

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY  
PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE  
LISTENING SESSIONS

SESSION 2: LISTENING SESSION FOR FIU COMMUNITY

Wednesday, April 13, 2022  
10:00 A.M.- 12:00 P.M.

Modesto Maidique Campus  
Graham Center Ballrooms  
11200 Southwest 8th Street  
Miami, Florida 33199

Stenographically Reported By:  
Aurora C. Sloan, FPR

1 APPEARANCES:

2 FIU University Staff Members:

3 FIU Board of Trustees Chair Dean Colson

4 FIU Board of Trustees Vice Chair Roger Tovar

5 FIU Ombudsperson Sofia Trelles

6 ALSO PRESENT:

7 Higher Education Search Consultant William Funk

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1 (Whereupon, the following proceedings were  
2 had:)

3 MR. TOVAR: Good morning. Good  
4 morning.

5 My name is Roger Tovar and I am the  
6 Vice Chair of the FIU Board of Trustees.  
7 In addition it is my pleasure to serve as  
8 the Chair of the Presidential Search  
9 Committee.

10 I would like to extend a warm welcome  
11 to the Presidential Search Committee  
12 members and the FIU community who are  
13 joining us for the listening session, and  
14 thank them for participating in this  
15 important step.

16 The FIU Board of Trustees met on  
17 April 5th to announce the Presidential  
18 Search Committee members. The Presidential  
19 Search Committee also held its first  
20 meeting on April 5th.

21 To keep all of you and the members of  
22 the FIU community informed, I am pleased to  
23 announce that we have launched the  
24 Presidential Search website which will  
25 provide information on the search process,

1 meetings, and candidates. This website  
2 will be updated routinely and we invite  
3 each of you to visit this website.

4 R. William Funk & Associates, based in  
5 Dallas, Texas, have been selected to assist  
6 with the search of FIU's sixth president.  
7 The firm has conducted more than 430  
8 searches for colleges' and universities'  
9 presidents and chancellors.

10 Mr. Funk is joining us today as we  
11 welcome members of the FIU community and  
12 the general public who are joining us via  
13 the webcast as we engage in a listening  
14 session.

15 And today we also have the pleasure of  
16 having the Chair of our Board, Dean Colson,  
17 with us.

18 So thanks, Dean, for being here with  
19 us.

20 MR. COLSON: Delighted.

21 MR. TOVAR: I now invite Mr. Funk to  
22 begin the listening session.

23 Thank you, Mr. Funk.

24 MR. FUNK: Thank you, Roger.

25 And thanks to all of you in attendance

1 in person. I see you squeezed in and have  
2 found a seat. So welcome, and we look  
3 forward to hearing your comments, and  
4 hopefully we can respond to any questions  
5 that you might have.

6 Our firm is delighted to be working  
7 with Florida International on this  
8 important search.

9 We think this is one of the more  
10 exciting, compelling leadership  
11 opportunities in higher education today.  
12 When you look at the growth trajectory that  
13 you've had, not only in terms of  
14 enrollment, but in terms of research  
15 expenditures, influence in the community,  
16 we think this is a very compelling  
17 opportunity and will attract a very strong  
18 pool of candidates.

19 You also have the advantage of being  
20 in Miami, one of the most exciting cities  
21 in the world, really. And one which  
22 affords leaders of this type real  
23 opportunities to make a difference and to  
24 be transformative.

25 From the outset of the search, Roger

1 and Dean have been emphatic about wanting  
2 to be as transparent as we possibly can be  
3 on the front end of this process. And  
4 that's one of the reasons that we've had  
5 yesterday, I think, six open sessions with  
6 various constituent groups, we had one  
7 earlier this morning at 8 o'clock. This  
8 session is, of course, one for the entire  
9 campus and all comers. And we will have a  
10 couple of sessions after this session.

11 We really do want to hear what the  
12 constituents have to say about what they  
13 would like to see in the next president.

14 And to keep us kind of on track, there  
15 are three questions that we have posed. I  
16 think most of you have had the opportunity  
17 to look at those questions. And if you  
18 didn't, they now are on the big screen.  
19 But these three questions kind of give us  
20 the real essence of what we are looking for  
21 as we go about targeting candidates trying  
22 to bring them into the pool.

23 Certainly, the first question is what  
24 are the challenges and opportunities you  
25 feel this next president will inherit, both

1 immediately and longer term?

2 If those are the challenges and  
3 opportunities, what kind of person do you  
4 see being best prepared to address the  
5 challenges and exploit those opportunities  
6 in terms of leadership style, experience,  
7 world view, personality? What adjectives  
8 would you use to describe the ideal next  
9 president of Florida International  
10 University?

11 And then thirdly, this is, in a way, a  
12 selfish part of the series of questions  
13 because it's really for our benefit at the  
14 search firm and ultimately with the search  
15 committee. But our task, one of our major  
16 responsibilities, is to be the proactive  
17 agent of the search committee.

18 You know, we have found that the best  
19 candidates don't respond to an ad, they  
20 don't respond to letters sent out by the  
21 search committee. Typically, the best  
22 candidates haven't even thought about  
23 making a move. They are very happy where  
24 they are, they are very successful where  
25 they are, and they haven't paid a lot of

1 attention to what's going on in terms of  
2 the presidential search market.

3 So our responsibility is to reach out  
4 to those people and to try to convince them  
5 that this is something they really should  
6 look into. And if you can help arm us with  
7 those compelling reasons we can share with  
8 prospective candidates, then we can better  
9 nurturer and cajole them to give this  
10 position some consideration.

11 So if you can share your thoughts in  
12 terms of those three questions, we would we  
13 would be most grateful.

14 The four of us will be deflecting to  
15 one another who's better able to answer  
16 which questions. But also Sofia, on my  
17 left, I think we have quite a number of  
18 individuals virtually. An earlier number  
19 was 300 people virtually. Is that still  
20 the case?

21 MS. TRELLES: Yes. We are actually  
22 joined by over 100 -- actually, 136  
23 participants right now are joining us  
24 through Zoom.

25 Please, we ask that you use the



1           technology available to you to share your  
2           comments and questions so that we may be  
3           able to hear your voice, and that the  
4           members of the presidential search  
5           committee who are here today are able to  
6           answer and address them accordingly.

7           MR. FUNK: Great.

8           So the biggest challenge is always for  
9           the first person to speak. And we always  
10          encourage you because, golly, if you wait  
11          until the end, what you wanted to say has  
12          already been said. So you should be  
13          clambering to be the first person to make a  
14          comment or pose a question to us.

15          Who would like to go first?

16          There are microphones on either aisle,  
17          you will note, and if you will step there.  
18          And we do have, I think, some portable mics  
19          that we are passing around.

20          But who would like to be first? Not  
21          all at once.

22          MR. COLSON: You may want to go to the  
23          mic.

24          DR. SACKSTEIN: My name is Robert.  
25          I'm a faculty member. I'm also an

1 administrator.

2 I want to thank this committee and all  
3 the people that are working hard towards  
4 this goal. In particular, because this is  
5 a pivotal moment in the history of this  
6 school, but is then also a pivotal moment  
7 in the history of this community.

8 The Florida International University  
9 has served as truly the economic engine of  
10 South Florida, unbeknownst to most.

11 I will say with great pride that I  
12 have a Panther license plate on my car, and  
13 people honk at me all the time, essentially  
14 all the time. And this is a sleeper --  
15 honestly, a sleeper message because people  
16 don't realize it from the outside.

17 What we need to do is convey that  
18 message to the prospective candidates, make  
19 them understand the spirit of the school  
20 and the spirit of the community. Now  
21 that's the thrust of my question.

22 How could you reach out to  
23 internationally recognized academic leaders  
24 from outside of the State of Florida to  
25 help them understand how incredible the

1 opportunity is to lead this school? It's a  
2 young school. It's got a lot of  
3 aspirations which are reachable. It has a  
4 faculty that's dedicated and committed to  
5 every student succeeding. And, on top of  
6 that, it is growing.

7 And so I ask, professionally, how do  
8 you sort of put that together in a format  
9 that people who may not have ever seen this  
10 school intersect their academic experiences  
11 can immediately appreciate its net worth?

12 MR. FUNK: Thank you, Robert, for that  
13 question.

14 I can take a first stab at an answer.  
15 And it relates to what we do to build the  
16 pool of candidates. And, obviously, just  
17 yesterday, an ad was placed in the  
18 Chronicle of Higher Education, the ad had  
19 gone through several iterations. I think  
20 you are going to find it to be one of the  
21 more attractive ads in the Chronicle.

22 And certainly, that will be in both  
23 the print edition and their online edition  
24 for the next 60 days. There are other  
25 publications that we're using, Inside

1 Higher Ed, Diversity Issues in Higher  
2 Education, Women in Higher Education, the  
3 Hispanic Outlook in Education. So we will  
4 be blanketing that to get the word out.

5 And we often -- in the firm, we think  
6 of the ad as more of an announcement, a  
7 communications piece, to do exactly what  
8 you are suggesting, to start to tell people  
9 the story, as opposed to being necessarily  
10 a recruiting tool.

11 My office will send out over 600  
12 letters that have been addressed  
13 individually to leaders in higher education  
14 around the country. That's a group that  
15 only hears from us and receives  
16 correspondence from us when we are doing a  
17 presidential search. And we find those  
18 individuals that will include probably all  
19 the sitting presidents of AAU, R1, and  
20 other institutions, as well as other  
21 leaders who we've worked with. They know  
22 us. They are individually addressed, we  
23 sign them. My staff goes crazy every time  
24 because it's a long and laborious process,  
25 but that letter will be going out over the

1 next week.

2 We will be talking with the leadership  
3 of the various professional higher  
4 education associations, telling them about  
5 the search and soliciting their best  
6 nominations that they can make to us to  
7 help build our pool.

8 We are encouraging the search  
9 committee to be proactive. Who better than  
10 the members of that search committee who  
11 have colleagues at other institutions, you  
12 go to conferences, annual meetings, we're  
13 encouraging the search committee members to  
14 literally reach out and talk to their  
15 colleagues and see who they might  
16 recommend. And then turn those names over  
17 to us, and we'll certainly reach out to  
18 each and every nomination that's received.

19 This morning when we met with the  
20 faculty senate folks -- and Joerg, I  
21 promised you that we would say this again,  
22 we want the faculty to know that we would  
23 like their nominations, we'd like their  
24 input in terms of helping build this pool.  
25 Because similar to the members on the

1 search committee, they all belong to  
2 various associations, have colleagues  
3 across the country. And if you have a  
4 person recommended to you, please share  
5 that with us.

6 And then among other things -- and I  
7 won't bore you with all the things that go  
8 into spreading the word, but we also -- the  
9 university will be sending out what we call  
10 a Friends of the University letter, and  
11 that's usually sent to key supporters of  
12 the institution, key donors, civic leaders  
13 who are supportive of FIU, some of our  
14 clients -- and I think a lot of it will be  
15 done here, too, will go to all alumni.  
16 Sometimes it's an email, the communications  
17 folks usually have good addresses and good  
18 email addresses.

19 And again, the tone and temper of that  
20 letter will be as a valued member of the  
21 FIU family, we wanted you to be among the  
22 first to know that a search for a new  
23 president has been launched. It will share  
24 with that group how to make a nomination as  
25 well.

1           But then a lot of it falls to the  
2           search committee and to us to just make  
3           sure that the story is told.

4           And as Roger will probably comment on  
5           later, we think that's one of the  
6           fundamental things the board would like to  
7           see the next president do, and that's  
8           really tell the great story that's happened  
9           here and get the word out.

