

**John A. Delaney**  
**Self-Report**  
**July 2003 – June 2004**

Florida law requires each university board of trustees to conduct an annual evaluation of its president. This requirement is considered by many to be one of the most important duties of the boards of trustees.

Recognizing the importance of this responsibility, Chair Thompson has recommended a four-step process for your annual evaluation of my performance as president of the University of North Florida. The first of the four steps was completion of a narrative in which I would address achievements related to institutional goals and priorities as well as personal professional goals and priorities. I am submitting this document to you as my self-report.

**First Steps**

When you, the members of the University of North Florida's Board of Trustees, selected me to become UNF's fifth president, I accepted your offer and your vote of confidence with a great deal of excitement and, I must confess, some degree of hesitancy. Close to twelve months later, I can report to you that my enthusiasm for the institution and for the position have grown with each passing day. I can also tell you, despite the initial reservations of some on campus about the prospect of having a president who did not come from an academic setting, I was warmly welcomed by the campus community, making my transition into this new role extremely comfortable and quickly allaying any hesitancy I might have felt at the onset.

Taking to heart the advice often given to new university presidents, I have spent time during this first year absorbing the campus culture and assessing where our greatest strengths and our most significant challenges are to be found. While I knew this institution had a great deal of potential, the time spent meeting with individuals and groups from across the campus and from the community-at-large, as well as the time spent going over university records and data, convinced me that I hadn't fully appreciated how much had already been accomplished and how much support there was for future development. As a result of these discoveries, I often begin conversations on campus with the observation that I have never worked at a place where the employees are as proud to be a part of the organization – or as welcoming and kind – as those who work at UNF. There is a true sense of love for the place, a desire for continued improvement, and a deep sense that what goes on here is important. It typically takes decades and strong leadership to develop such an atmosphere in an organization. In this case, it has made the job of a new president immensely easier.

Based on my review of UNF's allocation and expenditure analyses and other available metrics (e.g. increases in entering GPAs and SAT scores, national student awards, graduates' passing rates on state licensure and certification examination, greater scholarly productivity, and accreditation reports that affirmed the quality of our programs) it

quickly became apparent that the institution is fiscally very sound and that it has paid attention to the quality of its students, its faculty and staff, its graduates, and its programmatic offerings during its ongoing growth. These results have, of course, been fostered by the leadership provided by this board and by previous administrations.

The University's internal processes, such as search procedures and rules of governance, are well defined and well followed, albeit at times somewhat cumbersome and slow. And, as could be predicted from the strengths briefly mentioned above, the institution's top management team is strong, experienced, and highly talented. They have shown themselves to be committed to the institution and are able and willing to work with a new president in fulfilling UNF's potential. They work well together. Their contributions to the successes of the University during the past year have been manifold.

At the same time that I was discovering the strengths of the institution, I found areas that required action. The first of these was the need to permanently hire individuals for two key positions on the University's administrative team: the vice president for Administration and Finance, which at the time was filled by an interim appointee; and the provost and vice president for Academic Affairs position, from which David Kline intended to step down at the end of the 2003-2004 academic year. Dr. Kline had graciously agreed to continue serving in this role for my first year providing me with much needed counsel and support.

As I came to understand early on, finding a provost requires a labor and time intensive search process, which must be coordinated with the traditional academic calendar. With this knowledge and in accordance with the procedures set forth in the campus constitution, in the Fall I assembled a seventeen person search committee: nine members elected by the Faculty Association, one appointed by Student Government, and two from the non-faculty employee groups. I appointed the remaining five members, asking Mauricio Gonzalez to serve as Chair. Though this seems an unusual structure for hiring such a high level appointee, the process allows for consensus and campus involvement and helps to ensure the appropriate faculty voice in the curriculum of the academy.

Two particularly strong finalists emerged from this search process. From these two, we selected Gerry Giordano, Dean of Education at Utah State University as our next provost. Dr. Giordano's accomplishments as an academician and as an educational leader are impressive when considered independent of each other, and remarkable when regarded jointly. He will assume his new role on July 1. Our second finalist was later selected as provost at Florida Gulf Coast University.

