

1           PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE  
2           FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

3  
4           Tuesday, April 12th, 2022

5           5:01 p.m. - 5:51 p.m.

6           Graham Center Ballrooms

7           Florida International University

8           11200 S.W. 8th Street,

9           Miami, Florida, 33199

10  
11          FIU ALUMNI BOARD LISTENING SESSION

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19                           PRESENT:

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21           ROGER TOVAR, Chair

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23           R. WILLIAM FUNK, Esq.

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25           SOFIA TRELLES, PhD, Ombudsperson

1           MR. TOVAR: My name is Roger Tovar and I'm  
2           the vice chair of the FIU Board of Trustees.  
3           In addition it is my pleasure to serve as chair  
4           of the Presidential Search Committee. I would  
5           like to extend a warm welcome to the  
6           Presidential Search Committee members and the  
7           FIU community who are joining us for the  
8           listening session and thank them for  
9           participating in this important step. The FIU  
10          Board of Trustees met on April 5th to announce  
11          the Presidential Search Committee members. The  
12          Presidential Search Committee also held its  
13          first meeting on April 5th. To keep all of you  
14          and the members of the FIU community informed,  
15          I am pleased to announce that we have launched  
16          the presidential search website which will  
17          provide information on search process,  
18          meetings, and candidates. This website will  
19          also be updated routinely. We invite you to  
20          visit this website. R. William Funk and  
21          Associates based in Dallas, Texas has been  
22          selected to assist with the search for FIU's  
23          sixth president. The firm has conducted more  
24          than 430 searches for colleges and university  
25          presidents and chancellors. Mr. Funk is

1 joining us today as we welcome members of the  
2 university community and the general public who  
3 are joining us via the webcast as we engage in  
4 listening sessions. I now invite Mr. Funk to  
5 begin the listening session.

6 MR. FUNK: Thank you, Roger. And  
7 greetings to everybody that's online, and  
8 everybody who squeezed into the room here. You  
9 know, the alumni are a special constituency of  
10 any university. And those of you who stay  
11 active and have been involved in the affairs of  
12 the institution really demonstrates some real  
13 affection for what this place has meant to you  
14 and what it's meant in terms of changing your  
15 lives. So we're delighted to have an  
16 opportunity to listen to you today. And we  
17 really are here to take comments and learn from  
18 you what you would like to see in the next  
19 president. They're going to flash on the  
20 screens the three questions that we kind of  
21 want to focus on because this kind of gets to  
22 the nub of what we really can then go and look  
23 for. And the first question is: What are the  
24 major challenges and opportunities that this  
25 next president will inherit immediately, and

1           then maybe down the road a bit. And then  
2           secondly, if those are the challenges and  
3           opportunities, what kind of person do you think  
4           would be best prepared to address the  
5           challenges and exploit the opportunities. In  
6           terms of what adjectives would you use to  
7           describe the person's leadership style,  
8           experience, world view, you know, what does  
9           that person figuratively look like. And then  
10          thirdly, and this is one that's really for us,  
11          the search firm, anyone can really just run the  
12          ad and collect the resumes that might come in.  
13          We find the best candidates don't respond to an  
14          ad. They -- you know, they don't even respond  
15          to a letter sometimes from the search  
16          committee. The best candidates are very happy  
17          where they are, being very successful where  
18          they are, and so they really need to be  
19          nurtured and cajoled and told why they should  
20          become interested in this opportunity. And so  
21          that's really our charge from the search  
22          committee and board, but we need that  
23          ammunition to share with perspective  
24          candidates. You know, what are those things we  
25          can tell them about the university that could

1 energize their interest in becoming a  
2 candidate. I feel badly for the two of you  
3 because I'm looking right at you the entire  
4 time. Don't be intimidated by that. But we  
5 really would like to hear from you. And if you  
6 have any questions about the process, we'll try  
7 to answer those as well. But we had meetings  
8 last week to launch the search. We met with  
9 the search committee for the first time. We  
10 met with the board. Today we're meeting with a  
11 number of the constituent groups. This will go  
12 tomorrow as well where we interview -- not  
13 interview, we sit with other constituents.  
14 We're going to have a campus wide open floor I  
15 believe at 10:00 o'clock in the morning. And  
16 all of that is really helping arm us to be  
17 better stewards to perspective candidates, and  
18 to be as transparent as we possibly can. The  
19 board has been adamant from the very beginning  
20 that they wanted to be as transparent as they  
21 could be because once you get into the search  
22 and start collecting names and people, that's  
23 when we can't under new law, the new Sunshine  
24 law, those folks can't be identified until or  
25 unless they're a finalist. But we -- we're

1 going to listen attentively and try to be  
2 responsive to any questions that you have.  
3 Sofia is monitoring what might be coming in  
4 online, people that are tuned into the webcast,  
5 have the opportunity to post questions. And I  
6 think many of the observations and the comments  
7 made have come by technology driven means  
8 today. So we encourage anyone who's tuned in  
9 to please participate fully. But with that,  
10 would you like to -- what are the major  
11 challenges and opportunities, what kind of  
12 person would you like to see? And what are  
13 those great things about FIU that we can share  
14 with prospective candidates? No pressure, by  
15 the way.