10          Golly, the goal, top 50 public  
11          university, you are an R1. I don't think  
12          it's at all a stretch to say that you  
13          should be aiming to be an AAU institution  
14          in time. And, of course, AAU looks at  
15          research expenditures, endowment, and  
16          nationally and internationally prominent  
17          faculty. And you have all of those  
18          ingredients already, but if you can  
19          continue to build those, you know, I think  
20          AAU status is something that should be in  
21          the scheme of things and in the strategic  
22          plan.

23          Now, I hope I've said that, but I  
24          think we just have to get the word out.  
25          There's a great story here. And, you know,

1 we'll bear some of that responsibility, and  
2 the search committee will do the same.  
3 And, you know, I think we'll have a very  
4 good response.

5 MR. TOVAR: Thank you, Bill.

6 And Dr. Sackstein, I think you touched  
7 on some very good points. And one of them  
8 is that we don't do the best job as to  
9 getting our story out there, and you talk  
10 about the academic engine.

11 FIU has a \$1.7 billion annual budget,  
12 \$250 million in research that is growing  
13 daily.

14 Yesterday we just inaugurated the new  
15 translational science building up in Port  
16 St. Lucie, as far as the research they are  
17 doing there.

18 What was great to see there is to see  
19 not only Dr. Black there, but also the dean  
20 of the medical school, the dean of public  
21 health, and how they were talking and  
22 collaborating. So I think that is key.

23 Yesterday, also, you know, we've done  
24 six or seven listening sessions yesterday,  
25 we have already done one this morning. Two



1           were with the faculty.

2           One of the comments that came up  
3           yesterday is when you advertise, are you  
4           going to talk about the international  
5           component of FIU? So already last night we  
6           were about to place our ad, the ad is  
7           beautiful. We went through many  
8           reiterations as to the images of FIU, what  
9           image we're going to convey as to FIU. We  
10          changed the picture just recently because  
11          we didn't think it was broad enough or  
12          really conveyed the message that we wanted  
13          to convey.

14          But the suggestion yesterday -- to  
15          tell you that these sessions do work, that  
16          people are listening is, do you mention the  
17          international component in the ad? And so,  
18          sure enough, that was one component we had  
19          missed, and so we changed the ad yesterday.

20          So I think all of those points are  
21          important. We do need an amazing,  
22          exceptional leader. This is a very large  
23          institution. Four, five years ago, I think  
24          we were somewhere around 140, 150 as far as  
25          our rankings within public universities

1 with US News. This year we were No. 77.  
2 So, huge upward trajectory. I think we  
3 were No. 1 as far as the number of spots  
4 that we've moved in the last five years.  
5 The board has a directive that we want to  
6 be a top 50 university here shortly within  
7 the public universities. We want to move  
8 into top 100 overall. So we are very  
9 aspirational.

10 And so you need a very unique, dynamic  
11 leader to come in. Somebody that's going  
12 to work with the faculty, someone that's  
13 going to be the face of the university, but  
14 also that is not sitting up in an office or  
15 sitting in the house, but is walking around  
16 campus.

17 And when we met with the students  
18 yesterday, the students felt how important  
19 it is that they see the president, that  
20 they interact with the president. And so  
21 there's many boxes to check.

22 And I think the goal of the  
23 committee -- and we have one of our  
24 committee members here today, so thanks for  
25 joining us, there are some that are online.

1 But if you look at the composition of the  
2 committee that Dean has put together,  
3 really we have a really good  
4 representation. There's four faculty  
5 members on there, there's two ex-chairs of  
6 the board on there, there's community  
7 leadership on there, there's a student on  
8 there, there's a representative of the  
9 board of governors.

10 And so hopefully with all those folks  
11 working together, and then with the help of  
12 Funk & Associates as to going out and  
13 casting a wide net, we're going to have  
14 some exceptional candidates that, then, we  
15 will be able to select somewhere between  
16 three to five candidates, hopefully. The  
17 requirement is to select a minimum of two  
18 to take to the board. My goal is to select  
19 between three to five to take back to the  
20 board and say these are exceptional  
21 candidates, and then for the board to go  
22 through their process.

23 And by the way, we have Dr. Butchey  
24 here who is also on the committee. So I  
25 didn't mean to overlook you, but thanks for

1           being here.

2                 So we're going to work very hard to  
3           find amazing leadership to bring to FIU and  
4           this community, which is, I think, what the  
5           university deserves, the students, the  
6           faculty, and the community deserves.

7                 So thanks for the question.

8                 Dean, would you add anything?

9                 MR. COLSON: I think it's a great  
10          comment, Robert. And I do think that we  
11          need to work on getting our story out  
12          around the world. We are committed to do  
13          that as a board, and the administration is  
14          that, we are going to put some resources in  
15          to telling our story, because we are one of  
16          the great secrets in the country in higher  
17          education, and we don't want to be a  
18          secret. We want our story told.

19                Now, that's changing every day as we  
20          move up in the rankings, as we do these  
21          extraordinary things with graduation rates,  
22          as we do these extraordinary things with  
23          the diversity of our student body, as we  
24          build our research.

25                One of the reasons Bill Funk was

1           hired, as opposed to other search firms,  
2           was his experience in R1 searches. And his  
3           Rolodex is different than other search  
4           firms' Rolodexes, because he deals with  
5           people looking for presidents at R1  
6           universities. And so I do think that we're  
7           postured to get a great new leader.

8           Clearly, we benefit from the fact that  
9           we are in one of the great cities in the  
10          world, one of the hottest cities in the  
11          world. If you have any intellectual  
12          curiosity and you want to be a president of  
13          a university, the fact that the public  
14          university in Miami job is open, you ought  
15          to think, well, should I go to Miami?  
16          Because the rest of the world is coming to  
17          Miami.

18          And so I think what you are looking  
19          for is what we're also looking for. We  
20          want to search the world for the next great  
21          leader of FIU. And I think we're going to  
22          be successful and we're going to take the  
23          time to do that. But your goal is also our  
24          goal.

25          MR. FUNK: Who would like to go next?

1 We have a number of comments that are  
2 coming in virtually, and we certainly will  
3 share some of those, but we have another  
4 brave volunteer. Thank you very much.

5 MS. HORVATH: Good morning, you all.

6 My name is Michelle Horvath and I  
7 serve on the staff side. I've heard a lot  
8 about faculty and students, but I haven't  
9 heard a lot about staff.

10 I think one of the things that's going  
11 to be really important as we see this great  
12 resignation of individuals who are there to  
13 support the students. We have over 800  
14 openings of staff positions at FIU. And so  
15 I do think that somebody who is innovative.  
16 We know that higher ed, for all the  
17 wonderful things we do, we don't innovate  
18 well.

19 So, as well as looking at these 600  
20 folks who are presidents already, I do  
21 think we need to look for somebody who  
22 might be outside of higher ed who is able  
23 to innovate, who is able to make changes,  
24 who is willing to say the scope of the  
25 landscape is changing.

1           And as well as the fact that Miami is  
2           robust and it's vibrant and people are  
3           coming, but people can't afford to live  
4           here anymore; right? And so I do think we  
5           need to think about how do we innovate so  
6           that we attract talent who is able to  
7           support students, who is able to do the  
8           really hard work outside of the classroom,  
9           where all faculty are doing amazing work in  
10          the classroom, so we that we create this  
11          vibrancy.

12          And so, one of the challenges is  
13          really thinking, how are you going to  
14          recruit people who are there to do all the  
15          behind the scenes work in a way that they  
16          can actually live a meaningful wage in  
17          Miami, which continues 4, \$500 per month  
18          increases for rent is just not going to be  
19          sustainable when we have a population  
20          that's already leaving the fields.

21          And so I would really challenge the  
22          search committee to find somebody who is  
23          innovative, even if it is from outside the  
24          higher education, traditional scope.

25          MR. TOVAR: I'm sorry. What area did

1           you say you worked in?

2           MS. HORVATH: I'm in student conduct.

3           MR. TOVAR: All right. Thank you.

4           I think those are all valid and  
5 relevant points. I think there is a  
6 challenge everywhere right now hiring  
7 people. And I would be the first to  
8 encourage the administration, if we have --  
9 we kind of went through that with the head  
10 of internal audit over the last few years  
11 as to his struggle into finding candidates  
12 to work in even that department. And so we  
13 had talked through some innovative ways and  
14 some different ways to attract people.

15          As to your comment as to bringing  
16 somebody from outside of higher ed, listen,  
17 I would just tell you, we're not close to  
18 either of that. We don't want to limit our  
19 search in any way. We had people here  
20 yesterday say, you know, you need someone  
21 that really understands South Florida or  
22 Miami, so they need to be from here. And  
23 then you had other people saying, you need  
24 to really bring somebody from outside  
25 because, if not, they are going to come



1 with the same mindset.

2 I would just tell you as far as -- and  
3 remember, each of us up here speak for  
4 ourselves, and we are all parts of a  
5 committee and we are parts of a board. So  
6 I don't want anything to be misinterpreted  
7 that, you know, that my thought is the same  
8 as others that I serve with, but my view of  
9 this is, every time I get in Bill's ear, is  
10 Bill, bring as many candidates as possible,  
11 as wide as possible, as diverse as  
12 possible, with different experiences,  
13 because somebody who has reached a pinnacle  
14 in one area maybe would be a great leader  
15 here, or there may be some phenomenal  
16 president out there that wants to be in  
17 South Florida, or some phenomenal dean or  
18 some phenomenal provost. But we want to  
19 check all the other boxes with exactly what  
20 you are saying, innovative, charismatic.

21 I mean, if I sat there and I would  
22 observe and -- you know, our previous  
23 president, regardless of the events that  
24 took place that none of us were happy  
25 about, but we also have to acknowledge many

1 of his accomplishments and his dynamic  
2 leadership style and his charisma and that  
3 how you would go to many events and he  
4 would always be there. So every time I  
5 think back at that, I think about what it  
6 takes to be the president of a university  
7 that has approximately 57,000 students, 12  
8 to 14,000 faculty and staff, part of Miami,  
9 part of South Florida, it's many boxes to  
10 check.

11 And then we task that same person with  
12 being the face of the university, going out  
13 and doing fundraising, which we need to do,  
14 we need to build our endowment, we need to  
15 be less reliant on the state, which a lot  
16 of our funding comes from; we are not  
17 allowed to raise tuition. So that becomes  
18 a challenge as to some of those rules. So  
19 it's a tough, tough job.

20 But if you find a person that wants to  
21 serve, that wants to make a difference,  
22 that wants to leave a legacy, this is a  
23 great job to have.

24 So I hear everything you are saying  
25 and, again, all of the comments are being

1 taken down and we just have that many more  
2 boxes to check. So thank you. Thanks for  
3 those comments.

4 MR. FUNK: Thank you.

5 Who would like to speak next?

6 Joerg, we need to hear from you, sir.

7 MR. REINHOLD: I would just like to  
8 thank the previous speaker because it's a  
9 very important point that she made about  
10 the -- about the staff.

11 Supporting the staff so that the  
12 faculty and student have an excellent  
13 supportive staff available, because if we  
14 can rely on the staff, the faculty can  
15 focus on what their primary task is, which  
16 is teaching and research, and that needs an  
17 excellent staff. And the staff need to be  
18 able -- we need to be able to attract staff  
19 and also have the support for them that  
20 they can afford to be here and, sort of,  
21 make our life better so that we can do our  
22 job.

23 So I think you made a very excellent  
24 point there.

25 MR. FUNK: Thank you, Joerg.

1           Maybe a few comments that we have  
2           received.

3           MS. TRELLES:   Yes.

4           So we do have various comments and  
5           questions from our virtual attendees.

6           The first one is:

7           I would like to see someone who  
8           understands and is keenly aware of the  
9           Latina, Latino, and Latinx context.  
10          Additionally, it is essential that the  
11          candidate is a firm believer in public  
12          education. The candidate must be prepared  
13          to defend academic freedom in the face of  
14          great pressures from political forces.