To fill the Administration and Finance position, I, after painful deliberation, waived the traditional search process and appointed Shari Shuman as vice president. The deliberation was over the decision to waive the search, not over Ms. Shuman's qualifications or skills. After heavy consultation and a review of a study on UNF's search processes, in which the authors observed that the University spent from \$10,000 to \$30,000 on such searches, I proceeded with the selection. Though a break with custom, I felt that since I was personally familiar with Ms. Shuman's strengths, following the usual search format

would be both a waste of money and an insincere act on my part. I can state that within a few short months she was accepted and praised by the university community, and is doing a wonderful job.

Within the first month of my presidency, I came to the conclusion that while the University was generally functioning well, reorganization of some units could make better use of their relative strengths. Thus, I spent some time analyzing UNF's organizational structure and contrasting it against the suggestions I received from executive staff, suggestions that appeared in previously completed consultant reports, and other models we found from within and outside the state. Based on these deliberations, I realigned responsibilities among and within the University's divisions. Lead among these was placing Human Resources, the Office of Equal Opportunity Programs, and the Budget Office under Administration and Finance; repositioning Institutional Research and the Center for Student Success under Academic Affairs; moving Athletics to Student Affairs; splitting News and Publications into Marketing and Publications and Media Relations and Events; and repositioning and redefining the overall mission of Instructional Communications under Institutional Advancement.

The decisions to hire Ms. Shuman and to reorganize units among the divisions have served the University well. I am confident that Dr. Giordano will prove to be an effective leader as well, as we continue to build and strengthen our academic programs.

### **Fiscal Management**

During my review of the University, I also found areas where procedural changes were likely to bring about greater efficiency and improved quality in our operations. Among these were modifications to the budgeting process the institution had been using. Previously, annual budgets were built using an incremental model for both increasing and, when necessary, decreasing unit allocations. Justifications were required only for new funding. In contrast, I asked units to prepare budget proposals for the 2004-2005 fiscal year with justifications for new and recurring operating allocations. I also asked units to make a good faith effort to cut expenses from current allocations to help support newly proposed initiatives. This process allowed for redeployment of approximately \$1 million from currently funded activities to new initiatives. While we might have hoped for larger reallocations of current resources, this served as a good beginning for our new budgeting process. Once the proposed budget is completed, I will work with the vice presidents to determine how we strengthen this newly implemented budgeting process in the coming year.

In examining the University's fiscal resources, it became apparent that the University needed a better understanding of the state's allocation formula and its budgeting processes. Tom Serwatka in particular helped "break the code". These analyses uncovered areas where our processes and decision-making strategies were unintentionally causing the University to be allocated fewer resources than we ought to have received. One example of this was in making enrollment projections. Over the course of the past several years, the University has conservatively underestimated its new enrollment,

fearing long-term consequences of under enrollment. This underestimation has meant that we have received fewer dollars for new faculty to support the number of students who actually attend UNF. As we put forth our requests for the 2005-2006 academic year I am working with staff to use more realistic numbers, allowing us to grow our faculty at a rate that would more closely parallel the growth in our student body. This change in philosophy should also allow us to better document the actual cost of instruction.

When I came to UNF, I came with different experiences and a somewhat different skill set than a more traditional president might have had. This inevitably meant that I had to spend time learning the academic culture, as I mentioned above. But this also meant that I had some advantages that others might not. As is often reported, a university president has at least as many responsibilities off campus as she or he does on campus. Presidents must be in the community and in the state capital garnering resources and support for their institutions and for higher education in general. They and their teams must also be actively engaged in shaping legislation and policy.

While the University of North Florida has played a key role over the last few years in molding higher education policy and legislation at the state level and has completed an extremely successful capital campaign, transitions in leadership have not allowed the University to be as effective as it could be in gaining the financial support it needed from Tallahassee. Additionally, when I arrived the institution was poised for a post-campaign drop in community support. I recognized that one of the reasons the Board selected me as president was the hope that I had credentials and experience that would enable me to address these two needs. As I have reported to you earlier, we have been successful in both arenas. This year the University of North Florida received its highest ever PECO allocation from the state: \$17.3 million. Our share of the total PECO allocation was significantly higher than our system budget ranking; indeed, we received the fourth highest allocation among universities. The University will have also raised an estimated \$8.5 million in private funding and we are developing a campaign to significantly increase our endowment over the next six years. Over the next year we will be busy trying to duplicate or better our successes in seeking state moneys for needed capital projects, maintaining community support for program development, and increasing our endowment. To be candid, most of the credit in these two areas should go to Janet Owen and Pierre Allaire, but I believe that a healthy working relationship has been established with each that has made their job easier.

