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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE
LISTENING SESSIONS

SESSION 5: PRESIDENT'S LEADERSHIP PROGRAM
GRADUATES AND UNIVERSITY STAFF

Wednesday, April 13, 2022
3:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.

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

Stenographically Reported By:
Aurora C. Sloan, FPR

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APPEARANCES:

FIU University Staff Members:

FIU Board of Trustees Chair Dean Colson

FIU Board of Trustees Vice Chair Roger Tovar

FIU Ombudsperson Sofia Trelles

ALSO PRESENT:

Higher Education Search Consultant William Funk

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

3 MR. TOVAR: Welcome.

4 You know it's interesting in life that
5 -- and I always tell anyone that's willing
6 to listen that on a daily basis you learn
7 and you learn about new things.

8 And today I'm learning there's a
9 presidential leadership team, which I've
10 never had the opportunity to know about it,
11 understand it. And so I'm glad to have the
12 opportunity to be here with you all today,
13 and for you all to give us your input as to
14 what your views are as to not only who the
15 next president -- not who, but what type of
16 leader you all are looking for as to the
17 next president of this university.

18 We're honored and glad to have Dean
19 Colson here with us today, who is the Chair
20 of our Board.

21 We also have Mr. Eric Eikenberg here
22 who is the head of the Everglades
23 Foundation, and he happens to be, also, on
24 our search committee.

25 And if you all take the time to go

1 through the list of names on our search
2 committee and who they are and where they
3 come from, it's a pretty diverse,
4 interesting group and very passionate about
5 FIU.

6 And a lot of alumni, a lot of --
7 couple of past chairs of the FIU Board of
8 Trustees, there's actually Ms. Patricia
9 Frost who is not only ex-trustee of our
10 board, but she's on the board of governors
11 representing the board of governors. So
12 it's an interesting group of people.

13 I'm also glad to see the demographics
14 in this room, a lot of ladies.

15 MR. COLSON: Was this no men allowed?

16 MR. TOVAR: So that's great.

17 And by the way, you know, that's one
18 thing that we've talked about is, you know,
19 who do we have running the university? and
20 is it representative?

21 And so I'm glad to see that this group
22 exists. I hope you move up quickly and so
23 -- and we're happy to hear your comments
24 today and give us your input.

25 And please, don't limit it to just the

1 president. Tell us what you see out there
2 is working, not working, what input you
3 have.

4 And then we just had come in
5 Dr. Butchey, who is not only the head of --
6 the new head of the Faculty Senate, but
7 she's also on the Presidential Search
8 Committee. So thanks for being here with
9 us today.

10 So, Mr. Funk, I'll let you open up the
11 session.

12 MR. FUNK: Thank you. Thank you,
13 Roger and -- excuse me -- welcome, welcome
14 to this session.

15 This search is one that we're
16 delighted to be involved with. We think
17 this is a leadership opportunity that will
18 be very attractive to many excellent people
19 around the country, and it will be
20 attractive because of what you and others
21 in this administration have done to grow
22 the research expenditures, grow enrollment,
23 build buildings. It's one of the finest
24 and most spectacular stories in higher
25 education over the past 20 plus years.

1 I thought it might be helpful to this
2 group, though, to talk a little bit about
3 the search process. We really want to hear
4 from you, but I thought that this might be
5 a little bit interesting for you.

6 The search committee was formed in the
7 last several weeks. We met with the search
8 committee a week ago. We met with the
9 board as a search committee a week ago.
10 And in the last two days, we've been
11 meeting with all of the constituent groups
12 trying to elicit the thoughts each of those
13 groups has about what an ideal next
14 president might come with in terms of
15 experience, leadership style, personality,
16 world view, et cetera.

17 It's been quite educational for all of
18 us. But it really, as Roger has pointed
19 out, it's involved into more of a
20 conversation. And so we look forward to
21 having this conversation with you.

22 But over this past several weeks, the
23 board has been involved in putting the
24 search committee together. The
25 infrastructure of the search is being put

1 together under the auspices of Javier and
2 the board. A leadership statement is being
3 developed, and that's kind of an expanded
4 position description, and it's nearing
5 completion. And you will soon see it on
6 the presidential search website, which I
7 think you will find very interesting.

8 An ad was placed in the various higher
9 education publications just yesterday. And
10 if you go to the Chronicle of Higher
11 Education, online edition, I suspect it
12 will be there, if not today, certainly by
13 the end of the week, and it will appear in
14 the next two print editions.

15 It will also appear in other
16 publications, Inside Higher Education,
17 Diversity Issues in Education, Women in
18 Higher Education, the Hispanic Outlook in
19 Education. But we really wanted to
20 circulate widely that the search is
21 underway and that the position is
22 available.

23 And while we don't always find our
24 best candidates that respond to the ad, it
25 does get the word out that the search is

1 underway.

2 And then when we follow up with
3 individuals around the country, they
4 oftentimes will say, oh, yeah, I saw that
5 in the Chronicle, or I saw that Inside
6 Higher Education.

7 In my office, we've been targeting
8 individuals that we know around the
9 country. We're sending out some 600
10 letters to leaders in higher education that
11 we've worked with in the past and that we
12 always reach out to when we're doing a
13 presidential search. We don't send letters
14 to them when we're doing dean and
15 vice-president and provost searches. We're
16 contacting and talking with the leading
17 higher education associations.

18 It's kind of interesting, we have been
19 doing it remotely, but we used to go to
20 Washington DC and actually sit down with
21 all of those associations because they are
22 all within about a block of one another at
23 1 Dupont Circle. But we have asked them
24 who they might recommend as a good
25 candidate.

1 We've encouraged the search committee
2 to also be proactive in terms of talking to
3 their colleagues around the country,
4 associates who might be involved in higher
5 education, and asking those individuals who
6 they might recommend as a candidate. So
7 all of that is starting to gel, and that's
8 how the pool will be built.

9 Over the next couple of months,
10 though, we'll be contacting those
11 individuals who have either been nominated,
12 targeted, what have you, and that's where
13 the pool -- or how the pool will be put
14 together.

15 When we think that the pool is
16 complete, the search committee will begin
17 an evaluation process. They will look at
18 all the active candidates and decide which
19 of those individuals they would like to
20 interview in person.

