



Executive Director – Shady Rest Institute on Positive Aging



The Opportunity

Florida Gulf Coast University's (FGCU) Marieb College of Health & Human Services (MCHHS) invites nominations, inquiries, and applications for a seasoned leader to join the Institute as its next Executive Director (ED) for the Shady Rest Institute on Positive Aging. The Shady Rest Institute on Positive Aging was established in 2022 as a university-wide entity to strengthen interprofessional inquiry on aging and the life course, with the specific aims of advancing research to optimize the aging experience of diverse populations and preparing future leaders for the field of gerontology. The Shady Rest Institute on Positive Aging at Florida Gulf Coast University was created to close those gaps by integrating education, scholarship, and service. As one of the fastest-aging regions in the nation, Southwest Florida presents a unique opportunity for FGCU to emerge as a regional and national leader in healthspan, aging, and lifespan innovation. We are also living longer with more years of poor health and reduced independence. The Institute will draw upon the expertise of faculty, staff, and students from across the FGCU campus, fostering a vibrant interprofessional community and serving as a convener for community, governmental, and industry partners focused on aging and healthspan.

Reporting directly to the Dean of MCHHS, and serving as a member of the MCHHS Administrative Team, the incoming Executive Director (ED) will provide effective leadership and direction in implementing the vision, mission, strategic plan, and core values of the Institute. While foundational strategic planning efforts are underway, the Executive Director will play a central role in shaping, refining, and executing the Institute's strategic priorities in alignment with FGCU and MCHHS goals. The Executive Director for the Shady Rest Institute on Positive Aging will join MCHHS and FGCU at an exciting time in the college and university's history. Architectural planning is finalizing for a new academic building that will foster the college's projected growth. Additionally, there is a renewed focus on interprofessional education and utilizing emerging technology. The ideal candidate for this new role will be deeply committed to fostering an inclusive and collaborative environment. Additionally, this candidate will have an entrepreneurial mindset, with responsibility for advancing sustainable programs, partnerships, and funding opportunities that expand the Institute's impact across FGCU, the College, and the Southwest Florida community.

The Executive Director of the Shady Rest Institute on Positive Aging will be an innovative and collaborative leader with the vision to shape Southwest Florida's future of aging, lifespan, and healthspan. This position bridges academia, community, and industry; creating partnerships that enhance quality of life across the lifespan. The Executive Director will lead an interprofessional team in advancing research, education, and regional initiatives that expand healthspan and foster lifelong well-being in close collaboration with the Southwest Florida Healthspan Partnership and its multi-sector partners.

With more than 16,000 students, Florida Gulf Coast University is a comprehensive university dedicated to quality education, research, and service. All faculty are expected to be excellent teachers, responsive to changing professional needs, committed to innovative instruction delivery resulting in improved student learning, committed to effective use of technology, including distance learning, produce peer-reviewed scholarship, and provide service to the College, University, and Community. Teaching assignments may be on the main campus or at off-campus sites within our region. The Executive Director appointment is an out-of-unit leadership role and does not carry a routine teaching expectation.

Southwest Florida's older adult population is growing fast, and with it the need for a regional engine that connects, convenes, and coordinates organizations and residents focused on the evolving needs of people 65 and older. In our five-county region, 30.1% of residents are 65 or older, well above state and national averages (except Hendry). This demographic reality underscores the Institute's opportunity to serve as a nationally relevant model for aging, healthspan extension, workforce development, and community-engaged research.

Share of residents over 65 years old:

- Charlotte County: 39.6%
- Collier County: 31.6%
- Glades County: 26.9%
- Hendry County: 13.1%
- Lee County: 28.1%
- Southwest Florida: 30.1%
- Florida: 21.1%
- United States: 16.8%

Looking ahead to 2050, the steepest growth is expected among older cohorts: 65–74 (+12.2%), 75–84 (+11.9%), and 85+ (+13.9%). Together, these groups account for 38% of Southwest Florida's projected population increase. Combined in-migration and aging Baby Boomers will strain the supply across care, services, and supports. Quantifying this imbalance and acting on it is a regional priority. Key issues include access to care, affordable housing and aging-in-place, dementia and caregiving, food insecurity, and social isolation. Historically, researchers, educators, and practitioners have worked in silos, creating gaps between research, education, and practice (Levin & Greenwood, 2011). The Shady Rest Institute is intentionally structured to reduce these silos by aligning research, education, workforce preparation, and community implementation through shared priorities and coordinated action.