Allow me to offer one other observation on fiscal management. With devolution of authority we will begin handling our own cash and will be coming off of the state computer systems starting in July. In anticipation of these events, we have spent time and effort this year preparing to go live with our new Banner computer system and in developing the needed mechanisms and controls in our purchasing, accounting, and budgeting processes. Individual members of this board have helped us significantly throughout this process.

## **Capital Improvements and the Campus Master Plan**

During the course of this past year, the University has dealt with a number of issues related to buildings and the campus master plan. Shortly after arriving on campus, I learned of three immediate and two longer-range construction issues. The first of these was the delays in construction of the Science and Engineering Building. The building was originally scheduled to open during the spring 2003 term. Regrettably, and possibly unavoidably, this did not happen, due to the bankruptcy of a major subcontractor. Additional delays continued to occur and stack on top of each other. It became apparent to me that we needed to assert ourselves with the contractor and the bonding company if we were going to bring this building online in any reasonable length of time. While the building has now proven to be a great success and has been recognized by some in the professions as one of the best designs of its kind, we are using this experience as cause for examining our internal project management practices.

At the same time that I learned about the delays in the Science and Engineering Building, I was informed that the requested budget for the new Library addition was inadequate to fund the building program. This meant that the University was making compromises in the program that would affect the size and utility of the building. While I well understand that there are times when an administration must make concessions to accomplish its goals, I knew that compromises in this building program would hurt the entire University in the long run. In considering the alternatives, I determined that this would be an appropriate place for us to spend funds raised through the Training and Service Institute (TSI), one of UNF's two direct support organizations. With the infusion of this money, and modest and strategic cutbacks, we were able to restore the Library building program.

The third immediate construction issue confronting the institution was the need for a replacement or major renovation for the Social Science Building. Closing the second floor of this building caused significant problems in providing adequate support for the University's academic programs. The loss of classrooms impeded course scheduling. The loss of office space placed a burden on faculty, putting them in temporary cubicles with members of the same department relocated into different buildings, and made it difficult to find office space for new faculty. After consideration of all options, we decided that rather than remodeling and repairing the building, we would, for the same money, construct a new building. We will tear down the old building, aesthetically enlarging "The Green" in the heart of the campus.

In 2003-2004, the Legislature allocated planning funds for remodeling or replacing this building. It was imperative to secure the remaining \$8.8 million in our 2004-2005 allocations to meet UNF's educational programming needs. We were successful in realizing and exceeding this goal, as mentioned above under the PECO funding discussion.

With the closing of the Social Science Building it became necessary to move some faculty into the Robinson Center, which had been used for student activities. This brought to the forefront a longstanding issue, the need for improved facilities for student

activities. The Robinson Center was never designed to be a student union and was poorly laid out to function as one, yet this was where Student Government and other student related activities had been housed for a number of years. However, if a new student facility was built, the Robinson Center could be renovated to add quality faculty office space and classrooms to accommodate enrollment growth. Realizing the benefits to both students and the University's academic program, planning for a new Student Union became a priority for my administration. To move ahead with this priority we set two goals: (a) develop the building program for the Student Union, and (b) determine the feasibility of and sources of revenue for funding this project. Over the course of the year both of these goals were accomplished. In addition, we were able to secure a \$4.2 million PECO allocation from the Legislature for this building. We anticipate construction of the \$30+ million Student Union to begin sometime during the 2005-2006 academic year, subject to Board approval!

The other long-range construction issue we have been working on over the course of the year is UNF's need for additional student housing. Currently, demand exceeds capacity, necessitating the use of triple-person placements in some on-campus housing units. To address this ongoing long-term need we have worked diligently to build a program for future housing construction. In this instance, funding is not an issue because housing is a self-supporting operation. We are also proceeding with planning for Greek housing.