21 And then interviews will be held with
22 probably eight to ten -- there's no magic
23 number, but that seems to be the optimal
24 number -- they will meet with eight to ten
25 candidates, rigorously interview them and

1 question them.

2 After those interviewed -- by the way
3 before those interviews, we'll do
4 LexisNexis, Google, social media background
5 checks on those individuals.

6 After those interviews, the search
7 committee will decide which of those
8 individuals they would like to recommend to
9 the board as finalists.

10 Under the new law, the revised
11 Sunshine Laws, it's required that there are
12 three or more finalists that will be
13 announced and who will be brought to campus
14 and be interviewed by the board and the
15 various constituents.

16 Those individuals, before they come to
17 campus, will sign a release form allowing
18 us to do credit, litigation, criminal, and
19 sexual abuse background checks. We will
20 also do some off-list referencing to make
21 sure we know exactly who these folks are.

22 But then after the campus visits and
23 the board interviews, the board will decide
24 which of those individuals they feel is
25 most appropriate to be the next president.

1 They might initially narrow it to two and
2 invite two back, or they may very well say,
3 this is the person we'd like to engage in a
4 conversation about being the next
5 president, and just invite one person back.

6 And then in a perfect world, if
7 everything went smoothly and there were no
8 delays in the process, we'd like to have
9 the new president in place before the fall
10 semester.

11 As Roger keeps telling me, though, and
12 reminding me, we want to be right and not
13 quick. So however long it takes us to find
14 that just perfect individual, that's how
15 long we will take to do the search.

16 But I hope that's helpful to
17 understand how, you know, you start with
18 this many candidates and end up with that
19 one selectee. You start with this much
20 information about those candidates. And by
21 the time an offer is made, the board knows
22 quite a bit about these individuals who are
23 finalists, and certainly the person that's
24 ultimately selected.

25 So it's a rigorous process. I'm not

1 so sure that I would want to go through
2 that process, but I'm quite willing to go
3 ahead and put somebody else through that
4 process.

5 But we really would like to hear your
6 thoughts about what you would like to see
7 in the person who's ultimately selected.
8 You know, what kind of leadership style,
9 what kind of world view, what kind of
10 strategic idea they have for the
11 university.

12 Here are the three questions we've had
13 all the groups look at before the meeting.
14 And it really is, one, what are the major
15 issues, challenges, and opportunities the
16 next president with inherit both
17 immediately and longer term?

18 Secondly, if those are the challenges
19 and opportunities, what kind of person is
20 best prepared to step in and address the
21 challenges and really take advantage of the
22 opportunities?

23 And then thirdly, our role as the
24 search consultant is to proactively go and
25 talk to people who will not respond to the

1 ad, will not respond to a letter, and are
2 very happy where they are and haven't
3 thought about making a change. We find
4 those are the best candidates. But we need
5 to tell them why they should be a
6 candidate. We have to nurturer and cajole
7 them into the pool.

8 And if you can help us in terms of
9 arming us with those good things we can
10 tell them, we will have a better
11 opportunity to actually be successful in
12 bringing them in.

13 So we're going to turn this around and
14 have you do the talking. You may have
15 questions, and the four of us will take
16 turns trying to be responsive or commenting
17 on your thoughts.

18 But who would like to be first? This
19 is always the most challenging part.
20 Nobody ever seems to want to go first. But
21 -- ah, thank you. Thank you very much. We
22 have microphones back there and there.

23 MS. TRELLES: So as she walks to the
24 microphone, I did want to share that we do
25 have 40 individuals who are joining us

1 virtually.

2 Please, remember to utilize our
3 virtual platform if you have any comments
4 or questions. That way the Presidential
5 Search Committee, as well as our search
6 firm is aware of those, and your unique
7 voice does make sure it gets to us as well.

8 MS. HERNANDEZ: Hello. Good
9 afternoon.

10 Sonia Hernandez from the Division of
11 Academic and Student Affairs, just switched
12 in marketing.

13 So my question is, when I think back,
14 I've been at FIU my entire adult life,
15 except for two years, and I think back to
16 President Maidique and President Rosenberg,
17 I think of the audaciousness that they had.

18 When I was a student and President
19 Maidique said, we were going to get a law
20 school, we were going to get a medical
21 school, we were going to get a football
22 team, I didn't believe it.

23 So do you envision our next president
24 still needing to have that spirit in him?
25 Have we accomplished, you know, that

1 standard? Are we still looking for that?

2 MR. TOVAR: Absolutely. Absolutely.
3 I mean, I think we need to still continue
4 to dream and think big. And I think you
5 all deserve that, the community deserves
6 that. And it truly is amazing what the
7 university has accomplished in 50 years.

8 Any of you all that have grown up here
9 in Miami and just watched it grow, and I'm
10 old enough to remember that -- from what I
11 remember, there was really nothing here,
12 and seeing the old runways, and still we
13 see the old tower that's here. And some
14 people don't know this used to be an
15 airport.

16 And to be where we are at today and to
17 have multiple campuses and many satellite
18 facilities and the number of buildings that
19 we have, and then the impact that we make
20 on the community and the students that we
21 have, that many are first gen.

22 And then, you know, one of the things
23 that has been talked about in previous
24 meetings is, is there a tradeoff between
25 equity and excellence? And our response up

1 here is, no. We can have both, and we need
2 to have both, and we need to do both.

3 So I would tell you, if we're not
4 dreaming big, I don't want to be part of
5 this.

6 What I push for, what Chair Colson
7 pushes for is whatever we do, we need to be
8 relevant in. And so I would ask you all to
9 continue pushing FIU and the folks you work
10 with, and whoever you happen to report to
11 at the moment.

12 So, Dean, would you like to add to
13 that?

14 MR. COLSON: No. I agree. We need a
15 visionary.

16 And it may not be about what new
17 schools can we create? It may be, how do
18 we take a school that we have and make it a
19 top five school in the country? But we got
20 to dream big, and we need to push
21 ourselves, we need to push our elected
22 officials to fund us, but they will. If we
23 have -- my view of this is, if we perform,
24 we will get funding, and I believe that.

25 MR. TOVAR: And one of the things

1 we've talked about a lot in the previous
2 meetings is how each of us go out there and
3 tell the story of FIU, because you come
4 here and you realize that everyone you meet
5 has a passion about FIU.