15          MR. TOVAR:   Okay.   Dean?

16          MR. COLSON:   We obviously shouldn't  
17          hire anybody who doesn't come to South  
18          Florida with a love of our culture. And if  
19          you don't appreciate a diverse community,  
20          this is not the right job for you. I mean,  
21          this is a -- if you don't get excited about  
22          going up to a window and paying a dollar  
23          for an espresso, then, you know, go  
24          somewhere else. I think it's gone to \$2  
25          for an espresso, but it's one of the great

1 things about South Florida, and it's what  
2 makes us different.

3 So we have to have somebody that  
4 certainly appreciates the greatness of our  
5 community. And it is a great community.  
6 And so, you know, I agree with that. You  
7 know, I'm here to listen.

8 This is probably the last day I attend  
9 any of this because I turn it all over to  
10 Roger and his group and Deanne, and they  
11 are going to take this over, and I wait to  
12 hear what they are going to say. But I  
13 certainly agree with that comment, we have  
14 to have somebody that certainly  
15 understands -- and I don't remember the  
16 rest of the question.

17 MR. TOVAR: The academic freedom --

18 MR. FUNK: The political forces.

19 MR. COLSON: Oh. Listen, I've been on  
20 this board for six years, seven years, I've  
21 been on the board of governors before that,  
22 and I've been on a University of Miami  
23 board for almost 20 years. And to date, I  
24 have never been called by an elected  
25 official to pressure me to do anything. It

1           just hasn't happened.

2                   And it didn't happen -- when we made  
3           the decision to make a move on the  
4           president, you know, there were some rumors  
5           that I was being forced to make that move  
6           by the governor. Nothing was further from  
7           the truth, you know? And within 48 hours,  
8           everybody knew it wasn't true.

9                   So I think the academic freedom is  
10          important. I think shared governance is  
11          important. I think that everybody on our  
12          board believes in academic freedom.

13                   I think having conversations about it  
14          is good. I think that's -- that kind of --  
15          those kind of discussions make you aware of  
16          what's important in the university  
17          community.

18                   On the other hand, I also think it's  
19          extremely important that people feel  
20          comfortable expressing their views in a  
21          classroom or in public spaces on a  
22          university campus that may be different  
23          than other people's views, and we have to  
24          show tolerance for that. And I think FIU  
25          has done one of the great jobs in America

1 about being a place that welcomes diverse  
2 opinions so far, and I want to maintain  
3 that.

4 And the next president we have, I will  
5 assure you, will be committed to academic  
6 freedom, but will also be committed to  
7 those University of Chicago principles that  
8 came out about having the right to have  
9 free discussion on -- regardless of the  
10 points of view of the speaker.

11 MR. FUNK: Thanks, Dean.

12 We have another speaker in person.

13 MS. WELLS: Hi. Thank you.

14 Leanne Wells, I am the Associate  
15 Director for Faculty Leadership and  
16 Success, and Senior Director for the Center  
17 for the Advancement of Teaching here at  
18 FIU.

19 And I'd like to carry on this  
20 conversation that was introduced by the  
21 last comment. I was actually coming up  
22 here to say this before that comment was  
23 read.

24 Faculty actually feel attacked right  
25 now. So it's not so much faculty are

1           concerned that somebody is contacting  
2           somebody on the board of governors or board  
3           of trustees and influencing that. They are  
4           feeling attacked by legislation, et cetera.

5           And so what do we do to find somebody  
6           that helps not only do the things that you  
7           were just talking about, Dean Colson, but  
8           also will help faculty with and relay to  
9           our governance, both at the BOG and the  
10          state legislation, the importance of the  
11          job that faculty do and what happens in  
12          their classroom? How do we ensure that  
13          when the faculty -- or somebody that can  
14          support the faculty in a way that comes  
15          from understanding what faculty actually do  
16          with their time and how they design their  
17          classes?

18          MR. TOVAR: Well, listen, I think it's  
19          key -- you know, this is a big job. And  
20          the leadership that is required in a job  
21          like this requires a lot of skills. And  
22          yes, you hear things in the paper and you  
23          have politicians on both sides that will  
24          express, I want this or I want to do this,  
25          and many times they are playing up to their



1 constituency and what they think will help  
2 them in the future. So you got to take  
3 that and balance that.

4 But at the end of the day, the only  
5 thing that I could be up here speaking for  
6 is what goes on at FIU and what goes on  
7 within the board.

8 And I would second what Dean has  
9 mentioned to me -- has mentioned here. At  
10 no time before I was put on this board or  
11 any time subsequent to coming on this  
12 board, have I ever gotten a call saying,  
13 hey, you got to get those faculty in check.  
14 You got to get this going.

15 So we do have to understand that we  
16 have to balance what we do. There are  
17 people that get annoyed for some reason  
18 because someone said something. We have to  
19 realize how large these institutions are,  
20 you know, and again, I'm going to be  
21 repetitive as to what Dean said, we have to  
22 be a place that everyone is free to express  
23 their opinion, that we're hearing both  
24 sides of the equation.

25 And so I think some of the perception

1           and some of that pressure that people feel  
2           they are under, I would ask them to step  
3           back and say, has that ever really come  
4           into play into what they are doing? And if  
5           they feel it is, we're always available to  
6           speak.

7           And so I kind of welcome us sitting  
8           here today, because, really we're here to  
9           talk about what do we view as important for  
10          the future president? and part of that is  
11          what you are saying; but part of it is also  
12          for you all to have the opportunity to hear  
13          from us.

14          And my passion in being here and being  
15          on the board and the time I put into this,  
16          is that I feel that I do have -- that I owe  
17          to give back.

18          I grew up a mile and a half from here,  
19          I watched this university grow up, I  
20          attended here. And so I have a passion for  
21          what this university does, what it means to  
22          be community, how it affects our  
23          businesses, how it affects the labor  
24          market.

25          So I would tell you, you all keep

1           doing what you are doing, what you are here  
2           to teach, to educate, to support the  
3           students.

4           And what drives me is when I go to the  
5           commencement exercises and see those  
6           students that most are first gen, that they  
7           are so proud, they are hard workers, they  
8           are very different than a lot of the  
9           students that come out of most  
10          universities. Most of them had to work  
11          their way through college. Their parents  
12          have -- a lot of them left other countries  
13          to have an opportunity here in the U.S. So  
14          we serve a very different mission than most  
15          universities.

16          So I hear what you are saying. I  
17          appreciate what you are saying. But I  
18          would just ask, always step back and say,  
19          is this perception or is it reality?

20          MR. COLSON: Can I add?

21          We have to find a president that can  
22          walk this tightrope that says, we are a  
23          public university funded by the  
24          legislatures in Tallahassee, a budget  
25          signed off by a governor in Tallahassee,

1           and we need increased funding. We are not  
2           funded as well as we should be by the  
3           number of students we have. So we're  
4           constantly up there doing our best, and our  
5           board of trustees works hard at that, and  
6           we have help from the faculty in that  
7           regard, too. So we have to walk that  
8           tightrope knowing that we can't just offend  
9           the people that fund us.

10                 Yet, at the same time, we also have  
11           faculty who are concerned. You know,  
12           they're interested in academic freedom. So  
13           that's a delicate tightrope for the  
14           president to walk. Our last president did  
15           it well. He did a good job of that.

16                 And so, you know, it's part of the  
17           skill set that Roger and Bill are going to  
18           have to look for when we hire our next  
19           president, because if you can't walk that  
20           tightrope, you are not going to succeed in  
21           any public university in Florida, or any  
22           public university anywhere.

23                 MS. WELLS: I guess that's what I'm  
24           saying is, how do we find that person that  
25           has demonstrated the capacity to walk that

1 tightrope, you know, here in a place where  
2 nobody has ever had these issues before?

3 MR. COLSON: It's part of an  
4 evaluation. I mean, if you are coming from  
5 a small private university and you have  
6 never had to play, you know, this type of a  
7 game, then you are going to have to really  
8 impress Roger and the other members of the  
9 search committee that you have the skill  
10 set to learn how to do this.

11 You know, this is one of the hardest  
12 jobs in the country, in my opinion. Being  
13 a university president, in general, is an  
14 extraordinarily difficult job. Everybody  
15 thinks, hey, you sit in the president's box  
16 and have a cocktail watching a football  
17 game. You know, you get emails from your  
18 president at 4 o'clock in the morning, you  
19 know, tragedies happen. You know, you  
20 dread Saturday night because you know  
21 something is going to happen that's going  
22 to cause a problem on Sunday. And you  
23 don't get the day off on Sunday if you are  
24 a university president. So these are hard  
25 jobs. And we've been, you know, blessed as

1 a university with 40, 50 years of great  
2 leadership.

3 And so, you know, Roger has got a big  
4 -- and the search committee, they got a big  
5 job ahead to find the next one.

6 MR. TOVAR: Dean, you haven't been  
7 listening the last couple of days. I said  
8 this is the best job. You are going to  
9 scare people.

10 MR. COLSON: It's a great job, but  
11 it's a hard job.

12 MR. TOVAR: And I would agree. I  
13 would agree. And that's why we really have  
14 to do an exhaustive search, and there's a  
15 lot of boxes to check. So points all well  
16 taken. Thank you. Thank you.

17 MR. FUNK: From the search point of  
18 view, one of the advantages we have is that  
19 the individuals that we're going to be  
20 considering are pretty public figures. And  
21 if they have been engaged in any  
22 controversy around these kinds of issues,  
23 that will be well documented when we do the  
24 various background reports.

25 Secondly, though, the search

1 committee will have the opportunity to  
2 interface with the candidates that they  
3 evaluate and distill to. And I can assure  
4 you that a lot of that dialogue will  
5 pertain to these kinds of issues.

6 And very pointed questions, how would  
7 you handle this? If you get a call from  
8 the governor about this, how would you  
9 respond?

10 So there will be a lot of dialogue the  
11 search committee will have the opportunity  
12 to evaluate.

13 And then when we do referencing, you  
14 just can't minimize the importance -- or  
15 can't overstate the importance of good  
16 referencing. You know, it's funny, every  
17 letter of interest that we receive from  
18 candidates, we have not seen a letter yet  
19 that said, I'm autocratic, dictatorial, and  
20 controlling. It's remarkable to me how  
21 everybody is collaborative, a team builder,  
22 delegates. And then we do these reference  
23 calls, and they are saying, please hire  
24 this person, we want to get rid of them  
25 because they're autocratic, dictatorial,

1 and controlling.

2 But certainly this is going to be very  
3 thorough. It's not quite a science yet,  
4 but it's an art form that's getting better  
5 and better about surfacing those kinds of  
6 dimensions of a candidate's history, style,  
7 perspective.

8 MR. TOVAR: And the other thing I  
9 would add to what Bill is saying is that  
10 somebody has the perception of themselves  
11 being one thing, and then when you call a  
12 reference it's another. And I think that's  
13 the importance of the committee that Dean  
14 has put together, as to where each one of  
15 those individuals come from, because what I  
16 might think about may not be what one of  
17 the other committee members think about or  
18 vise-versa.

19 So hopefully working together, with  
20 all the life experiences that are at that  
21 table, will help us get to the right  
22 choices as to people that the committee  
23 feels have that demeanor and the right  
24 skill set to lead this university.

25 It's really interesting how the



1 process, because there's a set of  
2 guidelines that we have to follow within  
3 the process. This is not a process that  
4 we've come up with. It's very specific  
5 from publishing an article, to having to  
6 have a website, to having certain  
7 statements, to who needs to be represented  
8 on the committee. Then it goes to the  
9 board, then it goes to the board of  
10 governors. So there really is some checks  
11 and balances that are in place here to get  
12 to the right point.

13 And so I think that should give a lot  
14 of people some assurances that that is in  
15 place and there is a process to it.

