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Department of Soil, Water, and Ecosystem Sciences
University of Florida
1692 McCarty Drive
Room 2181, Building A
Gainesville, FL 32611

March 14, 2025

Dear Search Committee,

I am writing to express my interest in the Department Chair position within your esteemed Soil, Water, and Ecosystem Sciences Department at the University of Florida. With a strong background in soil, water, and plant science research and extension, my experience and skills align with the requirements for this role and will enable me to effectively lead your department.

As a native of southern Idaho raised on a dairy farm, my passion for agriculture and commitment to addressing its challenges have been fundamental throughout my career. I hold a PhD in Applied Plant Science from the University of Minnesota and have spent the last decade in academia and research. Currently, I serve as an Associate Professor, Associate Department Head, Interim Associate Dean of Research, and Agroclimate Extension Specialist at Utah State University, where I lead research and extension efforts focused on agricultural water optimization, soil health, precision agriculture, and adaptive nutrient management.

In my role at Utah State University, I also direct USU Crops, a team of about 25 Extension faculty, and work closely with stakeholders to conduct coordinated research and outreach. My team's research has resulted in over \$17 million in grant funding to our program and has directly benefited thousands of stakeholders across the state, region, and country. I have mentored numerous graduate students, many of whom have contributed significantly to research trials and publications. I have authored nearly 70 peer-reviewed journal articles (several more in press or review), 50 Extension articles, and over 250 proceedings/abstracts/extension articles, with our research presentations reaching over 8,000 stakeholders in more than 225 meetings.

My recent experience serving as associate department head and associate dean of research aligns well with the qualifications outlined in the position description. I am confident in my ability to learn and direct an academic department with various disciplines engaged in teaching, research, and extension, particularly within the context of a major land-grant university. My leadership and administrative experience include managing diverse teams of students and faculty, overseeing grant programs, developing strategic initiatives that foster collaboration across disciplines, and completing leadership training (completed Lead 21 in 2024). I am also committed to the

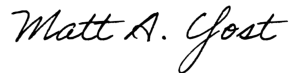
development and retention of students, faculty, and staff, and have a strong focus on ensuring the success of interdisciplinary programs.

My involvement in various professional societies demonstrates my commitment to continued professional development and advancing the field of soil, water, and ecosystem sciences. I am also deeply committed to outreach and engagement with industry stakeholders, as well as fostering national and international collaborations to enhance the global impacts of land-grant universities. I would be honored to contribute to the continued success and growth of SWESD and its mission. My background, leadership, and vision for advancing research, teaching, and extension in soil and water sciences will support the goals of your department and university.

Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss how my experience and qualifications align with your needs.

Please see my enclosed CV for more details about my qualifications. I am currently serving as an Associate Professor. My application for the rank of Professor is currently being considered and I expect to learn the outcome in early April.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Matt A. Yost".

Dr. Matt Yost