In 2021, the gap between lifespan and healthspan in Southwest Florida was 13.3 years. The Southwest Florida Healthspan Coalition is committed to narrowing that gap and extending the number of years lived in good health by 7 years by 2040. As a result, in late 2025, building on the previous successes, the institute launched the Southwest Florida Healthspan Partnership. The Healthspan Partnership operates as a core strategic partner of the Shady Rest Institute, with mutual accountability for advancing system-level change, shared metrics, and regional impact. Central to this effort is the Healthspan Coalition Partnership Manager. The Executive Director of the Shady Rest Institute will work in close coordination with the Partnership Manager to align research, education, convening, advocacy, and workforce development efforts.

While we may not think much about aging when we are young, the truth is that we are all on that journey from our first breath forward. A community that truly extends healthspan does not begin with older adults; it begins with prevention, purpose, and possibility at every age. When we design systems that make healthy choices easier and connections more natural, we build the foundation for lifelong wellbeing. Extending healthspan means investing early and often in the conditions that allow everyone, young and old alike, to live longer, healthier, more fulfilling lives. Healthspan improves when communities invest across every dimension of wellbeing: vitality, stability, growth, and belonging. No single sector can achieve this alone. Coordinated action across healthcare, education, business, and community life is required. Through its leadership role in the Healthspan Partnership, the Shady Rest Institute serves as a regional convener, supporting data-informed planning, workforce development, policy alignment, and translational research that moves evidence into practice.

The Healthspan Coalition, incubated at FGCU's Shady Rest Institute for Positive Aging, is working across Hendry, Glades, Charlotte, Lee, and Collier counties to change systems, improve outcomes, and increase healthspan for all. The Executive Director will be accountable for strengthening this partnership, clarifying partner deliverables (e.g., workforce preparation, applied research, convening, advocacy support), and ensuring progress toward measurable healthspan outcomes.

Role & Responsibilities

As the Executive Director of the Shady Rest Institute on Positive Aging, this position will lead operations, fundraising, and programs focusing on decreasing the gap between lifespan and healthspan. The Executive Director will be responsible for both shaping and executing the Institute's strategic direction, managing staff and resources, and forging vital partnerships through education, research, advocacy, and community-relationship building. Key duties will include leadership, strategic planning, financial oversight, program development, resource development, board and stakeholder relations, and advocacy and communication.

The Executive Director of the Shady Rest Institute will:

Leadership: Develop and implement the Institute's strategic vision; refine strategic priorities in collaboration with MCHHS leadership, the Advisory Board, and Healthspan Partnership partners; guide organizational growth; lead staff and affiliated faculty; promote interprofessional collaboration; and foster innovation in positive aging and healthspan initiatives.

Fundraising and Finance: Secure external funding through grants, philanthropy, partnerships, and other revenue-generating activities; oversee financial management, budget planning, and execution; manage human resources; and ensure financial accountability. The Executive Director will be accountable for growing the Institute's resource base in alignment with FGCU policies and approval processes.

Program Oversight: Oversee impactful programs, research, and services that promote lifelong well-being. Ensure that programs produce clearly defined deliverables for key partners, including workforce development, applied research, convening and planning activities, and evidence-informed community initiatives.

Board and Stakeholder Relations: Collaborate with the Institute's Advisory Council, the Southwest Florida Healthspan Coalition, and other key partners; build strong community and industry partnerships and develop relationships with policymakers, donors, and regional leaders. The Advisory Council will provide strategic guidance, sector expertise, and external perspective in support of the Institute's mission.

Advocacy and Communication: Serve as a visible public voice for the Institute; advocate for healthspan and positive aging across the lifespan; and communicate complex issues effectively to diverse audiences, including academic, community, policy, and philanthropic stakeholders.