16 MR. FUNK: We have two mics open just  
17 waiting for someone to come and share some  
18 comments. And if not, and while you are  
19 walking toward the mic, maybe Sofia can  
20 share some more comments with us.

21 MS. TRELLES: Yes. We definitely have  
22 received a good number of comments and  
23 questions from our virtual participants.

24 The first one is going to be:

25 Whenever I walk by the hallway in the

1 PC building with the portraits of the past  
2 presidents, I cannot help but notice that  
3 all the faces looking back at me are male  
4 and white.

5 I feel this is a great opportunity to  
6 change this. We have an opportunity to  
7 bring a president that our students can see  
8 themselves in.

9 Is this part of the search committee's  
10 vision?

11 MR. FUNK: I'll take a first stab at  
12 that.

13 I would just point out our firm has  
14 been committed to the notion of diversity,  
15 equity, and inclusion, and we are very  
16 proud of the fact that we have broken the  
17 color line and the gender line at over 50  
18 institutions around the country.

19 And by that I mean, in the  
20 presidential role alone, we have been a  
21 part of processes where the first woman or  
22 the first individual of color, an  
23 underrepresented individual has been hired  
24 as the president or chancellor. So we  
25 don't just talk the talk, we walk the walk.

1           And in the last six years, we recently  
2           looked at our records, compiled the  
3           completions at the president, provost,  
4           dean, and vice-president level. Over  
5           56 percent of our placements have been  
6           either women or individuals of color. So  
7           it's something that we live every day, it's  
8           something that we're dedicated to, and  
9           certainly the search committee expects a  
10          very diverse pool of candidates to  
11          consider.

12           So, certainly we are very much in  
13          alignment with what the questioner has  
14          asked.

15           MR. TOVAR: Do you want to add  
16          anything to that, Dean?

17           MR. COLSON: No. I mean, it's wide  
18          open. I mean, I would be disappointed if  
19          we had -- if the search committee sent back  
20          to the board of trustees, you know, five  
21          white males, you know. But we got to have  
22          good candidates, but the pipe -- you know,  
23          universities around the country or the  
24          gender numbers are changing dramatically in  
25          terms of the number of women being named

1           presidents. And we are wide open. You  
2           know, if it's the best -- I want the best  
3           leader for FIU. That's all I want.

4           MR. FUNK: Another comment?

5           MS. TRELLES: Yes. We have received a  
6           good number of comments, so I definitely  
7           want to make sure that we hear them.

8           The next comment is:

9           FIU is not a state university. It is  
10          a global university. The new president  
11          needs to have that mindset.

12          Furthermore, an additional comment  
13          that we received is:

14          The person must understand and  
15          appreciate and be inspired by the complex  
16          mission of a large, public, highest  
17          research activity, R1, metropolitan,  
18          Hispanic serving institution.

19          MR. TOVAR: I would agree to it all.  
20          I don't know there's much to comment there.  
21          We all understand the importance of all of  
22          that. So, great point.

23          MS. TRELLES: I agree.

24          So now we have a question from our  
25          virtual participants:

1           As a professional recruiting and  
2           search firm, how are you addressing the  
3           current trends across employers and higher  
4           education in the employee great exodus? I  
5           assume that the presidents are not immune  
6           from this and only staying in a position  
7           for a limited amount of time.

8           Also, I feel like it is an important  
9           challenge that any president will need to  
10          actively and immediately address, as we  
11          have a number of high level interim  
12          positions available at FIU.

13          MR. FUNK: That's interesting. The  
14          average tenure of all four-year presidents,  
15          according to the American Council on  
16          Education, is currently 6.5 years. That  
17          number had been as high as eight and a half  
18          years just not so long ago. And I think  
19          it's reflective of a number of things, just  
20          our general demographics. But also I think  
21          it relates to the challenge of these  
22          positions.

23          You know, there are some presidents  
24          who feel after five years or so, they have  
25          expended all of their political capital and

1           they are now in a status quo situation and  
2           look for a new challenge. Others probably  
3           are just worn out by all of the challenges  
4           they've had to face. But that tenure  
5           number is going down.

6           We find that those institutions that  
7           make the greatest progress are those  
8           individuals who have a continuity of  
9           leadership, not just in the president  
10          position, but in the board and in the  
11          administration.

12          To the point of some of the vacancies  
13          in key administrative roles here at the  
14          university, we find that most presidential  
15          candidates view that as a plus. It gives  
16          them the opportunity to be involved in  
17          those searches, at least at the end and  
18          during some of the selection process, it  
19          helps them build their own team. So that's  
20          not necessarily looked at negatively.

21          On the other hand, they are hopeful  
22          that there will be someone who will be near  
23          them that can give them the history and  
24          provide a continuity of what has happened  
25          in the past. But I think knowing what

1           these vacancies are now, I think most  
2           candidates would view that positively.

3           And the candidates themselves, you  
4           know, a good candidate would be reluctant  
5           to accept one of those jobs if they didn't  
6           know who the president was. So, you know,  
7           you have to look at it that way as well.

8           So we need to bring the president in,  
9           and I think potential candidates for those  
10          other jobs would be more forthcoming and  
11          we'd probably have a richer pool.

12          MR. TOVAR: The other thing I would  
13          add, because I think this topic has been  
14          brought up as to some positions being  
15          vacant. I think when you get into a  
16          university this size, you are always going  
17          to have transition, and you have transition  
18          for different reasons. I know there's one  
19          dean that I believe there's age, medical  
20          issues, you have another dean that left  
21          because I believe she became chancellor of  
22          one of the universities system.

23          So the important thing is to have the  
24          bench. And the reality is, we do have the  
25          bench and we have filled in these

1 positions.

2 If you look at when our president  
3 left, to have a person like Dr. Jessell  
4 with the knowledge that he has, with the  
5 tenure that he has. So it's not like we've  
6 got a stopgap that's not measuring up. As  
7 Dean likes to say many times, the trains  
8 are running on time.

9 And then if you look at then  
10 Dr. Jessell, him moving out of his position  
11 and then Amy moving into his position, if  
12 you look at the provost and having  
13 Dr. Bejar there with her knowledge and  
14 tenure and expertise. And as I talk to the  
15 leadership, everybody is very comfortable  
16 as to where we're at.

17 So I understand where the comment, but  
18 I think if you step back and look at each  
19 of those individual situations, they are  
20 each very unique.

21 And the other thing that I think Dean  
22 would tell you, and anybody on the board  
23 would tell you, is that, you know, we are  
24 very comfortable with all the folks that we  
25 have in place today.



1           And there's some people that are in  
2           interim roles, and that's just because we  
3           want to make sure we get it right before we  
4           -- whatever input we have on naming people  
5           permanent, that we do it -- because it's  
6           interesting, they say there's a lot of  
7           people in interim roles, and then say,  
8           well, how are you going to have a president  
9           in place by the fall? So it's either  
10          you're too slow or you're too fast.

11          And even as far as naming the future  
12          president, our desire would be hopefully to  
13          identify somebody, and for that person to  
14          be put through the process that we do have  
15          somebody in place by the fall. But if we  
16          don't, we're comfortable, too, and we have  
17          the right people in place and the right  
18          leadership and the right structure that we  
19          will continue accomplishing and moving up  
20          and getting to where we want to be.

21          Dean, would you like to add?

22          MR. COLSON: I would like to point  
23          out, also, that we're probably only three  
24          or four months ahead of where we would have  
25          been had we not had an unanticipated change

1 in the presidency.

2 I think Dr. Rosenberg would have  
3 announced in May -- April or May, this  
4 month or next month, that he was intending  
5 to retire at the end of the next academic  
6 year. So we would be going into a search,  
7 and that search would have started probably  
8 in June or July, instead of -- instead of  
9 April, you know. So we're not -- and once  
10 that search started, I doubt we would have  
11 filled any of these positions. We would  
12 have maintained the interim status because  
13 we do want the next president to have the  
14 opportunity to make those hires.

15 And as Bill has said, your best deans  
16 aren't going to come until they know who  
17 their president is. They are not going to  
18 come for a president -- you know, you don't  
19 want the person who just wants to get a  
20 promotion. You want the person that you  
21 have recruited who is a superstar, and they  
22 are not going to come unless they know who  
23 their president is.

24 So, if anything, the process is going  
25 to be a little bit quicker than it would

1 have been otherwise.

2 MR. FUNK: Great.

3 Anyone else in the room that would  
4 like to make a comment? And if not, we can  
5 continue.

6 MS. TRELLES: So the next comment from  
7 our virtual participants is:

8 We need someone who is not an FIU  
9 insider; fresh look and perspective.  
10 Someone who is a woman or a person of  
11 color. Someone who will have a team in  
12 place that will recognize the hard work of  
13 our staff administrators through experience  
14 and education, and not friendship. Someone  
15 who will not charge students for everything  
16 at the university. Someone who understands  
17 the value of its employees while aiming to  
18 be competitive nationally and  
19 internationally.

20 Thank you for reading my statement.

21 MR. TOVAR: I think good points, but  
22 my goal is not to be -- not to say it's  
23 going to be this or that.

24 My goal is for Mr. Funk to go out  
25 there and bring us a wide pool of qualified

1 candidates, for the committee to go through  
2 their process and make their decision as to  
3 the person that can take this university  
4 forward to higher levels, and make this  
5 community shine and serve the community.

6 So, I hear what's being said. And  
7 it's interesting, again, the back and forth  
8 as to, we need to bring somebody from the  
9 outside, but we need to bring someone from  
10 the inside because they need to know; so  
11 it's an interesting dynamic.

12 But the only thing I would assure the  
13 person that writes those comments is, I'm  
14 going to push hard with the committee  
15 members that are with me to explore every  
16 possible option, to have a considerable  
17 dialogue as to who would be the best leader  
18 for this university going forward.

19 MR. FUNK: Deanne, I see you have  
20 stepped to the mic. We're eager to hear  
21 your thoughts.

22 MS. BUTCHEY: Thank you.

23 First of all, I'd like to thank  
24 everyone for giving me the opportunity to  
25 serve in this very important search

1 committee.

2 You know, I came here as a doctoral  
3 student 30 years ago, I came from Ivy  
4 League schools in Canada, Ivey School of  
5 Business, York University Schulich School,  
6 and everyone said, you are ready to do your  
7 Ph.D., why come here?

8 And when I did get my Ph.D., they  
9 asked, why are you staying here? And, you  
10 know, you are -- every comment in here,  
11 every question in here is basically  
12 answering that question. There's so much  
13 opportunity. You don't have opportunity in  
14 some of these other schools.

15 Miami itself, there's so much  
16 opportunity here. I mean, why is it in the  
17 last two years that house prices have gone  
18 up so much? Why is it hedge funds -- I  
19 teach finance, and a lot of my students --  
20 people keep reaching out to me, find me the  
21 best student for my organization. And I  
22 said, well, do you know what? The best  
23 students are going to New York, the best  
24 students are going to these wonderful  
25 places. Let's keep them here. Let's find

1           ways to integrate them directly in Miami  
2           into our expanding trajectory of growth and  
3           prominence. Cosmopolitan city that we are,  
4           there's so much opportunity.

5           I also want to remind everyone that  
6           it's not just about diversity and  
7           ethnicity, but diversity of opinion. You  
8           know, many of us, whether -- you know, I  
9           come from business, but my undergraduate  
10          degree is econometrics.

11          So it's very important that we  
12          recognize all of this, and the new  
13          president also appreciates and recognizes  
14          that diversity of opinion, and the  
15          importance of being charismatic, energetic,  
16          and the ability to build his or her legacy,  
17          because I don't think there's any  
18          university in this country now that's going  
19          to be experiencing the kind of exponential  
20          growth that we've had in the last few years  
21          and will continue to have. I'm certain of  
22          that.