6 But there's still a lot of people that
7 could not even live a mile from here that
8 haven't been on campus in years or have
9 ever been on campus.

10 And so as you drive by the outside,
11 yeah, it looks nice, it looks like
12 something is going on in there. But as you
13 come on campus and you realize what's here
14 and you realize the students and you
15 realize the opportunities, and the many
16 things that are going on, it truly is
17 impressive.

18 So starting with the president,
19 because really we're here to talk about
20 anything you all want to talk about, but
21 our number one goal is to talk about you
22 all's vision as to the next president and
23 the type of individual that is.

24 And I think a big part of that is
25 somebody that is the face of FIU and goes

1 out there and tells the story here in South
2 Florida and throughout the country, and
3 engages people.

4 And there are so many hats that that
5 person will wear that it really takes a
6 unique individual.

7 I think it was two groups ago, there
8 was a lady that presented, and one of the
9 points she made is, it really is a tireless
10 job, and there's so much that goes into it.
11 And so how do you do that? And then her
12 second point was, with love.

13 And with love means that the passion
14 for the mission that FIU serves, and, in
15 turn, that that leader will serve to have
16 the passion to go through and do 20 hours a
17 day and attend that basketball game and
18 attend the 8 to 12 commencements every
19 semester, go and meet with the mayor of the
20 county or the mayor of the City of Miami,
21 or with the governor or with the
22 legislature.

23 And again, from the time I've been on
24 the board and I observed President
25 Rosenberg, I was in awe with the amount of

1 time and dedication and passion and
2 charisma that he had for the job. And so
3 we'll go out there and searching for
4 nothing less than that.

5 So yes, we still have big dreams. And
6 we're about to break ground, and we
7 technically already broke ground on
8 Engineering 1. We need to raise funds for
9 Engineering 2. We're finishing the SIPA
10 building. We're finishing 650-bedroom
11 dorm. We truly need a true building for
12 Honors College.

13 What do we do as to facility for the
14 medical school as to bringing the three
15 schools together? I mean there's still
16 much more to do, regardless as to where
17 we're at.

18 Bill, would you add anything?

19 MR. FUNK: No. I just love the word
20 audacious.

21 We certainly do want someone who's
22 audacious in their thinking and their
23 vision, because I think the trajectory has
24 been so steep and so good.

25 You know, I think you should be

1 thinking about being an AAU institution.
2 Right now there are only 62, 63 AAU
3 institutions in the country, and those are
4 typically perceived to be -- it's mostly
5 research, but those are some 63 schools
6 that have the highest research
7 expenditures. But also they take into
8 consideration -- it's by invitation only.
9 They take into consideration not only
10 research expenditures, but the endowment.
11 So that puts a lot of pressure on the
12 fundraising folks.

13 And I've talked to people who are on
14 the membership committee of AAU, and they
15 also would look at the number of national
16 and internationally respected and known
17 professors, and of course that requires the
18 new president to help recruit in some of
19 the leaders in the various disciplines
20 around the country.

21 But why not? Look what you've done.
22 You can do anything. And with that same
23 trajectory and with that commitment to the
24 vision, I think this institution can do
25 anything it wants to do.

1 Who would like to speak next?

2 Ah, good. We were with the students
3 last evening, and we kiddingly said to one
4 of the students who was walking to the
5 microphone, you will appear on the 11
6 o'clock news tonight. And he stopped and
7 really didn't want to step to the
8 microphone.

9 You will not be on the 11 o'clock
10 news.

11 MS. BOWLES: And I'm okay if I am. So
12 good afternoon.

13 I'm Emmanuele Bowles, and I serve as
14 the Director for Diversity, Equity, and
15 Inclusion at our great FIU. And like
16 Sonia, I grew up at FIU, 15 years in May.
17 And so I have had the opportunity to go
18 through two FIU presidents during my tenure
19 here at the university.

20 But I would like to answer the
21 question of the type of leader we would
22 like to see. And in the last year and a
23 half; right? we have been blessed with
24 leaders who -- not only from our executive
25 leadership team, our board of trustees

1 members, who, after the summer of 2020,
2 have listened, really, to all of our
3 university constituents, faculty, staff,
4 students. And so we would like to see a
5 leader who continues to understand that
6 diversity, equity, and inclusion is not new
7 to FIU, but we have opportunities to
8 elevate it here at our great institution.

9 And it starts by leading with empathy
10 and also listening; right? Taking the
11 opportunity to listen about what's going on
12 at the university. Being approachable that
13 our -- even our students, no matter what
14 level, what classification you are in, our
15 staff, from our custodial to executive
16 leader, can come and share some of the
17 challenges that they may be experiencing on
18 our campus.

19 And so having a leader who continues
20 to help to elevate DEI, especially in the
21 State of Florida with the legislation that
22 is being proposed -- or have been signed
23 into law -- but that they continue to lead
24 and listen; right? and lead with empathy.
25 And know that our people; right? there's

1 opportunities, but also challenges with
2 keeping our great talent here at the
3 university.

4 And so our next leader is going to
5 help, not only recruit our leadership, but
6 also a number of key roles at our
7 university that have left because of
8 different things.

9 So that's it. That's all I wanted to
10 share. Thank you.

11 MR. FUNK: Wonderful. Thank you very
12 much.

13 MR. COLSON: You know, you wonder, why
14 would anybody want to come to this
15 university to be president if they didn't
16 embrace those ideals?

17 There's a lot of presidencies around
18 the country that open up every five,
19 six years. But if you are not interested
20 in serving a diverse community, then why
21 come here? Because we need somebody that
22 not only isn't scared by it, but embraces
23 it, is excited by it.

24 MR. TOVAR: And one of your points as
25 to listening, and it's been brought up in

1 many, many of the meetings that we've had,
2 and it was brought up by the students last
3 night, because at the end of the day, you
4 know, we talk about a lot of things, but we
5 need to remember it's our customers, and
6 those are our students. And so what do the
7 students think about what we're doing?

8 And so it's important to the students
9 -- you know, I was touring a university, I
10 think it was about a month and a half ago,
11 and I was just part of a group, and what
12 was interesting to me is that the president
13 walked by, and he stopped to talk to the
14 group not knowing who was in the group.
15 And the student that was giving the tour
16 says, it's not just because you folks are
17 not from here. He stops and talks to us
18 all the time, and he engages us.