The final area I would like to discuss in this section of my self-report deals with the campus's master plan. Because the University needed to decide on the locations for the replacement Social Science Building, the new Student Union, and the next phase of housing, I decided that it would be appropriate to jump start the state-mandated master planning process by beginning it one year ahead of schedule. In considering this decision, I began to understand that the University had limited space suitable for future growth, which led me to work with the Duval County Research and Development Authority (RDA), asking them to suspend further sale of land in the University of North Florida Research and Technology Park. The members of the Authority accepted my proposed suspension on the sale of land while the University examined various options for this property.

After further deliberations, I took two other actions in an effort to give the University the greatest flexibility for planning and future development. First, I began working with our representatives in Tallahassee seeking funds to purchase all of the remaining land in the research park. To this end, the Legislature allocated \$100,000 as a first installment on this proposed \$14 million purchase. Because this idea came to me late in the budgeting cycle, it was not on the five-year PECO list. For this reason, the Governor vetoed this item as well as millions of dollars for similar PECO projects at our sister institutions. This fact notwithstanding, I will recommend that we make a similar request through the normal legislative budget request process for the 2005-2006 academic year. The second action I undertook, with the assistance of UNF's TSI and RDA boards, was the purchase of a seventeen-acre track of land, which would later be transferred to the University by TSI. This property provides the University with access from Kernan Road to UNF's eastern ridge, a potential site for future student housing and activities. We have now obtained all

former Technology Park land west of Kernan, with the exception of the Auchter and ADT buildings.

During the upcoming year, we will be busy building the addition to our Library, beginning construction on the replacement for the Social Science Building, and planning for the new Student Union and our next phase of housing. In each of these cases we will closely monitor the procedures we use to manage major construction projects. We will also finalize our updated master plan.

### **Strategic Planning**

As I was observing and gathering data about UNF, I paid particular attention to the strategic plan the University adopted two years earlier. In reading the plan, I was struck by the fact that it set no unique, long range goals for the University and had few if any metrics that could be used to measure the institution's progress. It seemed to me generic and noncommittal in content. In questioning its origin, I was told that it had been completed simply to satisfy the requirement for having a plan.

As I began to get my bearings, it became apparent that the Board and the university community were willing to work on a new plan, a plan which provided a vision for the institution and offered clear definitions for future growth and development and provisions for their measurement. I also became convinced that for this plan to be effective we needed input and buy-in from across the campus and that it would be best developed through an iterative process.

I have long found that, for me personally, workshop formats are incredibly productive. The workshops that you, the Board of Trustees, asked for served as a first step in helping me establish an initial structure to flesh out this plan. These discussions helped define the guiding principles, which the Board established as university commitments: excellence, focus, relevance, and accountability. In addition, these discussions helped me identify nine of the key elements that the plan would address: (a and b) the need to attract and retain quality faculty and students; (c) the expansion and further development of the learning experiences we provide for our students; (d) the selection and development of flagship programs; (e) support for faculty and student research; (f) building relevance to our community, region, and state within our curriculum, research, and service activities; (g) reexamination of our campus master plan; (h) increasing and improving the management of our fiscal resources with a focus on building a significantly larger endowment; and (i) establishing a continuous improvement protocol for the campus. These guiding principles and key elements served as the basis for my inaugural address, a copy of which is attached.

Since my inaugural address, the Board and the university community have engaged in discussions on specific elements proposed for the plan. Most recently, board members have expressed individual views on the importance of maintaining and increasing standards for students in tandem and, at times, in contrast with the need to provide accessibility to the institution. We have also discussed issues on our master planning

process and the institution's rate of growth. In May, the University of North Florida held its first ever university-wide retreat for UNF's top one hundred leaders, including both academic and non-academic personnel. A major portion of this retreat was spent in breakout sessions discussing the key elements for the plan. This workshop suggested the addition of a tenth component: the attraction and promotion of quality staff. Currently, the Faculty Association's Strategic Planning Committee and other members of the university community are reviewing the work that came out of this retreat.