23          Thank you for listening.

24          MR. TOVAR: Dr. Butchey, the faculty  
25          should be very happy to have you leading

1           them. And congratulations, I heard you  
2           were elected yesterday as president of the  
3           faculty senate yesterday. Congratulations.  
4           And I'm honored to serve with you on this  
5           selection committee. So, thank you. Thank  
6           you. And I agree with you.

7           MR. FUNK: We won't make you wait in  
8           anticipation, but we have yet another  
9           speaker.

10          MR. DRUCKER: Hello. Thank you for  
11          taking my question.

12          My name is David Drucker. I am a  
13          current graduate student here at FIU, as  
14          well as an alumnus and an employee in FIU  
15          strategic communications.

16          My question is around how much  
17          athletics and the overall campus atmosphere  
18          is being considered in this decision? As a  
19          big FIU sports fan myself, I love the job  
20          that our new athletic director, Carr, is  
21          doing.

22          And so my question is, how important  
23          is it to the committee that the next  
24          president be an advocate for excellence in  
25          athletics?

1 Thank you.

2 MR. TOVAR: Dean, can I take this?

3 MR. COLSON: I want you to take it.

4 MR. TOVAR: I would tell you, very,  
5 very important. And I'm glad -- you know,  
6 it's not your typical question, but I would  
7 tell you it's very important.

8 I happen to be -- one of Dean's first  
9 functions as the head of the board was, we  
10 had an athletic committee, which I was just  
11 named the head of, and he got rid of it.  
12 But he got rid of it for the right reason,  
13 because there was not a real purpose to  
14 have that committee, but then he named me  
15 the liaison between the board and  
16 athletics.

17 And as you know, back in November we  
18 named a new athletic director, and within  
19 weeks, we named a new football coach.

20 If you look at basketball, with the  
21 women's basketball, Coach Burks is, to me,  
22 doing a phenomenal job, and the passion  
23 that's there.

24 If you look at men's basketball with  
25 Coach Jeremy Ballard -- you know, frankly,



1 I took my wife to one of those basketball  
2 games, and the energy and the entertainment  
3 that's there, frankly, is off the charts.  
4 I'd rather -- please, don't get mad at  
5 me -- I'd rather go to one of those games  
6 than even a Heat game. I mean, that's how  
7 fun it was, and the dedication that those  
8 athletes have.

9 You get to football, and we have a new  
10 football coach. I went out to a practice  
11 about two weeks ago, I went to the  
12 scrimmage last Saturday night. There was  
13 more energy and turnout there than a lot of  
14 the football games.

15 And all of that together is, that's  
16 what brings the alumni engagement, that's  
17 what brings the community engagement.

18 Now, one of the things that we have to  
19 be sure of is, anything that the university  
20 does, we need to be relevant in. And so  
21 that's what was driving me off the charts  
22 the last few years as far as football. And  
23 so, I think what AD Carr has been  
24 challenged with is to make sure how we're  
25 relevant, the condition of those

1 facilities, I toured those facilities three  
2 weeks ago. There's a plan in place as to  
3 even some of those plunge pools, how do we  
4 upgrade those as to Pantherizing the  
5 hallway?

6 So getting back to your question, that  
7 will be one of the key questions that I  
8 will be asking for our future president is,  
9 how do they envision athletics and their  
10 engagement? There's nothing better than  
11 going to a baseball game, and the president  
12 of the university is there and the athletic  
13 director being there, or going to a women's  
14 softball game, or what are we -- our  
15 women's dive team and swimming team, which  
16 they are always one of the top ranked teams  
17 in the country. And so there's many things  
18 going on.

19 If you go over to the athletic  
20 facilities, there's the tennis courts are  
21 being completely redone and upgraded. So  
22 there is a commitment to it.

23 We still need to do a better job as to  
24 fundraising for athletics. Remember,  
25 there's also a limitation in the state

1 system as to the flow of funds. And so you  
2 can't take E and G money and put it into  
3 athletics. We think there's other ways.

4 We're encouraging the board of  
5 governors to relook at some of the  
6 auxiliary funds that could help athletics,  
7 because we do have certain things that need  
8 to be addressed as to facilities and  
9 lighting.

10 And so my goal is that the student  
11 experience, be it the student that is not  
12 involved in athletics, but if we are in  
13 athletics and we have student athletes,  
14 that we truly support them, because we  
15 could ask them to win all we want -- again,  
16 I was over at the athletic facilities, and  
17 they have all these cool computer programs  
18 as to when the athletes are lifting weights  
19 and as to their movement and as to the  
20 percentage as to how quickly they go up and  
21 down, but unfortunately the Wi-Fi in there  
22 was not up to par as to how to run those  
23 programs. So immediately, I got on the  
24 phone with Dr. Jessell, and I think within  
25 hours, he had the IT department over there

1           seeing how we upgraded the Wi-Fi because he  
2           is supportive of that.

3           If you talk to Dr. Bejar as to the  
4           game day experience and whether we allow  
5           tailgating or not tailgating, and there's a  
6           balance there. So we don't want it to  
7           become unsafe for the students, but I think  
8           there's things that we can do to make that  
9           tailgating experience better. And how do  
10          we get those folks that are tailgating into  
11          the games? So I can go on and on.

12          So does it sound like I'm engaged in  
13          the athletic side? I think we can do  
14          better. I think we're trying to put the  
15          pieces in place as to the AD, as to the  
16          coaches, and we do need to be relevant. I  
17          think it's something that the community  
18          pays attention to. You have, by anyone's  
19          count, 250,000 to 300,000 alumni.

20          And then look at last year soccer when  
21          we went to the playoffs for soccer, I mean,  
22          the stadium was packed.

23          And so, the minute you become relevant  
24          in these sports, you get a lot of the  
25          engagement, you bring people back on

1 campus.

2 And there's other things that I don't  
3 want to get into that are being worked on  
4 to further this. And again, how do we  
5 support these swim teams? We don't have a  
6 pool on campus. We have one in North  
7 Miami. We don't have a true dive pool,  
8 swimming pool here for those athletes. And  
9 so, again, are we doing enough to support  
10 those students that are participating  
11 there?

12 So great question. I think it's going  
13 to be a great question to ask the  
14 candidates, as to how they view athletics?  
15 Because we are a D1 school. And if we are  
16 going to be involved in this, we got to go  
17 all in, and we got to do it right.

18 So perfect. Thank you.

19 MR. DRUCKER: Thank you.

20 MR. FUNK: It's interesting, we -- the  
21 current president of the NCAA, a fellow  
22 named Mark Emmert, prior to accepting that  
23 role had been the president of the  
24 University of Washington where we had  
25 recruited him. And I remember talking to

1 him when he accepted that role with the  
2 NCAA. I said, gee, why did you do that?  
3 This is an area that's always very active.

4 But from a president's point of view,  
5 you know, they stay up late at night  
6 worrying about many, many things. But when  
7 you think about those things that get a lot  
8 of publicity when they go wrong, it's  
9 athletics, the medical school, these are  
10 areas that are complex, the general public  
11 has a keen interest in, the money involved  
12 in these enterprises is immense.

13 You know, in many places, the medical  
14 side of the house is almost half the  
15 budget. Athletics usually has its own  
16 separate foundation and the like. But it's  
17 certainly something that a president has to  
18 be attuned to. And, you know, certainly  
19 advantages in terms of student experience,  
20 morale, school spirit, the athletic program  
21 can be central to all of that.

22 Who's next?

23 MS. TRELLES: Me.

24 MR. FUNK: There you go.

25 MS. TRELLES: I do have a comment from

1           one of the audience members.

2           The next president should be a  
3           visionary, an innovator, a team player and  
4           a good listener.

5           The next president must resist the  
6           trends in higher education that focus only  
7           on the bottom line and perceives education  
8           as a mere product and students as its  
9           customers. A university has a higher  
10          purpose, and the next president must be a  
11          champion of that.

12          MR. COLSON: What was the last thing?

13          MS. TRELLES: They must be a champion  
14          of that.

15          MR. TOVAR: I think all of our  
16          presidents have been visionaries. It's  
17          always been dreaming bigger and better.

18          If you just go back to Dr. Maidique's  
19          day, to think that we could have a law  
20          school, to think that we could have a  
21          medical school, to think -- you know, what  
22          we are today. You think about Dr.  
23          Rosenberg's vision and you see some of  
24          those things coming in place today as to a  
25          lot of the on-campus housing and you see

1           that new dorm going up, which again, when I  
2           was at that practice -- or the scrimmage on  
3           Saturday, and you see that dorm right next  
4           to the stadium and the lighting, and how  
5           the windows were thought out. And I think  
6           it was a lot of input from the faculty as  
7           to the glass, that it's a very specific  
8           type of glass so that the birds don't fly  
9           into it. And I was like, I didn't even  
10          know that existed, and if you look at the  
11          preserve and the pieces that are in place  
12          here as to the vision going forward.

13                 So I would agree 100 percent that the  
14          sixth president needs to have that type of  
15          mindset as to, not what are we, what can we  
16          be? And it's waking up every morning and  
17          thinking, what am I going to accomplish  
18          today? Not dreading that I've got to go do  
19          this today.

20                 So yes, that type of personality is  
21          key for me, and I would assume it is for  
22          every other committee member and board  
23          member as to have someone that truly is  
24          visionary and that looks at the community  
25          and sees what we are already doing and what



1           can we be and what can we do? So 100  
2           percent.

3           MR. COLSON: I would say our bottom  
4           line -- and when you use that term, you are  
5           normally thinking about budgets -- our  
6           bottom line is -- when I look at this is,  
7           how are we doing on graduation rates? How  
8           are we doing on improving our funded  
9           research? How are we doing on getting our  
10          kids jobs? You know, that's the way I want  
11          to measure our success, on those types of  
12          metrics. And I want new and fresh ideas  
13          about how to improve all those things.

14          I mean, one of the things that I think  
15          we've learned in athletics is just by  
16          having a change in leader, doesn't mean  
17          your last leader wasn't good, but when your  
18          last leader has been there 15 years, a new  
19          person can bring new ideas. And we're  
20          going to get a whole bunch of new ideas  
21          with our next leader.

22          And I think that's -- our -- you know,  
23          our bottom line should be measured by how  
24          great FIU is in the world of higher  
25          education and what a great job it's doing

1 in its role in South Florida, in the state,  
2 because it's an important role.

3 MR. TOVAR: And the other thing I  
4 would add there is to only thinking budget.  
5 You know, that's not my experience as to  
6 sitting on the board. There is a reality  
7 that we are limited with the funds that we  
8 have, and then we have to be creative to,  
9 number one, how do we utilize those funds?  
10 And how do we go out there and secure more  
11 funds?

12 And frankly, we have to be grateful to  
13 the state as to some of the additional  
14 recurring funding, because that's the  
15 magical phrase when you get to the  
16 legislature and you get to funding. One  
17 thing is for them to give you 30 million  
18 today one time, another thing is when they  
19 give you recurring funding. And that's  
20 something that the state has done for us,  
21 and we have to be grateful and acknowledge  
22 that.

23 And if you look at this year's budget,  
24 they are giving us recurring funding for  
25 nursing. We're getting a significant

1 amount of funding for deferred maintenance,  
2 which is -- you know, in years gone past,  
3 there used to be constant funding for  
4 deferred maintenance. Now it's, you know,  
5 you can go two, three, four, five years  
6 without funding, and we are getting that  
7 funding this year.

8 So, you know, we need to be fiscally  
9 responsible. We need to look at where  
10 money is being well invested and where  
11 there's places that we can be more  
12 efficient, more effective. But we are not  
13 running a true business here. We're  
14 serving the public.