19 And so that was one of the comments
20 from the students last night is, important
21 to them was a president that walked around
22 the campus; somebody said today that comes
23 into the classroom once in a while.

24 And obviously, with the size that we
25 have, the president can do that many times

1 and a student may never engage with the
2 president because there's just so many
3 people and so many campuses.

4 But we want to make sure that we look
5 for someone that does not feel that they
6 have this elitism that they are up in an
7 office, or they get shuttled from their
8 office to the house and back; that's
9 engaging with the students, with the
10 faculty, with the staff, with the
11 community; that truly is the face of the
12 community.

13 So all those points are near and dear
14 to our hearts.

15 And somebody said today, you know, the
16 university is not a business, and I would
17 agree with that. We are not here to run a
18 P&L. We have a budget that we have to
19 adhere to because there is not an endless
20 amount of money, but we're not here to make
21 a profit. So we run it different than a
22 business. But I think any good run entity,
23 there is that dialogue, that communication,
24 that connection.

25 And so we need to make sure that

1 whatever leader we pick truly believes that
2 and is cognizant of that and is going to do
3 that; and they need to listen.

4 So I agree with you 100 percent. And
5 listening is not always necessarily
6 agreeing, but all of us want to be heard.
7 And so we will strive to check that box.

8 And so I appreciate that input. Thank
9 you very much.

10 MR. FUNK: Who's next?

11 MR. TOVAR: Or do we have any
12 questions?

13 We have someone back here.

14 MR. ASECIO: Good afternoon.

15 Thank you, Sofia, for moderating this
16 panel, Trustee Tovar, Trustee Colson, and
17 Mr. Funk.

18 The history of FIU is completely tied
19 to the history of our community. And as my
20 colleague previously was just mentioning
21 about our opportunities in DEI, I don't
22 feel we're necessarily looking for a
23 university president. We're looking for a
24 community leader, because we are an anchor
25 institution, and so much of our community

1 depends on the resource that we are.

2 So when we're talking about the best
3 and most ideal candidates and competitive
4 and being competitive in that area, how are
5 we approaching really looking within?
6 Because that candidate, although we're
7 doing maybe a national search, that
8 candidate may already be right here in our
9 own backyard. And how much are we really
10 willing to exhaust every single resource to
11 make sure that we don't lose that candidate
12 to one of the other Florida institutions
13 who are currently also in that search?

14 A candidate that as -- you know, our
15 recent presidents and their vision of what
16 FIU and the community should look like, you
17 know, a candidate that can also carry that
18 torch of understanding that we are not
19 necessarily separate entities. We're one
20 community dedicated to elevating all of the
21 members of our community both in
22 leadership, government, students, faculty,
23 and staff.

24 So when we look at our impact, and
25 even beyond our immediate community, the

1 Caribbean, South America, and where our
2 students come from, our impact is
3 international. It's not just limited to
4 here.

5 So what I'd like to see is that
6 approach of what we're looking at. And for
7 us, as my colleague mentioned, we have an
8 opportunity here to break some new ground
9 and barriers, to really change it.

10 The biggest challenges that I think we
11 are going to face, or our next president,
12 is not necessarily an FIU challenge, it's
13 going to be an academia challenge. We are
14 being challenged right now with technology
15 and innovation just everywhere. And in the
16 way the talent needs to be supplied to the
17 economic growth and the stabilities of our
18 areas, we need to be able to be -- we're
19 young, we need to be able to keep being
20 young, nimble, and quick to address that
21 talent deficit, because we lose the talent
22 from here everyday, they go somewhere else.

23 And as companies -- and we're seeing
24 what's going on with our community and the
25 tech movement, they are asking us, and

1 we're not producing that talent fast
2 enough; not just we as FIU, but we as the
3 academic community locally, is not able to
4 even fulfill that pipeline.

5 So again, I go back, I'd like to see
6 in a leader, not just for FIU, but a leader
7 for our community that can come in and
8 actually say, here's our role and here's
9 where we pick up and we break new ground,
10 where we set the bar even higher, and we
11 show the rest of the world of how these
12 things are done.

13 So again, maybe a candidate on paper
14 is one way, but that leader that we want is
15 not just that FIU leader. How are we
16 looking at that from the trustees'
17 perspective and the committee? And are we
18 willing to really -- how competitive are we
19 really willing to be? because we're not the
20 only ones in that search, and this is a
21 hyper competitive search right now.

22 We've got incredible assets in South
23 Florida that make FIU, not just because of
24 our population of our students unique, but
25 also because of our geography down here.

1 Yet, it kind of hurts a little bit
2 when I look around the room and I know
3 colleagues -- I've lost colleagues that
4 have left to other institutions because
5 we're not as competitive as other
6 institutions at the moment when they are in
7 need of things.

8 So I'd like us to see this as an
9 opportunity for, yes, presidential search
10 for our university, but also the community.

11 And I'd like to thank the board for
12 installing Interim President Jessell,
13 because I think we see what we have here
14 and how we continue to survive, but we
15 don't want to be on this survival mode. We
16 want to be on this growth mode.

17 That's what I have for you guys.
18 Thank you.

19 MR. TOVAR: And I'm sorry. What was
20 your name and where do you?

21 MR. ASECIO: Mike Asencio, office of
22 Engagement.

23 MR. TOVAR: You are engaged.

24 Listen, Mike, I would tell you
25 100 percent what you are saying. And I

1 think everybody says it in a different way,
2 but this is a big part of the Miami
3 community, the South Florida community, and
4 we need that engagement. And somebody else
5 said it in another way, this is the
6 economic engine of Miami.

7 We've got a budget of \$1.7 billion, a
8 research of \$250 million, the amount of
9 people we employ directly and indirectly,
10 and then the impact that we make on the
11 community; a lot of first gen students, I
12 being one of them, that if it wouldn't have
13 been for FIU, I would have never gone -- I
14 wouldn't have dreamed of going to school
15 anywhere.

16 And so I found myself in a position
17 where I lost my job, and I said, you know,
18 what am I going to do now? Do I want to
19 find myself in this position again? And
20 thank God that FIU was here. And because
21 of some advice and counseling I received at
22 FIU, I went on and I picked a certain major
23 and I went on and did something else, and
24 then I ended up getting a masters.