Operations: Manage day-to-day operations, personnel, and infrastructure; ensure compliance with university, state, and federal guidelines; and establish systems for monitoring performance, outcomes, and progress toward strategic goals.

Professional Qualifications & Personal Qualities

Required Candidate Qualifications:

Any appropriate combination of relevant education and experience will be considered:

Demonstrated record of senior leadership experience in higher education, nonprofit, public health, business, or related sectors focused on aging, community development, or health innovation. Earned graduate degree from a regionally accredited institution/program in a health-related field or nonprofit management.

Demonstrated fundraising, nonprofit management, advocacy leadership, or creating substantial leads including experience growing programs, partnerships, or organizations through grants, philanthropy, contracts, or earned revenue.

Excellent communication skills with an ability to engage and inspire diverse stakeholders across academia, community organizations, industry, philanthropy, and government.

Evidence of visionary leadership, exceptional communication, financial management, political savvy, collaborative attitude, and an entrepreneurial spirit with demonstrated ability to translate vision into measurable outcomes.

Five or more years of relevant experience leading complex, multi-stakeholder initiatives or organizations.

Preferred Professional Experiences and Characteristics:

Demonstrated knowledge of gerontology, the socioeconomic needs of the aging population, and state and federal guidelines governing senior services.

Expertise in securing funding streams including grants and donations, and experience working within institutional approval, compliance, and governance structures.

Experience working with advisory councils, coalitions, or cross-sector partnerships to advance shared goals and accountability.

Special Instruction to Applicants

Review of applicant materials will begin **March 16, 2026 and will continue until the position is filled.**

Appointment will be made at an out-of-unit faculty rank commensurate with the candidate's experience on a 12-month out-of-unit multi-year appointment basis available (*as early as May 2026*).

The Executive Director is evaluated based on leadership effectiveness, partnership development, resource growth, and measurable institutional and community impact rather than traditional teaching or tenure expectations.

About Marieb College of Health & Human Services

The healthcare industry is booming. It is projected to add more jobs than any other industry in the next several years, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. A growing and aging population, technological advances, and changes in the way healthcare is delivered are among the primary reasons the industry is expanding so rapidly. That translates into a wealth of career opportunities for well-trained professionals. Graduates of the Marieb College of Health & Human Services' seven undergraduate and twelve graduate programs are among those filling these positions.



About Florida Gulf Coast University

FGCU Has Grown from Idea to Impact. Since welcoming its first class in 1997, FGCU has grown into a thriving community, educating more than 16,000 students annually and graduating more than 43,000 alumni. FGCU is a big part of Southwest Florida. Students have contributed to the Southwest Florida community through millions of service-learning hours. They have interned at countless local businesses and started their own. They've united a community through the arts, athletics, and advocacy.

FGCU holds the second-highest graduate employment rate among all Florida state universities. Tuition has remained the same since 2013-14, and 59% of students graduate with no debt. When they leave Florida Gulf Coast University, nearly half of the graduates stay in the region and continue to serve the community as teachers and nurses, scientists and social workers, engineers, and entrepreneurs. Through thousands of Eagle alumni and through the university's rising profile, FGCU's impact continues to expand exponentially.

Mission

Florida Gulf Coast University is a transformative, learner-centered institution dedicated to student success that strategically serves Southwest Florida and beyond. FGCU, as a regional comprehensive institution, provides academic, economic, and cultural enrichment for the community through impactful partnerships and excellent teaching, learning, scholarship, and public service. FGCU creates pathways for students to thrive as engaged, responsible, global citizens. Through undergraduate and graduate programs, FGCU students receive a distinctive education with experiential learning, community service, and participation in a living laboratory of sustainability practices.

Vision

Florida Gulf Coast University aspires for national prominence and global recognition as a community-focused, comprehensive institution driving positive change and shaping the future of higher education. FGCU graduates will be exemplars in an ever-changing world, known for their individual successes, dedication to sustainability, ethical leadership, and transformative global impact.