With the plan currently under development, we have begun using its framework in making university decisions. Particular examples of this can be seen in the budget I am submitting for the Board's review. This budget sets aside significant money for merit scholarships to address our need to attract and retain quality students. Recognizing the need to ensure increased access, we have also allocated money for need-based scholarships. Other areas of the budget that reflect this framework include a proposed allocation for flagship programs and an increased allocation to be given to the Florida Institute for Education to support its research agenda. There is also a proposed increase in the allocation for new faculty lines. While moneys generated by enrollment growth would support fourteen new lines, the budget I have submitted includes funds to recruit thirty-one new faculty members, as well as a number of other positions that directly support instruction (e.g. student advisors, graduate teaching assistants).

Additionally, the proposed budget and the offer we currently have on the table in our negotiations with the United Faculty of Florida would provide a significant increase in faculty salaries, improving our ability to attract and retain quality faculty. Merit pay should be a key element of the salary increase. Other activities that build on our strategic plan include the master planning activities described above and the funds we have raised for endowed professorships.

With all of this said, there is still much to be done in fleshing out our plan. Clear definition must be given to words like *excellence*, *quality faculty*, and *quality students*. A rational process needs to be established for selecting and nurturing flagship programs. And we must come to agreement on the metrics to be used in tracking our progress. My commitment to involving the campus community in the strategic planning process means that this work will be ongoing through much of the upcoming year. Nonetheless, with this framework in place we will continue to take actions to implement its basic tenets.

### **Equity Goals and Objectives**

In your annual evaluation, you are asked to examine my performance in meeting the University's equity goals and objectives. Currently, you are reviewing a report on the Florida Educational Equity Act. The data in this report document that minority student enrollments have increased both in number and percentage at the graduate level, as have the graduation rates of minority students at the same level. The percent of minority enrollments overall, however, has remained flat for the past two years. The study also reports that the percent of minority hires among faculty increased this past year. Twenty-one percent of the new hires were minorities and 43% were female. These numbers

showed progress when compared to the overall percentages of minorities (15%) and females (39%) among the faculty. Yet, the study points to the need for more minority administrators within the University. Overall the report shows significant effort and some measure of success in achieving UNF's goals. At the same time, it indicates that we, along with most other institutions, have challenges ahead of us.

While the report you are reviewing does provide a comprehensive picture of how the institution is doing, the timeframe for the data does not lend itself to evaluating my own performance. First, indicators providing this type of information won't be available until the end of the new academic year. Preliminary numbers do suggest, however, that minority enrollments among first-time-in-college students will increase from 18.2% last year to 20.2% for fall 2004.

I have also begun conversations with leaders in the African-American community about developing an approach for increasing minority enrollment over the long term, a plan that includes a component for academic support. This particular program will take some time to have a significant impact, but I believe we will indeed have a plan that will help significantly change our numbers.

## **Communication**

I recognize that to be an effective leader, two-way communication must occur relative to establishing vision, direction, and process. Since coming to UNF, I have made concerted efforts to listen, discuss, coalesce, augment, and act upon suggestions. The first university-wide retreat (mentioned above) served as a forum for opening lines of communication among vice presidents, deans, directors, chairs, and others in leadership positions. I am committed to continuing these retreats as one mechanism for breaking down barriers and silos and tackling difficult issues as a team.

In addition to the retreats, I have kept an open door policy in my office. I have not turned down any request for a one-on-one meeting or to visit a class, group or club. In the past twelve months, I have held regular meetings with our leaders in Student Government in an effort to proactively seek student input. (I even attended a 2:00 a.m. breakfast with students, at Trustee Watterson's request, to listen to their concerns and learn their views on improving the University.)

We are also working to improve and further open our communications with you, our board, and with UNF's Foundation. To this end, we have developed quarterly budget reports that will enable you to track our financial progress throughout the year and we have changed the format of some of our meetings to allow more open dialogue on future directions that the University will follow. I do have some concern that a more structured, frequent, and organized personal dialogue with board members may be necessary from an individual board member's perspective. This, of course, is for the individual or collective board members to indicate. For my part, the guidance from the Board has been helpful and appropriate; in fact, this Board is perhaps the best with which I have worked. I look

forward to hearing from the Board if it wishes more or a different dialogue. If no change is requested, I am perfectly happy with the relationship as it has developed.