25 So that's where I get my passion for

1 what is happening here.

2 Could there be somebody internally?

3 Yes, of course there can be. But we want
4 to make sure we do a broad search and bring
5 in the best leader possible. It could come
6 from within, it could come from outside, it
7 could come from Miami, it could come from
8 California. I don't know. We don't know.
9 But I think we owe it to FIU, to South
10 Florida, to you all, to look for the most
11 amazing individual that will lift us up
12 further.

13 So as to being young, nimble, and
14 quick, absolutely, and I think you are
15 100 percent right. Being as young as we
16 are, we can move in different ways and do
17 different things.

18 If you look at our medical school,
19 where some people will see it as a
20 detriment that we don't have all these
21 hospitals and this whole medical complex,
22 but I think we have other opportunities.
23 Whereas, how do we work together between
24 the medical school, the nursing school, the
25 school of public health, now, our research

1 center in Port St. Lucie, which Dr. Brown
2 is going to be taking over as part of the
3 medical school, the research side. So
4 there's many moving pieces within that that
5 I think we can do it a different way.

6 You look at our community health and
7 what -- you know, you go over to that
8 building over there on 8th Street, and,
9 frankly, it's underutilized.

10 And so how do we take an asset that we
11 convinced different stakeholders previously
12 to fund, to truly take that facility and
13 make an impact as far as in community
14 health? And so there's many things to be
15 done.

16 The only thing I know today, as far as
17 who our future leader is, that I and the
18 committee, and then the board, is going to
19 work very hard to explore every option, and
20 then hopefully bring candidates to the
21 board to find who's going to take us
22 forward and turn the chapter and move
23 forward, because every time you do have one
24 of these new leaders, you are turning the
25 chapter. And it's never an indictment or

1 saying, well, this wasn't good enough.
2 It's just always moving onward and upward.

3 So points all well taken. And again,
4 I love to hear people like you speak with
5 the passion that you have for FIU. So
6 thank you.

7 Dean, would you have anything?

8 MR. COLSON: No. I mean, I think it's
9 extraordinary that we're two or three
10 months into a vacancy, and there hasn't
11 been a story yet that so and so is the
12 likely next candidate and next president of
13 FIU.

14 MR. TOVAR: Right.

15 MR. COLSON: And that's a testament to
16 how well we're running the university right
17 now. I said we, but it's you running the
18 university. And I think also that we have
19 a search committee that has now been
20 announced that is, what I call,
21 bulletproof.

22 You are not going to run anybody
23 through this search committee that is --
24 you know, they are going to ensure that FIU
25 gets the next great leader.

1 But think about it, there hasn't been
2 an article saying, here's the favorite, you
3 know, and we're three months, and that's
4 great. And that's what I wanted.

5 MR. TOVAR: And that's what I
6 mentioned to a number of the other groups,
7 that many times you start a process like
8 this, and the outcome has already been
9 determined. Okay?

10 If you were to ask me is the next
11 president going to be a man, a woman,
12 Hispanic, black? I will categorically tell
13 you, I have no idea. I want the most
14 amazing person that can move us forward.

15 And so I think we will have a lot of
16 candidates to pick from, because it's an
17 amazing opportunity as to where we're at,
18 and it's an amazing opportunity to come to
19 the City of Miami with a large public
20 university. So I think the future for FIU
21 is very bright.

22 So again, thanks for your comments.

23 Dr. Butchey?

24 DR. BUTCHEY: Yes. Thank you.

25 I wanted to reiterate something you

1 said about being nimble. I'll add to that.
2 It's about being agile. We're not stuck in
3 the past. Nobody has told us no, that we
4 can't do this.

5 So having that agility and having the
6 gumption to say, well, we can do it. We
7 have done all of these things and we're
8 going to continue doing more.

9 I do want to also thank all of you
10 here and all the participants of this
11 entire process. I think the
12 self-reflection that we've had through this
13 process, getting to know everyone, getting
14 to know what others are doing, how we work
15 together, has been critical. And I look
16 forward to the entire search process where
17 we do have these kinds of engagement, even
18 more with the candidates, and we all learn
19 more about each other and what we can do to
20 keep advancing this organization.

21 MR. TOVAR: And thank you for your
22 willingness to participate in the
23 committee. So thank you. Thank you for
24 those words.

25 Do we have any -- okay.

1 MS. TRELLES: Yes, we actually do.

2 So we have a few comments and a couple
3 of questions.

4 Our first comment is, we need to see
5 gender balanced leadership at FIU.

6 MR. TOVAR: Absolutely. Absolutely.
7 And I'll tell you, sometimes, you know, we
8 met with the deans earlier and I looked out
9 and -- absolutely.

10 MR. COLSON: It's easy to talk about
11 it. We have got to walk it.

12 MR. TOVAR: Yup.

13 And listen, this is not -- this is
14 just reality, this is not to point fingers,
15 but the board doesn't approve or disapprove
16 of any dean that gets hired, any associate
17 dean or anything else.

18 But we have started conversations to
19 say, have you guys looked around -- or you
20 ladies looked around?

21 And so it does get to a point where I
22 do think -- and it was written in an
23 article so I'm stealing somebody else's
24 thunder -- that we generally promote people
25 that we view as the same as us, that are

1 comfortable with us, and everything else.

2 But I think we're all enriched when we
3 surround ourselves with people that come
4 from all walks, from different places, from
5 different thought processes, and then we
6 can share ideas, share our life
7 experiences, share many things. So I can
8 only tell you that we all agree.

9 MS. TRELLES: Thank you for that.

10 I also wanted to share that as our
11 time does come to an end today, if you have
12 any comments or any questions, please, make
13 sure to communicate with us. We want to
14 make sure that the Presidential Search
15 Committee, as well as the search firm, do
16 have access to that feedback.

17 We do have another comment from our
18 virtual participant.

19 We have had some difficulty in
20 retaining talent. The new president needs
21 to assess why we continue to lose talent,
22 as well as determine how they can improve
23 the community's perception of this
24 institution, particularly that of
25 non-Hispanics.

1 MR. TOVAR: Say the last part?

2 MS. TRELLES: Of course.

3 The new president needs to assess why
4 we continue to lose talent, as well as
5 determine how they can improve the
6 community's perception of this institution,
7 particularly that of non-Hispanics.