15 And so, as part of serving the public,  
16 how do we utilize limited resources in the  
17 best way?

18 So I would just hope that sometimes  
19 people step back and understand, you know,  
20 there's a responsibility with it. And I  
21 happen to chair the finance committee,  
22 also. And frankly, it's impressive how the  
23 administration here manages that budget.  
24 And it is a very large budget, but it's not  
25 an endless amount of resources, and we're

1 serving a lot of people.

2 So, point well taken, but I would just  
3 differ a little bit that we're not  
4 budget-centric, but we have to manage the  
5 resources that we have knowing that it's  
6 not unlimited.

7 MR. COLSON: You know, we should also  
8 point out that a couple of years ago, over  
9 two years, we got \$32 million of recurring  
10 funds from the state; 32 million recurring.  
11 I've said this before, it takes 7,  
12 \$800 million of endowment to throw off 32  
13 million recurring. That's an extraordinary  
14 amount of money that we got from the state.

15 During that same period of time, as  
16 I've said before, no one called me up and  
17 said, you got to spend it a certain way,  
18 or, you're not going to get this unless you  
19 do something.

20 So we have to be thankful for that,  
21 and spend it wisely so that we can go back  
22 and say we did a good job and, by the way,  
23 we need another 32 million recurring  
24 because we're way behind some of the other  
25 universities in the state, and that's what

1 we try to do. We try to be good stewards  
2 of all of this, recognizing we have a  
3 mission, and that is to produce one of the  
4 great public universities in the world.

5 MS. TRELLES: Thank you.

6 I did want to share with those members  
7 of the FIU community that are participating  
8 from our virtual platform, that we see all  
9 of your comments and your questions, and we  
10 will do our very best to answer them and to  
11 hear them throughout our session.

12 If, unfortunately, we do not make it  
13 to your comment or your question, we will  
14 ensure that our presidential search  
15 committee and the search firm are aware of  
16 them so that they have an opportunity to  
17 hear your unique voice.

18 Our next question from virtual  
19 participant is:

20 Good morning. As we see that more  
21 industries and fields considering Florida  
22 as the main hub for their growth, besides  
23 hospitality, what steps are being taken to  
24 seek candidates who know how to foster  
25 meaningful collaborations so that our

1 students can have a better professional  
2 opportunity once they graduate? Many of  
3 our students need assistance in navigating  
4 the transition from college to professional  
5 life.

6 MR. TOVAR: Well, I think outside of  
7 even the search for the president, my first  
8 job coming out of FIU was through career  
9 placement, and I had a couple of offers  
10 through career placement.

11 So, I think we need to look at that  
12 and make sure that the job that career  
13 placement is doing is one that the students  
14 feel comfortable going to seek advice,  
15 help, internships. I'll be frank, I  
16 haven't -- I've asked the question about a  
17 year half, two years ago prior to COVID, I  
18 haven't asked it recently, but I think the  
19 career placement -- you know, I have three  
20 kids myself, and I think the ultimate goal  
21 is to get them employed. And I think the  
22 university plays a key role, and I think  
23 there's a lot of companies that seek to  
24 find great employees and folks to work with  
25 out of a universities such as FIU.

1           And I remember that, also, part of --  
2           even back in the day when I was graduating,  
3           that they were coming here because they  
4           wanted bilingual candidates. One of the  
5           jobs that I was offered was actually to go  
6           to Minnesota and work for Cargill. And so,  
7           to think about a company like Cargill  
8           coming from Minnesota to hire here at FIU.  
9           So I think that that is key.

10           I'm going to be frank with you, I  
11           don't know exactly where we're at with that  
12           today, but I think it's a relevant point  
13           for us to be briefed on possibly in an  
14           upcoming board meeting and get a better  
15           understanding of that. But I would agree  
16           that that's important for the future  
17           president.

18           MR. COLSON: I would add that I had  
19           intended -- we were going to have a retreat  
20           in March or April, and I had intended that  
21           career planning was going to be the subject  
22           of that retreat, and we have work to do in  
23           that area.

24           The presidential search has kind of  
25           changed the subject of all the retreats for

1           awhile. But we need to understand what  
2           we're doing and are there better ways to do  
3           it, and do we need to invest some resources  
4           in it.

5           MS. TRELLES: Thank you for that.

6           Our next question is:

7           With the international perspective  
8           being included in the search scope, does  
9           that mean that international candidates  
10          will also be considered? or is the focus  
11          remaining with candidates in the United  
12          States?

13          MR. FUNK: Certainly, we would welcome  
14          candidates that have international  
15          experience, both currently or previously in  
16          their careers. There's not a lot of  
17          outreach that goes on in terms of these  
18          searches internationally simply because the  
19          scope of the position in Europe, for  
20          example, or Australia, around the world, is  
21          a little different. Fundraising is an  
22          entirely different kind of activity in  
23          terms of here vis-a-vis other countries.  
24          The whole athletics piece is much different  
25          here vis-a-vis what you find in foreign



1 countries.

2 So at the same time, we will get  
3 interest and will be referred to  
4 individuals who are currently overseas, and  
5 we certainly track them, try to encourage  
6 them to have an interest, and will bring  
7 those individuals forward. But I would  
8 suspect the great majority of our  
9 candidates will be domestic right now, but  
10 that doesn't mean they have not had  
11 experience internationally throughout their  
12 career.

13 And what we find is that many of the  
14 nation's best leaders are extensively  
15 traveled, they have lived overseas, they  
16 have done part -- not part-time, but they  
17 have taught for a year at another  
18 international university.

19 So I think someone who brings that  
20 global perspective, they don't necessarily  
21 have to be overseas right now, but  
22 certainly have a knowledge and an affinity  
23 for what FIU is in terms of an  
24 international institution.

25 MR. TOVAR: And I would add, you get

1           that anyways today in this country. You  
2           know, Dr. Butchey, you are from Trinidad.  
3           If you look at Dr. Black, who's over at the  
4           Center for Translational Sciences, I  
5           believe he's from Scotland. And so I think  
6           you are just going to get that anyways.

7           And so it may not be bringing somebody  
8           from England or the Caribbean today, but I  
9           think where this country is at today, you  
10          are going to get a lot of that  
11          international background anyways as to a  
12          lot of the people that are out there. So  
13          that may be.

14          MS. TRELLES: Thank you for that.

15          In the spirit of recognizing that this  
16          is a very big job, I think that we should  
17          be looking for leaders who know how to  
18          delegate and collaborate. The perfect  
19          candidate may not know South Florida and  
20          higher education and RIs, but they will  
21          recognize the need to listen to the people  
22          who do. Humility is a part of leadership.

23          MR. COLSON: I couldn't agree more. I  
24          mean, the odds of getting somebody that  
25          knows all of that, you know, it's -- your

1 pool is going to be very small. But you  
2 ought to be able to get somebody that  
3 appreciates all of that.

4 And if you didn't come from academia,  
5 you ought to show some -- that you've got  
6 interest in it, and that you have an  
7 appreciation for the concepts involved in  
8 it, including chaired governance.

9 So I think that delegation is  
10 extremely important. I mean, this is a  
11 university that's run in different silos  
12 and we have to -- you have -- a president  
13 won't make it if he or she tries to do it  
14 all themselves. They won't last very long  
15 here because you've got to -- it's a big  
16 place.

17 MR. FUNK: You know, it's interesting,  
18 I won't belabor the point, but there have  
19 been a number of studies of leadership in  
20 higher education, as well as in the private  
21 sector, related to longevity in these  
22 roles. And I think the key relative to  
23 humility is most presidents, when they come  
24 into that role at a university, it's about  
25 the university. And when they make

1 decisions, it's for what's best for the  
2 university.

3 What you find -- and we have  
4 experienced it when we've been asked to  
5 come in and recruit behind a long, long  
6 serving president, there comes a point, the  
7 studies show, where those individuals begin  
8 to think, well, this is my university. You  
9 know, what do I want it to do?

10 And that's the point at which I think  
11 in higher ed, or even in the corporate  
12 world, that's the time for that person to  
13 move on, because the focus should always be  
14 on what's best for the university? Not  
15 what's best for me and my reputation as  
16 president? And certainly those will be the  
17 people that we're looking for.

18 MS. TRELLES: Thank you for that.

19 I have a couple more comments that I  
20 would like to share with all of you.

21 The first is:

22 We are not running a business at all.  
23 FIU is a public educational institution.  
24 It is different goals than a business.

25 MR. TOVAR: Absolutely. I agree.

1 MS. TRELLES: The former president was  
2 faculty friendly and a dynamic person. We  
3 hope to find a similar dynamic president.

4 I would also suggest that this future  
5 president should work to increase the  
6 salaries for faculty and staff to meet  
7 their current inflation. It is hard right  
8 now.

9 MR. COLSON: I agree with that. You  
10 know, it's --

11 MS. TRELLES: We -- do you want to  
12 continue?

13 MR. COLSON: Oh, no. I mean, listen,  
14 these are -- especially younger faculty,  
15 we're not paying -- the salaries are tough.  
16 I mean, it's just we're not paying enough.

17 And so there's got to be a recognition  
18 amongst everybody that if you want quality  
19 education, you got to have -- you got to  
20 pay your faculty decent salaries. And we  
21 are relying way too much on adjuncts -- and  
22 this is not FIU, this is across the  
23 board -- we're relying way too much on  
24 adjuncts being paid 2 and \$3,000 a course,  
25 and that's not fair to them, and it's not

1 fair to our students.

2 MR. TOVAR: But keeping in mind that  
3 it's a tough, tough balancing act knowing  
4 that, you know, the credit hours are fixed,  
5 they can't be changed. So you truly need  
6 someone to go in and look at budgets, look  
7 at how we spend our current funds. Are we  
8 efficient? And so it does become tough,  
9 outside of a huge amount of money being  
10 donated, but even if you get a -- you know,  
11 we just got a donation, a large donation  
12 for FIU. But then when you start thinking  
13 through how that's spent, and do you want  
14 to spend it all in one year? Do you want  
15 to endow those funds? Do you want to do a  
16 mix of that? And when you start dividing  
17 that up over our size, it's hard to make a  
18 dent or an impact. So it's tough.

19 And so I'm aligned with Dean. I would  
20 hope -- you know, I had this discussion  
21 with Bejar regarding advisors. My position  
22 is, I'd rather have a few less and pay  
23 better than having more and we're not sure  
24 that they are being effective.

25 So it's a constant balance that you

1 are trying to figure out, and, you know, I  
2 think you have to pay people what they are  
3 worth. And, you know, everybody deserves a  
4 decent wage and reward them for the efforts  
5 that they do. But then again, we have to  
6 find those funds. And so it's always that  
7 back and forth.

8 AUDIENCE SPEAKER: I was just going to  
9 add, alternative funding sources through  
10 auxiliary or other activities.

11 MR. TOVAR: Yes. And, you know,  
12 that's something that I think we're pushing  
13 and we're all for it.

14 But again, let's not forget, we have  
15 had some very successful years in  
16 Tallahassee. We have had support in  
17 Tallahassee. We always want more.

18 I think outside of a lot of the other  
19 things that go on or are said, my  
20 understanding of the governor is that he  
21 does place a lot of importance in the state  
22 university system and how we're ranked and  
23 the progress that we've had. And so we've  
24 got to recognize that, too. And I think  
25 we'll continue having that support.

1           And we have a huge champion as far as  
2           our Lieutenant Governor, Jeanette Núñez,  
3           and the importance she places in FIU and  
4           the mission that we serve, and that this is  
5           her community that she lives in and her  
6           kids have gone to school here. So we do  
7           get significant amount of support.

8           We can always use more funding. So I  
9           hear them.

10          MS. TRELLES: Thank you for that. And  
11          for those members of our the audience that  
12          were not in attendance, that comment was  
13          alternative funding.

