J. Michael Pate

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June 7, 2010

Honorable Bob Rackleff
Chair, Leon County Board of County Commissioners
301 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32301

Honorable Chairman Rackleff:

Tallahassee/Leon County is a community with huge potential. The colleges and universities in Tallahassee/Leon County have huge potential. If we can get the community and higher education working together more effectively we can achieve that potential together. We can build our economy by growing jobs. We can make Tallahassee/Leon County a better place to live by improving the quality of life for all our residents. We can create an atmosphere of cooperation and collaboration that will lead us to develop a community that will have the sense of place that will help us to attract and retain college graduates and young professionals. In order to do these things we must find a way to turn our "town and gown" relations into a community attribute.

To make this happen, the Town and Gown Relations Project is being proposed. The project will be hosted by the Tallahassee Community College Foundation.

The project will have three phases:

1. **A study of perceptions of town/gown relations in Tallahassee**
   We will survey a broad segment of the community by phone and conduct face to face interviews with key leaders in the community to gain an understanding of exactly how the community perceives town/gown relations in Tallahassee/Leon County.
2. **Town hall forums to discuss the research and best practices**
   We will present the data from the surveys to the community to give them an opportunity to understand the findings and respond to them. In addition, we will conduct a series of town hall forums that will present best practice examples from other communities that Tallahassee/Leon County could take to improve town/gown relations. The forums will be run by The Village Square and will be presented by representatives from other communities from around the country who will be identified as having a best practice that should be shared with the Tallahassee/Leon County community.

3. **Creation of a process and projects to pursue excellence in town/gown relations**
   Key stakeholders will come together to evaluate the data from the survey, input from the best practice forums and feedback from the community. From that information they will develop a process for Tallahassee that will help the community become a best practice example for other communities in the area of town and gown relations followed by the creation of specific projects to begin addressing town/gown issues.

This project is expected to start immediately and take 2 to 2 ½ years to complete.

The budget for the project is $240,000.

We expect that funding for the project will come from a variety of stakeholders, including Florida State University, Florida A&M University, Tallahassee Community College, City of Tallahassee, State of Florida, Knight Foundation, other local foundations in Tallahassee, and a cross section of local business and industry.

We would respectfully request $25,000 from Leon County as your commitment to becoming a key stakeholder in this project. If this request is approved, payment should be sent to the Tallahassee Community College Foundation for the Town and Gown Relations Project.

Please let me know if you need further information or if you have any questions. I will look forward to your confirming response.

Sincerely,

J. Michael Pate

cc: Commissioner Akin Akinyemi
Commissioner John Dailey
Commissioner Bryan Desloge
Commissioner Bill Proctor
Commissioner Jane Sauls
Commissioner Cliff Thaell
Parwaz Alam
Vince Long