Communication to the public through the media has also been elevated. I am fortunate to have the history and relationship necessary to engage the media, and I have tried to use that “notoriety” to increase the profile of the University, not only on the First Coast, but also statewide. I believe you are seeing evidence of that in the print media coverage we have received, as well as in television, radio, and Internet coverage. I hope to continue this stepped-up communication next year with a new, statewide cable-access television show, as well as regular features on local public radio. And you can expect to see improved communications with the community in general, with regularly scheduled e-mails to several hundred community leaders, reaching out to engage the community in our campus so that UNF is not Jacksonville’s best kept secret. I will also continue to schedule group lunches with varied community and business leaders.

UNF has begun to tell its story and it is one we are and will continue to be proud to share.

### **A View to the Future**

Though an evaluation by definition involves a backward look, the past year actually sets the platform for the future. The critical years for a university president are probably the second and third years, where more widespread institutional change and implementation of mission are set to occur. In saying this, I am very proud of the structural policy and personnel changes made already and with the development of a UNF “point of view.” But the key questions are about the next few years. One such evaluative question should be: Has the past year set the stage for the future? I believe it has.

Over the course of the upcoming year we have a number of opportunities before us. These include providing definition for our guiding principles (excellence, focus, relevance, and accountability), building consensus on a completed strategic plan, and identifying the metrics we will use to track our progress. I will be responsible for the UNF community coalescing behind the draft mission statement and unifying behind a vision. I further feel responsible to propose a philosophy for our institution, and to articulate a destination. To a large extent I tried to portray this in my inaugural address, but I will provide more focused and nuanced definitions for the University and its Board over the course of the ensuing year.

We will also spend time revising our campus master plan, with attention to locating currently planned building programs, long-range planning for institutional growth, and improving campus aesthetics. To ensure the continued and improved institutional financial health, the University will be actively engaged in getting Banner, our new enterprise resource system, up and running, making the best use of the new authorities we will have as a result of devolution, and further refining our budgeting processes. We will also continue our review of our auxiliary operations, as well as our efforts to increase UNF’s endowment. At the beginning, middle, and end of the day, resources are what

allow us to act upon our mission, so the exhaustive overhaul and review of our financial operations continue to be critical. Again, a tremendous start has already begun.

You can expect judicious growth in UNF's curricular offerings, with attention paid to regional needs and collaboration with other local institutions of higher education during the 2004-2005 academic year. You can also expect criteria for and the identification of a set of flagship programs over the next two years.

Enrollments will grow this academic year, exceeding previously set targets. In the following year, 2005-2006, we hope to correct this with new projected growth rates that more closely reflect actual enrollments. In the near future, I will recommend to the Board an overall enrollment goal for the next decade. This plan should result in a more appropriate budget allocation from the State Legislature. The preliminary figures for 2004-2005 indicated improved SAT scores for freshmen and increased diversity among our first-time-in-college students.

The budgeting decisions we are making as I write this report will allow us to hire a significant number of new faculty members to support our academic programs. The hiring units have been clearly charged with paying attention to both the quality of teaching and research potential these faculty members bring with them and to provide an evaluative system to demonstrate that this potential is being met. In addition, we are investing in more support for faculty development and research. We also will be rolling out new programs to reward meritorious staff.

### **A Closing Note**

For a university to flourish, it must begin with a body of engaged and energetic students working together with a talented and dedicated faculty to understand what is already known and, even more importantly, to discover or create that which has to yet be found. You add to this mix other professionals and support staff who believe in the mission of the institution and understand that it is not just a place of employment, but rather a door to the future. And finally, you place this university in a community that understands its mission and its value, welcoming it with open arms.

Understanding this, I must relate that there is no accomplishment that occurred this year for which I could or would take sole credit. The progress we have made over the past year represents the work of many different people, on campus and in the community. I am proud, truly and sincerely, to be associated with each and every one of them. This, of course, includes you, the members of our board. I am also absolutely delighted, personally and professionally, with the relationship as it has developed with the upper level management team already in place, as well as the new vice president for Finance and Administration, Shari Shuman.

I know you have heard this before but I believe it deserves repeating: The University of North Florida has accomplished a great deal since its inception and in the past year, and

we are proud of these accomplishments; with this said, I know that the best part of our journey must be yet to come.