8 MR. TOVAR: Okay.

9 I don't understand the last part of
10 the question.

11 But I will tell you, I think in any
12 business industry, there is turnover and
13 there's movement because of what's going on
14 in the world.

15 I would also agree that in any
16 business, any institution when you have
17 turnover, some of it is saying that there's
18 something that you are doing that's right
19 that people want to take people that are in
20 a successful place. Other times you are
21 going to look around and you are going to
22 say, I'm running people off, or I'm not
23 compensating people correctly.

24 So I think all of that needs to be
25 analyzed in a holistic way and say, do we

1 truly have more turnover than the norm?
2 Less? If we do have more than the norm,
3 why is that? Is it a pay issue?

4 But I would also caution everybody on
5 the pay issue. Again, we're not running a
6 for-profit organization. So we've got a
7 pot of dollars, and it's how you allocate
8 them. And so are we allocating them
9 efficiently? Is there more ways to be more
10 efficient on one side that we can
11 compensate people better on the other side?

12 Chair Colson did mention earlier
13 today, some of the pay that gets paid to
14 some of the adjuncts or, you know, adjuncts
15 that maybe should be full professors. But
16 again, within the system that we live in,
17 and I'm just speaking frankly and realistic
18 here, we don't have the ability to go and
19 raise tuition. So you have got to have
20 funds to do whatever you want to do.

21 And so the first thing I would always
22 say is, are we being efficient? Are we
23 being wasteful?

24 The second thing is to continue to
25 find creative ways to bring in additional

1 funds. And so part of that is fundraising,
2 part of that maybe is looking at the
3 limitations on certain -- maybe it's
4 auxiliary funds that if we had more
5 flexibility with auxiliary funds, can we
6 shift them into other areas. Obviously,
7 E&G funds have restrictions and
8 limitations. So you are constantly playing
9 that balancing act.

10 So I probably got off, I probably
11 didn't even answer your question but.

12 MR. COLSON: Sounds like a lawyer.

13 MS. TRELLES: I think you did a good
14 job, especially since it was a comment.

15 But they did ask a question, which I
16 think goes back to another question or
17 comment that a member made, which is:

18 Will the new president support the
19 equity action initiative and the
20 recommendations that were presented by the
21 DEI Council?

22 MR. TOVAR: Go ahead.

23 MR. COLSON: I would assume that the
24 next president will or will improve upon
25 that. That's part of our culture here, and

1 that's not going to change.

2 MR. TOVAR: Yeah. I would second
3 that.

4 MS. TRELLES: Thank you.

5 MR. FUNK: I would say to the group in
6 this room, this is your time.

7 I think of the last several R1
8 president searches my firm has conducted,
9 and at Indiana University, we recruited the
10 first woman in that institution's history,
11 Pamela Whitten, who had been the President
12 at Kennesaw State University and before
13 that was the Provost at the University of
14 Georgia.

15 We did the president search at Texas
16 A&M University. And that successful
17 placement was a Dean of Engineering, a
18 woman who had been at Purdue, last name of
19 Banks, she's a superstar. And she's just
20 going to do great things there.

21 Before that, we had recruited the new
22 president to Rutgers University, and it was
23 that institution's first African American
24 president, a fellow named Jonathan
25 Holloway, who had been the Provost at

1 Northwestern University. And before that
2 had been the Dean of Yale College, which is
3 within Yale University, as you know.

4 If you go to the Chronicle when it's
5 published, or even online, and look at the
6 successful placements, a large percentage
7 of the new presidents are women and
8 individuals of color.

9 So things are changing. This is your
10 time. 56 percent of the individuals we
11 have placed in not only president but
12 Provost and Dean positions over the past
13 six years have been women or individuals of
14 color.

15 So I just want to give you that
16 thought, that glass ceiling, all these
17 ceilings, are being broken down, broken
18 through. And I hope all of you have higher
19 ambition because the future really is very
20 bright. It's very bright.

21 MR. COLSON: I would add that I met
22 Bill Funk when I was Vice-Chair of the
23 Board of University of Miami and he was
24 doing a search to replace Tad Foote and he
25 brought us Donna Shalala. And that was a

1 board that was populated mainly by men and
2 mainly by white men who were Republican.

3 And Donna Shalala came in and swept
4 everybody off their feet and got the job
5 and did a remarkable job. And Bill's
6 effort to convince Donna was probably as
7 difficult as it was to convince some of the
8 old white men on our board, but who then
9 became Donna's biggest supports. So he's
10 got a track record.

11 MR. TOVAR: Go ahead.

12 MR. DIAZ: Hello everyone.

13 My name is Jackie Diaz and I am the
14 Director for Advising in the College of
15 Arts, Sciences, and Education. And thank
16 you so much for giving an opportunity for
17 me to listen, learn, and to also contribute
18 to the conversation.

19 I wanted to bring up the topic of
20 undergraduate student success, because it
21 is such a dominant part of the
22 conversations, the focus, the priorities,
23 the mission; right? And in particular, to
24 advocate on behalf of the professional
25 staff; right? that work so hard to support

1 our students.

2 And in the same way that they very
3 much are our students' advocates, as the
4 director of an advising team, I am their
5 advocate.

6 And so I just wanted to make sure that
7 we highlight the amazing work that our
8 professional staff is doing day-to-day, and
9 to bring up the issue, also, of retention.

10 And not just to bring up salaries,
11 although that has a place in this
12 conversation, but to say that we need a
13 leader that recognizes values and promotes
14 the kind of work and the achievement of the
15 professional staff that is working so hard
16 to support our students; right? And to
17 make sure that our students are making the
18 best of their undergraduate experience,
19 that they are reaching their academic and
20 professional goals, and that they feel as
21 though they belong and they are supported
22 and they are loved.

23 It is very much a labor of love what
24 an academic advisor does for their
25 students, and it is oftentimes emotionally

1 draining. We are going through peek
2 advising right now, and my staff, I just
3 check in on them and I say, are you okay?
4 Make sure you take your lunch; right?

5 So I do want to say that, in terms of
6 what would I like from our next leader, is,
7 I want a leader that, in addition to being
8 very present and very engaged with our
9 student body, because our undergraduate
10 students deserve a fabulous leader, I would
11 also want a leader that does the same for
12 the professional staff, and that makes them
13 feel important, and not like they are just
14 a cog, if you will.