Strategic Plan 2024-2029

In April 2022, the President’s Cabinet and FGCU’s Board of Trustees implemented the FGCU Strategic Roadmap Initiative, a framework to facilitate the university’s next strategic plan. The initiative focused on extensive internal and external input to serve as an indicator of FGCU’s current state, as well as factors that will impact the university’s future. The results of this first phase were published in June 2023.

In July 2023, FGCU initiated the second phase to finalize the next strategic plan’s mission, vision, goals, and objectives. Led by a Strategic Planning Steering Committee – and informed by the Strategic Roadmap Initiative, stakeholder feedback sessions, and community surveys – the work will result in the 2024-2029 Strategic Plan to be submitted to the Board of Trustees in December 2023 for approval. President Aysegul Timur received unanimous approval for the plan by the Board of Governors of the State University System of Florida in January 2024. To read the full Strategic plan, please visit the link below:

Innovating for Student Success - FGCU’s Journey to Excellence

- Goal 1: Innovate in Academic Excellence
- Goal 2: Enhance Student Success and Well-being
- Goal 3: Elevate Partnerships for Regional Impact
- Goal 4: Strengthen Organizational Culture and Commitment to Employees
- Goal 5: Champion Sustainable Practices and Resiliency

About Southwest Florida

Florida Gulf Coast University is situated on Florida’s beautiful southwest coast. It’s midway between the cities of Fort Myers and Naples, just minutes from the Gulf of Mexico and the Southwest Florida International Airport, with easy access to Interstate 75. Its proximity to both Naples and Fort Myers affords the option of living in either city without being far from campus. Estero and Bonita Springs are even closer. These communities all offer a wealth of choices when it comes to housing: from downtown living near trendy restaurants and shopping to maintenance-free condo complexes to lush golf communities, waterfront homes and charming historic neighborhoods. Both Naples and Fort Myers have made the top 10 list of best places to live in the U.S. News & World Report annual surveys. The beaches are routinely cited among the most beautiful, particularly those on Sanibel Island in Lee County and Barefoot Beach in Collier County.



When it comes to affordability, real estate prices are on the rise, as they are everywhere. However, property taxes are comparatively low, homestead exemptions provide additional tax breaks to those

claiming Florida residency, and there is no state income tax. The region also is blessed with an abundance of environmental treasures, cultural attractions and a bounty of golf courses, great restaurants, and shopping. These are just some of the benefits of living in a place that millions choose to visit.

Nature is on full display at serene preserves such as Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, Big Cypress National Preserve, Everglades National Park, Naples Botanical Garden and the Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge. Animals such as endangered Florida panthers, loggerhead sea turtles, American alligators, river otters, roseate spoonbills, eagles and other wild creatures call these carefully maintained lands home.

There are performing arts centers in Naples and Fort Myers, dozens of art galleries, movie complexes and excellent places to dine — from innovative food trucks to top-tier restaurants run by James Beard Award nominees.

For sports lovers, the Grapefruit League brings the Boston Red Sox and the Minnesota Twins to town every spring. The Florida Everglades are a minor league ice hockey team based at the Hertz Arena just south of the university on Ben Hill Griffin Parkway. And for professional sports, Tampa is a mere 2½ hours away, with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in the NFL, the Tampa Bay Lightning in the NHL, and the Tampa Bay Rays in the MLB. (The New York Yankees conduct spring training there as well.) The region, with its wealth of things to do and low crime rate, is a choice spot to raise a family or enjoy all of the attractions without ever having to leave.



Nomination & Application Process

Compensation

Salary will be competitive and commensurate with qualifications and experience.

How to Apply

Greenwood Asher & Associates® is assisting Florida Gulf Coast University in this search. Applications and nominations are now being accepted. Initial screening of application will begin immediately and will continue until an appointment is made. The search will be conducted with a commitment of confidentiality for candidates until finalists are selected. For best consideration, applications and nominations should be submitted by **March 16, 2026**.

We strongly encourage submitting application materials as PDF attachments:

- A letter of interest that clearly states the applicant's qualifications for the position
- A current résumé/curriculum vitae

Please submit full application packets [here](#).

Nominations and confidential inquiries can be sent to:

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