14          I did have a question and a comment  
15          from a member of our FIU community who  
16          shared it through our virtual platform:

17          The person considered should reflect  
18          and champion the pluralism and morality  
19          needed for this age, and the involved  
20          civility that doesn't silo dissenting  
21          voices --

22          MR. TOVAR: I'm sorry. Can you  
23          repeat? because I'm not hearing you  
24          clearly.

25          MS. TRELLES: Of course.



1           The person considered should reflect  
2           and champion the pluralism and morality  
3           needed for this age, and the involved  
4           civility that doesn't silo dissenting  
5           voices.

6           We are about to build the Bell Chapel  
7           on campus. Faith is important to our  
8           students, parents, alumni, and the  
9           community at large.

10          When we suffered the pedestrian bridge  
11          collapse, people didn't want to speak to  
12          counselors, administrators, and first  
13          responders. They wanted to talk to  
14          chaplains and to spiritual directors.

15          Will the candidates have an  
16          opportunity to present their views on  
17          creating a culture that intentionally and  
18          genuinely invites conversations among  
19          people of our multi-religious world?

20          MR. COLSON: I think that the chapel  
21          is going to be important. I think it's  
22          going to be -- and I think having diversity  
23          of thought and making that type of advising  
24          available to our student body and our  
25          faculty and administration is important.

1 And, you know, I think that -- I can't  
2 imagine the next president isn't going to  
3 think that as well. But I don't think I'm  
4 answering the question well. I'm not sure  
5 I understand it.

6 MR. TOVAR: I'm not sure I'm clear on  
7 what the question is either.

8 MS. TRELLES: I believe their question  
9 is when we are interviewing these potential  
10 candidates or learning more about them, if  
11 we will be providing them the opportunity  
12 to present their own views on creating a  
13 culture here at FIU that is both  
14 intentional and genuine, that invites  
15 conversations among all of our FIU  
16 community members regarding their  
17 multi-religious world perspectives.

18 MR. COLSON: Listen, those kind of  
19 conversations should be ongoing on this  
20 campus right now, I would hope. And the  
21 next president -- I'm not on the search  
22 committee, but I would hope that the search  
23 committee would talk about that with the  
24 presidential candidates.

25 MS. TRELLES: Thank you for that.

1                   We have a comment that reads:

2                   We need a president who's brave,  
3                   whether defending academic freedom, making  
4                   innovations in HR policies, or supporting  
5                   our students.

6                   I would like to have one of the  
7                   interview questions be asking the  
8                   candidates to describe one or more  
9                   occasions in which the person stood up for  
10                  something that they believed in, whether or  
11                  not the outcome was what they wished for,  
12                  and what they learned from that experience.

13                  MR. TOVAR: I think that's a good  
14                  recommendation.

15                  MR. COLSON: It's also interesting to  
16                  ask them when have they stood up for  
17                  something that they didn't agree with, as  
18                  opposed to something that they did agree  
19                  with.

20                  MS. TRELLES: An additional comment  
21                  from an FIU community member is:

22                  We need a candidate who has a proven  
23                  track record in leading an equity and  
24                  inclusion platform and who could lead and  
25                  inspire by their ability to lead beyond

1 inner circle dynamics.

2 MR. TOVAR: Agreed.

3 MS. TRELLES: Then we do have a  
4 question, I believe we've answered it  
5 partially, but just in case you wanted to  
6 add anything extra to it:

7 How do you plan on choosing someone  
8 that is able to liaise, manage, and  
9 maintain good relationships with the local  
10 community, mostly Hispanic, the local,  
11 state and federal government, and with the  
12 student body and faculty?

13 MR. TOVAR: Listen, I was always  
14 concerned that I didn't think we were doing  
15 a great job here locally with Dade County.  
16 I have seen in the last, however long the  
17 mayor of the county has been there, that  
18 interaction has improved tremendously. I  
19 think our interaction with Mayor Suarez is  
20 amazing. I think when we go up to the  
21 legislature and we communicate with them, I  
22 think any place that we do business --  
23 again, back to the Center for Translation  
24 Sciences, I saw some of the commission  
25 members that were there, I think there was

1 a state senator from that area that was  
2 there yesterday.

3 So all that interaction is super  
4 important because we play different roles  
5 for each of these different groups, and  
6 they influence us in many different ways,  
7 and then we play a role as to the role we  
8 serve in the community and in the state.

9 So, agreed. I think the future leader  
10 of this university has to understand the  
11 importance of all of those interactions.  
12 We need to engage with these people. We  
13 need to be inclusive of them so that they  
14 see the role that we play in the community  
15 and vise-versa.

16 So yes, I will encourage the committee  
17 to consider the dynamics of that and  
18 whether we feel that those skill sets are  
19 there.

20 MR. COLSON: And I would actually  
21 think that Daniella, the mayor, and Mayor  
22 Suarez as well, they are great recruiters.  
23 They know -- and I have talked to Daniella  
24 about, we might need her help at some point  
25 in this search because she can help entice

1 people to come to South Florida. Mayor  
2 Suarez has done that a lot.

3 So these are -- they are -- I view our  
4 mayors and local elected officials as  
5 resources we can use in this search.

6 MR. TOVAR: And I will tell you that  
7 just last week, I think the mayor was  
8 there, and I think both the mayors I think  
9 there was activities with. So they are a  
10 key component of this, and I think we are a  
11 key component as to what Dr. Sackstein said  
12 as to the economic engine as to this  
13 community, and this is -- so I think we  
14 need to work hand-in-hand with all those  
15 folks and with all the commissioners on any  
16 of the -- be it the county commission, the  
17 city commission, very important.

18 MS. TRELLES: Thank you for that.

19 We do have a comment from one of our  
20 presidential search committee members which  
21 will be, then, followed up by, how did we  
22 actually select the search committee  
23 members?

24 So Committee Member H.T. Smith  
25 mentioned, as a member of the search

1           committee, I want to join the search  
2           committee chair, board chair, and the  
3           search firm in thanking all of the FIU  
4           stakeholders for participating in today's  
5           listening session.

6           And then members of our community --

7           MR. TOVAR: Let me stop you there.

8           I want to tell H.T. Smith that I'm  
9           thrilled that Chair Colson -- I have heard  
10          about him, read about him, seen him on TV  
11          for all the years that -- from the time I  
12          was very young here. Not trying to date  
13          him, but I've known so much about him and  
14          the work he does in Miami and his advocacy.  
15          And I know he was just awarded with a  
16          recognition at University of Miami a couple  
17          of weeks ago, and I congratulate him for  
18          that.

19          So I'm honored to be able to serve  
20          with him and appreciate that he's agreed to  
21          serve on the committee. And knowing that  
22          he's one of the faculty members here at our  
23          law school and knowing -- he mentioned it  
24          the other day in the committee meeting, but  
25          I had previously looked up his story as to

1           how he got into University of Miami Law  
2           School. And I would encourage anybody to  
3           go onto, I believe, it was on YouTube, and  
4           just punch in H.T. Smith, and he was being  
5           interviewed somewhere as to how he got into  
6           law school. Very impressive story. So he  
7           was out in front after he served, I  
8           believe, he was in the Army.

9                     So, thank you, Mr. Smith. It's my  
10          honor.

11                    And what were you going to say?

12                   MS. TRELLES: We want to learn how our  
13          presidential search committee was selected.

14                   MR. COLSON: Well, it was very  
15          scientific. The board of governors  
16          regulation gives the Chair of the Board of  
17          Trustees the authority to select a search  
18          committee.

19                    So from end of January until very  
20          recently, that's pretty much what I was  
21          thinking about, how do I -- and they set  
22          out certain guidelines. You got to have a  
23          faculty member; you got to have a student  
24          member; you got to have a BOG selected  
25          member; you want members of the



1 community -- I'm missing a couple of  
2 categories.

3 And so I wanted a search committee  
4 that was reflective of our community, of  
5 our university, and that anybody would look  
6 at and say, everybody here on this search  
7 committee, regardless of their politics or  
8 -- they love FIU, and they care about FIU  
9 and they will protect FIU.

10 And so, you know, any of our board of  
11 trustees members, if they have given the  
12 same assignment I had, I think would have  
13 come up with -- they would have used --  
14 they would have arrived with different  
15 people, but with similar backgrounds and  
16 similar -- it was intended to be  
17 extraordinarily talented people who care  
18 about FIU and care about our community.

19 So, you know, the prejudice in all of  
20 this is that I tend to go to people that I  
21 knew because of life experiences.

22 I've worked with H.T. Smith for  
23 30 years on different community projects.  
24 I know what he's passionate about and he'll  
25 be a great member of the search committee.

1           Some of the people I didn't know so well.  
2           But I had served with Gerald Grant, and I  
3           had served with Claudia Puig. I hadn't  
4           served with Albert Maury, but I knew him  
5           and I worked with him, and I admired what  
6           he had done.

7           So those are -- you know, and I could  
8           go through each one of why I picked each  
9           one. But it was all -- you know, it was  
10          just trying to come up with a diverse set  
11          of people with different backgrounds that  
12          reflected a love for FIU and, you know,  
13          that would give comfort to the various  
14          constituencies of FIU. So that's what I  
15          was trying to do.

16          And, you know, you can second guess  
17          any of it, but I think I'm pleased where we  
18          are.

19          MS. TRELLES: Thank you for that.

20          We do have a few more comments that I  
21          would like to share.

22          The first is:

23          Industry, especially the technology  
24          sector, is far outpacing academia. The  
25          next president will have be bold in

1 accelerating the pace of FIU's offerings,  
2 both inside and outside of the classroom,  
3 to prepare current and future students, as  
4 well as alumni, for the world of work and  
5 for today and for the future.

6 Additionally, the next president must  
7 be ready to work with Tallahassee while  
8 ensuring that the core values of FIU and  
9 the local community are maintained.

10 The local community is looking to FIU  
11 to lead the way, and ensuring commitments  
12 made to DEI are fulfilled while playing  
13 well with Tallahassee to ensure funding is  
14 not affected.

15 MR. TOVAR: Wonderful comment.

16 MS. TRELLES: Our next comment is:

17 FIU is not only one of the most  
18 diverse, large institutions of its kind, it  
19 is also known for innovation, applied  
20 research, and professors who are best in  
21 class. You have a mix of large institution  
22 with swagger, paired with brilliant,  
23 leading researchers in a vibrant, booming  
24 committee.

25 And then an additional comment:

1           An ideal candidate would have  
2           experience working with multiple  
3           administrative levels, student workers to  
4           deans, in an R1 institution or at a smaller  
5           institution with comparable demographics to  
6           FIU.

7           They also need to understand what is  
8           required to work with state, federal, and  
9           international funding agencies.

10          They need to know how to sustainably  
11          grow a university, the human  
12          infrastructure, and be willing to do the  
13          work to make sure that people stay and want  
14          to stay at this university.

15          They also need to understand Miami  
16          and/or Latin America, and be able to  
17          negotiate between the university's identity  
18          as part of Miami, and the practicalities of  
19          being an R1 institution.

20          MR. TOVAR: Good point.

21          MS. TRELLES: Then we do have a  
22          question:

23          There are truly wonderful people on  
24          the search committee, and we wish them much  
25          luck for this monumental task.

1                   Is there a reason that no staff  
2 members were chosen?

3                   MR. COLSON: No. I -- I --

4                   MR. TOVAR: You messed up.

5                   MR. COLSON: I guess I goofed up. I  
6 erred on -- you know, I wanted to -- I was  
7 thinking faculty and, you know, I didn't  
8 create categories -- I didn't break down  
9 the categories, and perhaps I could have  
10 done better.

11                  MR. TOVAR: And I think we had  
12 somebody mention the staff earlier in  
13 saying -- listen, I think everybody that is  
14 here and puts their heart and soul into  
15 what this university is about is very, very  
16 important.