15 My staff, they have all graduate
16 degrees. They can get opportunities
17 outside of higher education where they
18 would get paid better. They have chosen to
19 go into education because they love their
20 profession and they love the students that
21 they are in. But we also owe it to them to
22 value their work and to show them that they
23 are important, and that their work has
24 merit and it has worth; right?

25 So I do want that out of our leader,

1 one that understands the role that we play
2 in undergraduate student success, and is
3 just compassionate and loving towards this
4 group of people, oftentimes former
5 graduates of FIU, because we employ a lot
6 of students that come out of our higher
7 education program that have decided to
8 dedicate their lives to such a worthy cause
9 and deserve just, you know, those moments
10 of acknowledgment, appreciation, and
11 support.

12 Thank you.

13 MR. TOVAR: Jackie, one of the things
14 you bring up is near and dear to my heart,
15 which is advising the students. Because we
16 talk about graduation rates and, to me, key
17 is how we're advising them coming in and
18 then throughout, and that will be a big
19 determinant as to the success rate.

20 So I'm going to ask you a question
21 that I've asked numerous times and it never
22 gets truly answered. And I know that your
23 answer is going to be C, all of the above,
24 but C is not the option. Okay?

25 So A is, would it be better to have

1 more advisors? or B, would it be better to
2 have funds to compensate the advisors we
3 have better?

4 If you can go back to the mic,
5 because -- I'm glad you are here because
6 it's a question that we have asked that I'm
7 not sure that we're fully briefed and I'd
8 like to hear your point of view.

9 MS. DIAZ: Sure.

10 I mean, you are throwing quite a
11 difficult question to a woman who
12 supervisors 47 academic advisors; right?

13 So I have to advocate for those that
14 are here. And realistically I have to -- I
15 constantly monitor the data; right? What
16 are their appointments? Do we have enough
17 availability?

18 And to be quite honest, the advisor to
19 student ratio has been a prominent concern
20 for me since I started this journey years
21 ago. And in my college we are talking
22 about we had 1500 to 1; right? And we're
23 down to mid 400s to 1, which is such a huge
24 accomplishment, because an academic advisor
25 cannot do work -- good work; right? they

1 cannot make a real impact when the volume
2 is so large.

3 So I say that we need the staff we
4 have, because if we had less staff, we
5 would be able to serve less students;
6 right? or the quality of the service that
7 we provide would be seriously impacted
8 negatively.

9 MR. TOVAR: So I guess you are saying
10 we've made an impact going from the 1500 to
11 1 to 400 to 1.

12 MS. DIAZ: For my college, I speak for
13 my college. There are other colleges that
14 may have a different ratio.

15 MR. TOVAR: I get it. But I think
16 your college is probably indicative of
17 others.

18 MS. DIAZ: It is the largest.

19 MR. TOVAR: But if you had your choice
20 would it go down to 300 or 250 to 1? or
21 would you say we need to see if we can find
22 some funds to compensate a little better?

23 MS. DIAZ: I think that the -- the
24 recommended number that we hear from our
25 national organization is around 300, 350 to

1 1. But I think we can manage with existing
2 staff, but we do need to think about not
3 only paying them better but having a more
4 realistic career ladder where we invest
5 some time and attention and work with HR
6 professionals to make sure that across the
7 board, across our college, there is a
8 consistent way of acknowledging talent and
9 making sure that they have their own upward
10 mobility. Because right now, you may lose
11 a very talented advisor to an
12 administration position because it pays
13 more. Where if you had additional -- you
14 know, we have rungs on the ladder, they are
15 just not always easily accessible.

16 And so I think that I would say, let's
17 work with the system we have and make it
18 better. I don't think we need to add
19 additional lines. I certainly don't have
20 space for them, if I'm honest. But I think
21 that we could -- what we need to do is
22 improve the existing system.

23 And I'm more than committed in any way
24 possible to assist the leadership with my
25 ideas and my experience from having led

1 this team for so many years.

2 I hope that answers your question.

3 MR. TOVAR: Thank you.

4 MR. COLSON: You know, Roger, when we
5 set up performance funding at the BOD, we
6 talked a lot about, you know, it was all
7 motivated by graduation rates at the time,
8 which were pretty bad in 2013, 2014. And
9 everybody knew it had to do with advisors.
10 We couldn't solve the problem unless we had
11 advisors. And they needed to be
12 professional advisors, they couldn't just
13 -- it's not enough to say to a faculty
14 member who's teaching a full load and
15 researching, hey, you need to advise 20
16 students a year. They weren't getting the
17 work done that needed to be done.

18 Now, I don't think 400 to 1 is the
19 right number. I think it's probably 250 to
20 1 is the right number to do this correctly.
21 And we probably have taken our graduation
22 rates to about where they can go unless we
23 move that number to 250, in my opinion.

24 MR. TOVAR: Thank you.

25 MS. DIAZ: You're welcome.

1 MR. TOVAR: Believe you me, your input
2 is great for us to hear. So appreciate it.
3 Thank you very much.

4 What was your name, again?

5 MS. DIAZ: Diaz.

6 MR. TOVAR: I was kidding. Thank you.
7 Thank you.

8 I think we're are we -- I think we're
9 out of time. Okay.

10 MS. MIRABAL: I'll make it quick.
11 Okay.

12 My name is Alexandra Mirabal. I'm
13 from the Controller's Office. I am an alum
14 from FIU, and proud to say both of my kids
15 are going to be alums from FIU. So it's a
16 very dear institution to my heart.

17 It is an investment of myself and of
18 our efforts, you know, to contribute to
19 this search, but not just because of being
20 an employer and alum, but also being a mom
21 and being on the other side as mom of
22 students that graduated from here.

23 But the one thing that I wanted to
24 focus on with the questions is the current
25 major challenges and opportunities we have.

1 And I think that in a leader, I think since
2 we face challenges in both the academic
3 spectrum, as well as the financial
4 spectrum, which are two key components of
5 what this job is going to entail for the
6 new candidate, I hope that the committee
7 can focus on trying to find someone that
8 has some level of experience in both
9 arenas. That not only understand the
10 academics, because they have been through
11 academia, but also has a good high level,
12 or at least good enough understanding of
13 finance, to also be able to marry the two
14 challenges and being able to make better
15 decisions or correlations between the
16 challenges we are trying to meet when both
17 of those different themes are obviously
18 going to come to play.

