynote Speaker at Florida Conference for Church Administrators.
- Evans, Jr., Gilbert L., (2013). "The Law: Random Drug Testing Among High School Students,"
 Putnam County Florida Teachers, Administrators, and Parents Meeting.
- Evans, Jr., Gilbert L., (2013). "The Law: Random Drug Testing Among High School Students,"
 Putnam County Florida Teachers, Administrators, and Parents Meeting.
- Evans, Jr., Gilbert, (2010). "Effective Leadership," Keynote Speaker at National Leadership Conference, 2010.

- Evans, Jr., Gilbert (2010). "St. Johns River State College & College Readiness," Crescent City Rotary Club Annual Meeting, 2010.
- Evans, Jr., Gilbert L., (2009). "Never Give Up . . . Strive for Greatness," Putnam County 9th Grade Students Assembly, 2009.
- Evans, Jr., Gilbert L., (2009). "The Importance of a Good Education," Keynote Speaker at Putnam County College Bound Student Workshop.
- Evans, Jr., Gilbert, L., (1998). "What Do Community College Presidents Want?" Florida Association of Community Colleges Conference, 1998.
- Evans, Jr., Gilbert L., (1997). "Teaching Developmental English," Florida Developmental Education Association State Conference.
- Evans, Jr., Gilbert L., (1997). "Job Satisfaction and Organizational Climate as Reported by Community College Presidents," Florida Association of Community Colleges.

RECENT CAPITAL PROJECTS

St. Johns River State College | St. Augustine, Florida

Renovation of St. Augustine Campus Student Center \$2,500.00

St. Johns River State College | Orange Park, Florida

Renovation of Orange Park Campus Student Center & Student Services Building \$5,200,000.00

St. Johns River State College | Palatka, Florida

Renovation of Testing Center and Tutoring Lab \$2,000,000.00

St. Johns River State College | Palatka, Florida

Renovation of Palatka Campus Student Center and Student Services Administrative Suites, Athletic Facility Improvements \$2,500,000.00

SELECTED FUNDRAISING/GRANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Awarded Episcopal Children Services Grant, \$200,000.00, 2021 and 2022.
- Awarded Florida Supplemental Education Services, No Child Left Behind Grant, 200,000.00, 2013-2015.
- St. John River State College Foundation/President's Circle Member, 2010-Present.
- Chaired Fundraising Committee for HOGC Building Drive, \$350,000.00 raised, 2008-2010
- Awarded Florida College Reach-out Program Grant for At-Risk Students, \$30,000.00, 1998-2000.

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RESEARCH

Dissertation research focused on job satisfaction and organizational climate as perceived by Community College Presidents, field research utilized moral, intellectual, and student development instrumentation. Interest in leadership theory, workforce development, legal issues in higher education, ethics, organizational management, and governance.

PUBLICATIONS

- Evans, Jr., Gilbert L., The Relationship between Organizational Climate and Job Satisfaction as Reported by Community College Presidents. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Florida, (1996).
- Evans, Jr., Gilbert L. and David S. Honeyman, Climate and Job Satisfaction Among Community College Presidents. Journal of Applied Research for the Florida Association of Community Colleges. Spring (1998).
- Evans, Jr., Gilbert L., It Takes More than A Degree. Black Issues in Higher Education, June (1998).
- Evans, Jr., Gilbert L., Cultivating a Climate of Satisfaction. Community College Week, July 27, 1998, Vol 10, Num 26.
- Evans, Jr., Gilbert L., Degrees of Success: Perseverance Pays Off. Community College Week, September 11, 1998, Vol. 11, Num 4.