17                  So I can't imagine Dean's job because  
18 I'm sure he probably upset some people on  
19 the board, he probably upset some people on  
20 the foundation, he probably upset all the  
21 other groups that we've met with.

22                  MR. COLSON: Offended a lot of people.

23                  MR. TOVAR: The reality is there's a  
24 limit of 15 people that could be put on  
25 that committee, and there's certain

1 positions that you have to have a student,  
2 you have to have a BOG member.

3 But I would just encourage anyone that  
4 is concerned that one group or another is  
5 not directly represented on the committee  
6 is to seek out the committee members and  
7 give them your point of view, because I  
8 think everyone that's on there is going to  
9 welcome the input and welcome things that  
10 -- again, just in these sessions that we've  
11 had the last two days. There's many things  
12 that I hadn't thought about, I hadn't  
13 considered, and it's very valuable. But  
14 the staff are very valuable, and we do  
15 recognize the hard work that's put in  
16 constantly.

17 MS. TRELLES: Thank you to all of  
18 those of you who have taken the time to  
19 share your comments or questions, concerns,  
20 to voice your opinion through this entire  
21 process utilizing our virtual platform.

22 We do have a couple more minutes in  
23 case anybody wanted to share their comments  
24 or questions both in the audience as well  
25 as virtually so that we may be able to hear

1           your unique voice.

2           MR. FUNK: I think we have another  
3 speaker.

4           MS. WELLS: Hi. Leanne Wells, again.

5           Just to your third bullet, so you were  
6 asking for some people that might be  
7 reluctant to come, which is the leader that  
8 I would want is the reluctant leader.

9           One of the things that I have found,  
10 and I have been at FIU for over 20 years  
11 now, when I travel to conferences, when I  
12 present the work that we're doing in our  
13 office, but also with our colleagues that  
14 are faculty, I hear all the time, how do  
15 you have that happen at your university?  
16 We don't get to do that at ours. How do  
17 faculty do these things?

18           And one of the things that has, for  
19 the entire 20 plus years, FIU has always  
20 put its money where its mouth is.

21           So when we start talking about student  
22 success, we fund student success. When we  
23 start talking about career placement, we do  
24 a better job of career placement. And I  
25 don't think that's true everywhere.

1           So whoever is coming in the small  
2           pool, or even the larger pool, I would want  
3           them to know that you have faculty,  
4           students, and staff who regularly go above  
5           and beyond and do amazing things that other  
6           universities just don't see.

7           And when we start talking about  
8           student success and the things that faculty  
9           are doing in their classroom, I would also  
10          encourage the successful candidate to be a  
11          regular visitor in our faculty's classrooms  
12          and with our students. We see the  
13          opportunity walking around campus all the  
14          time to engage, but actually going into the  
15          classroom and into the labs and seeing what  
16          our faculty are doing and what our students  
17          are doing will -- certainly, maybe, that's  
18          something they can do when they tour -- let  
19          them know that they are coming to a special  
20          place.

21               MR. TOVAR: Thank you.

22               MR. FUNK: Great. Thank you.

23               MR. TOVAR: Good point.

24               DR. SACKSTEIN: That's an excellent  
25          point, and thank you for bringing it up



1           because I think this is another touching  
2           point for the next president.

3           We have an amazing public school  
4           system here, we really do. We have amazing  
5           educators, amazing staff -- sorry for not  
6           mentioning that before. Of course, every  
7           staff member is dedicated to student  
8           success at this institution, as well as in  
9           the public system.

10          It should be somewhat eye opening for  
11          Mr. Funk, maybe, to realize that our  
12          current Surgeon General of the United  
13          States graduated from Miami-Dade County  
14          Public Schools. Our newest Supreme Court  
15          Justice graduated from Miami-Dade Public  
16          Schools.

17          Now, Mr. Colson may, sort of, take a  
18          step back and say it wasn't Coral Gables  
19          High School, it was Palmetto.

20          But the fact is that we must integrate  
21          this university into the younger learners  
22          to assure the career success that we're all  
23          attempting to achieve.

24          And so I would hope the next  
25          presidential candidate or candidates come

1 forward, speak to that point specifically  
2 for our community and the communities where  
3 they have lived in before.

4 MR. TOVAR: Thank you.

5 MS. BUTCHEY: I want to commend  
6 Dr. Sackstein for reminding everyone of the  
7 wonderful people who have come from Miami  
8 in recent years. Also, poet laureate,  
9 okay? So very diverse group.

10 I did want to reach out about the  
11 comment about inclusion of staff in the  
12 search committee. You didn't goof. We  
13 don't stay at FIU for as long as the four  
14 of us have without close connections with  
15 the staff and recognize how their  
16 professionalism is very important, very  
17 indicative of where we've grown.

18 Faculty are very busy, teaching,  
19 research, service, we rely very heavily on  
20 staff. In fact, in recent months, we have  
21 complained about the fact that we got so  
22 used to wonderful support at FIU online,  
23 and others have poached them from us.

24 So yes, we can definitely incorporate  
25 the viewpoints of the staff and speak to

1           their perspective, and to recognize that we  
2           need them to keep doing our jobs.

3           Thank you.

4           MR. TOVAR: Thank you.

5           MR. FUNK: I think we've had a  
6           wonderful discussion.

7           Any more comments online?

8           MS. TRELLES: We do, Bill.

9           If you can just go ahead and give us a  
10          little bit more information regarding the  
11          length of expected time to stay in the  
12          position of a president? And how do we  
13          prepare a compensation package for this  
14          position?

15          MR. FUNK: Okay. In terms -- I  
16          mentioned earlier the American Council on  
17          Education, they do a five year survey of  
18          presidents, and occasionally they will do  
19          an update. And in their most recent  
20          iteration, have indicated that the average  
21          tenure of a president is 6.5 years.

22          You know, it was interesting, when I  
23          first began doing this work 100 years ago,  
24          I would have boards say to me, gee, Bill,  
25          find someone who will stay here 20 years.

1 We don't want to have to do this again any  
2 time soon. And when I was just beginning,  
3 of course, I'd say, sure, I agree with you.

4 But now when someone will say  
5 something like that, you know, I kind of  
6 push back and say, you know, really? There  
7 are very few people who can renew  
8 themselves as events and time pass. The  
9 person that you hire today may not be the  
10 right person that you want in the position  
11 ten years from now, because you kind of  
12 take into consideration those more  
13 immediate challenges that are ahead of you.

14 But the truth is, the best leaders can  
15 renew themselves and will grow with the  
16 position. I think, as I mentioned earlier,  
17 the institutions that make the most  
18 progress are usually those institutions  
19 where there's a continuity of leadership  
20 and dedicated people leading the way.

21 But I think people stay in these  
22 positions because they are challenged, they  
23 have a board that's supportive of them,  
24 they enjoy working with faculty, they have  
25 a passion about students and changing

1 lives. And that's why, I think, presidents  
2 and professors stay in this academy.

3 But I think it's important that  
4 presidents are always staying fresh, they  
5 are creative, they are innovative. And I'm  
6 not so sure it's important -- you know,  
7 there used to be a time when there was a  
8 perception that the beloved senior dean  
9 would ascend to the presidency and stay for  
10 20 years. We just don't see that anymore.  
11 And that 6.5 years, I think, is not a bad  
12 time frame. And when you think about it,  
13 that means there's some presidents out  
14 there who have left in two, three,  
15 four years, not for good reasons typically.

16 But I think if the next president were  
17 here for six to ten years and provided the  
18 kind of leadership I know that the board  
19 wants, you know, they will move this  
20 institution forward in dramatic ways.

21 So that should be the aim, and, you  
22 know, I think if you have a good president  
23 and they are doing well, the board needs to  
24 recognize it, compensate them  
25 appropriately, make sure that they are

1           acknowledged for doing a good job. They  
2           are like all the rest of us, they want to  
3           be acknowledged when they do good things,  
4           and there are ways that the board can do  
5           that.

6           So that would be --

7           MR. TOVAR: And as far as putting  
8           together the compensation, you know, that's  
9           the job of the board.

10          I will tell you, looking back as to  
11          how we were compensating the past  
12          president, and you look throughout the 12  
13          universities in the state, they are all  
14          pretty similar as to how they are  
15          compensated. There was two that are  
16          outliers, and part of that was some  
17          deferred comp. But I think we are very  
18          competitive as to what our compensation is.

19          I think the board would be receptive  
20          as to bonus structure and how do we  
21          incentivize the next president to hit the  
22          goals that the board will lay out for the  
23          president.

24          So I think it's competitive, and not  
25          only within the state system, but as you

1 look throughout the country as to how those  
2 structures are put together.

3 MR. COLSON: Public universities don't  
4 pay as well as the high ranked private  
5 universities. And if you look at, you  
6 know, Marks -- I dealt with him for four or  
7 five years on this and he never really  
8 wanted to raise his salary, he didn't want  
9 to call attention to his compensation. So  
10 he didn't get any big raises over the last  
11 five or six years. We increased his bonus  
12 structure a little bit, I think it was by  
13 \$25,000, you know.

14 The president of the University of  
15 Florida makes significantly more, but he's  
16 running a 6, \$7 billion enterprise when you  
17 throw in the medical school there. And  
18 we're running a billion seven enterprise.

19 Now, any other -- in the private  
20 sector, anybody with a billion seven  
21 enterprise would make a lot more than our  
22 university presidents makes. So, you know,  
23 if we need to tweak our salary structure to  
24 attract the best leader for the next ten  
25 years, the board will do that.

1           MR. FUNK: For those who are  
2 interested, the IRS requires not for profit  
3 organizations and universities to report a  
4 Form 990 every year in terms of  
5 compensation, including that of the  
6 president. And that information is a  
7 matter of public record.

8           And when we're asked to do  
9 compensation surveys when a board is  
10 hiring, that's what we look at. That is,  
11 in fact, the best information you can get.

12           I would warn you, though, sometimes  
13 you don't see that data for two years. If  
14 you go to the Chronicle, it's always like a  
15 year or two old, and then we would  
16 extrapolate by a cost of living index.

17           But you also have to be careful  
18 because some presidents have deferred  
19 compensation plans. And if they retire in  
20 a given year -- you know, sometimes they  
21 will talk about the ten highest paid  
22 university presidents in the country.  
23 Typically, those are individuals who, in  
24 that year, have collected that deferred  
25 compensation, so it really skews the



1 numbers.

2 But you can look up and see what the  
3 current compensation is of public  
4 university presidents here in the state.  
5 It's not a secret. It's just not always  
6 timely.

7 Dean, would you agree with that?

8 MR. COLSON: I would. They are  
9 usually two years behind.

10 MR. TOVAR: Not everything is measured  
11 exactly the same way.

12 MR. FUNK: Yeah.

13 MR. TOVAR: I think we're out of time.  
14 Do we have --

15 MS. TRELLES: We are. We are out of  
16 time.

17 Thank you so much to everybody who  
18 attended and for those of you who attended  
19 virtually for your comments and your  
20 questions, we really do appreciate them.

21 And once again, we will make sure that  
22 the entire presidential search committee  
23 and the firm has access to those comments  
24 and those questions.

25 MR. FUNK: Thank you very much.

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MR. TOVAR: Thank you.

MR. COLSON: Thank you.

(Thereupon, the proceedings were  
adjourned at 12:00 p.m.)

CERTIFICATE

STATE OF FLORIDA )  
COUNTY OF MIAMI-DADE )

I, Aurora C. Sloan, Registered Professional  
Court Reporter, State of Florida at Large,  
certify that I was authorized to and did  
stenographically report the foregoing  
proceedings and that the transcript is a true  
and complete record of my stenographic notes.

Dated this 18th day of April, 2022.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aurora C. Sloan', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Aurora C. Sloan, Florida Professional Reporter

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