19 I laugh because when you appointed
20 Dr. Jessell, Dr. Jessell has all those
21 qualities. He's been academia and he's
22 finance. So it's easier to have those
23 conversations and for him to actually see
24 the big picture with regard to making, you
25 know, the tough decisions and seeing where

1 we have opportunities. But I hope that the
2 committee takes that into account.

3 As I said before, it's invaluable when
4 you have a new leader come into the
5 organization that, when they come with that
6 background, that that kind of starts the
7 ball rolling and gives them an open forum
8 to be able to talk to all the different
9 sides that are going to be pivotal in
10 running the institution or supporting the
11 institution. So that's the one thing.

12 And then, obviously, the other thing
13 that's super important to me, and I think
14 to a lot of us, especially when we are
15 being faced with change; right? everyone
16 thinks -- you know, takes change very
17 differently, but the majority of us tend to
18 be a little bit hesitant to change or
19 resistant to change.

20 So in personality and how the leader
21 that I would like to see is, we do have a
22 lot of internal talent, as we have all
23 said, and I think we have all brought to be
24 the cheerleaders for that within our
25 institution.

1 And having a new person come on,
2 whether somebody from the outside, or even
3 somebody from internal that we are able to
4 identify would be the best next leader, I
5 think that the style of that leadership,
6 what we should be looking for is someone
7 who is conducive to promoting trust.

8 Usually, when somebody comes from the
9 outside, the hesitancy is that -- or at
10 least the perception is, oh, they are going
11 to bring in their new people, and then they
12 are going to just come in with their own
13 style and they are not going to really take
14 the time to learn what we have going on
15 here at FIU, what is working, what really
16 needs to be tweaked. And sometimes they
17 just come in with that mentality, no, I
18 have a system I'm used to, this has worked
19 for me before, I'm going to go ahead and
20 implement this here with very little
21 feedback or very little openness to have
22 the feedback from the people who are being
23 affected here, so that that transition can
24 be successful.

25 So I'm hoping that that's another

1 thing that we're looking for in our next
2 leader. That kind of management style that
3 exhibits not only confidence and the
4 experience and the knowledge that they
5 bring to the university that they can
6 impart on us, but also sufficient
7 confidence, the same level of confidence,
8 to be able to listen to what we're doing
9 here, to listen to the leaders we have
10 within the executive management, the
11 faculty and staff, the deans, the colleges,
12 and have that, as I said, that confidence
13 that maybe their ideas may not work here,
14 but they are open to listening to what we
15 have.

16 And that, also, it's going to be not
17 just a listening exercise, but an actual
18 real communication exercise in which the,
19 you know, the leader's invested, but gets
20 us all invested because we are starting to
21 develop that trust based on how that, you
22 know, that the new president interacts and
23 reacts and talks the talks and walks the
24 walk, and all those wonderful things.

25 So I think that's two of the most

1 important things that I think would be
2 really helpful and I think would lead us to
3 the next success rank that we want to all
4 get to. We've been very fortunate in
5 President Maidique and President Rosenberg
6 who were pillars of this institution.

7 So no one knows our community, our
8 history, our growth, our ascent to where we
9 are now. So obviously unless we have luck
10 to be able to see if we have somebody
11 internally who has the same qualities, but
12 regardless, even if it's somebody from the
13 outside, we definitely want to make sure
14 that we have that kind of open vision and
15 that kind of personality that will embrace
16 the knowledge and the history, and takes
17 the time to learn about it before just
18 coming in and trying to institute and make
19 changes without really, you know, giving
20 the -- what we have done. I mean, we've
21 been doing something right, we've gotten to
22 this point.

23 So there's a lot of good things going
24 and a lot of valuable people and talent we
25 have within. And I'm just hopeful that

1 that's going to be -- the person that we
2 select for the position will be open to
3 that and will leverage all this incredible
4 talent and all the success and all of the
5 things we've built so far to take it to the
6 next level, and not just break it and start
7 it from scratch.

8 And that's going to be -- that would
9 be a sad, I think, outcome because there's
10 a lot of us coming to, you know, some of
11 the things that others have said. You know
12 we are already having a problem or we are
13 already seeing struggles with keeping
14 talent and keeping the people interested in
15 coming to work for FIU.

16 So if you have that kind of leader
17 that doesn't have that finesse and that
18 fine balance of these different things,
19 then it's going to take a step back instead
20 of forward.

21 So that's it. Thank you.

22 MR. TOVAR: Thank you and I agree.
23 Thank you. Thank you.

24 MR. FUNK: We mentioned earlier the
25 session was being recorded. So we have all

1 of those comments documented now. And also
2 we have a court reporter in the back taking
3 copious notes. So all of us could maintain
4 eye contact and didn't have to be writing
5 at the same time. So thank you very much.

6 MR. TOVAR: So you all are the last
7 group and it's a lot of good input. And
8 what's most amazing is the passion that
9 everybody has for FIU and the dedication
10 and everything else. So we appreciate your
11 time.

12 We will work hard to make the right
13 decision and find the next leader of FIU.
14 So thanks again for your input.

15 Dean, any closing words?

16 MR. COLSON: You know this is the last
17 thing I'm doing on this because I'm not on
18 the search committee. After this session,
19 I'm now turning all this over to Roger and
20 expecting --

21 MR. TOVAR: And our committee.

22 MR. COLSON: Roger and the committee,
23 and expecting him -- and then he'll send it
24 back to me at some point with three, four,
25 five names. And then the real politics

1 start, you know.

2 But I'm really looking forward to
3 letting Roger handle this for the next two
4 or three months while I sit in the
5 mountains somewhere and enjoy my summer.

6 MR. TOVAR: Thank you, all. Thanks
7 for the input. And thank you, Dean.

8 MR. FUNK: Thank you very much.

9 MR. TOVAR: Appreciate it. Thank you.

10 Thanks to all the support staff here
11 and in the back. Sofia, Javi, Carlos,
12 thanks for all you all have done to put
13 together. And you all back there, thank
14 you. Thank you.

15 (Thereupon, the proceedings were
16 concluded at 4:15 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

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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.



Aurora C. Sloan, Florida Professional Reporter

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