16 MS. ROMERO: Good afternoon. Hi, my name  
17 is Gina Duarte Romero. I'm the president for  
18 the alumni association, and thank you for  
19 having us. We feel that it's really important  
20 to recognize our alumni base because they are a  
21 big constituent to the university. I apologize  
22 that Manny and I are the only ones here. I  
23 wish that we had had a little more notice. I  
24 actually have to leave in just a few minutes  
25 because I have a previous engagement, but I

1 thought this was that important that I come  
2 in-person. I do believe we have some other  
3 alumni board members online. I think to  
4 address some of your questions or some of your  
5 concerns in your search for our president, I  
6 think that the most important characteristic  
7 besides all of the credentials that I'm sure  
8 are required, it needs to be somebody that  
9 connects with the Miami -- the Miami -- I don't  
10 know what the word is, the Miami vibe, the  
11 Miami culture because it -- I think it's so  
12 important. Sometimes we have somebody with all  
13 these credentials, they're -- they just do a  
14 great song and dance, and then when it's time  
15 for the rubber to meet the road, it just  
16 doesn't happen. So whoever that person is, I  
17 really hope that it's somebody that connects  
18 that continues what so many things -- so many  
19 amazing things that have happened in our  
20 university in the last 13 years. You know, I  
21 graduated, the first time I graduated from FIU  
22 was in 1991, we had 3 buildings, now we have I  
23 think it's 117 buildings. It's just another  
24 world. We have campuses all over the planet,  
25 we have so many things, and whoever it is that

1 takes that, not only has to connect with the  
2 Miami culture, but also has to keep that  
3 momentum going.

4 MR. FUNK: Wonderful. Thank you so much.  
5 And thank you for squeezing us in honestly.

6 MS. ROMERO: This is a priority for me.

7 MR. FUNK: Thank you.

8 MR. TOVAR: And just so you know, we've --  
9 that comment is felt throughout the board, the  
10 search committee, and then the numerous groups  
11 that we've already spoken with. What I am  
12 saying because I only speak for myself here is  
13 we need someone that either understands Miami,  
14 and the community, and what we're all about,  
15 and one of the things I've said numerous times  
16 already is this has to be the most exciting  
17 city in this country, if not in the world to  
18 come to right now as to what we have going on  
19 here. Every time I travel and I come home, and  
20 I look out the window of the airplane, I'm in  
21 awe of what I see and what Miami means to me  
22 and what it's all about. I've also lived  
23 through what you're saying which is you go and  
24 you find somebody from some area and they just  
25 don't get it, they don't feel it, they don't



1 see it, they don't fit in, they look down. But  
2 there's other people that you bring in and they  
3 get it right away, and very quickly they tell  
4 you they want to go eat Cuban food or they --  
5 so what we don't want to say is it has to be an  
6 individual that is from South Florida, I think  
7 that's a positive. Then the other thing is  
8 there's a lot of people that have left South  
9 Florida that have some type of connection to  
10 South Florida, so that's another positive. But  
11 then there's also others out there that have  
12 never had any connection to South Florida, but  
13 they have that ability to fit in, assimilate,  
14 understand culture, and, you know, culture is  
15 -- it could be the culture of an office, of a  
16 business, so we're all aligned with what you're  
17 saying, that that is one of the boxes we want  
18 to check, to make sure that we are comfortable  
19 that the person going to make the effort, has  
20 the ability to fit in, to reach out because  
21 it's not only fitting in here in FIU, it's  
22 fitting into the community, to the community  
23 leadership, to the diversity that we have in  
24 Miami because years ago people would say, Miami  
25 is Cuban, or Miami is this. Miami is many,

1 many things, and people from all over the world  
2 and many languages. And so how do we find  
3 someone that unites and brings us together, but  
4 at the same time moves FIU forward? So 100  
5 percent in agreement with you.

6 MS. ROMERO: Thank you.

7 MR. TOVAR: And again, thanks for being  
8 here --

9 MS. ROMERO: Of course.

10 MR. TOVAR: -- and thanks for your -- and  
11 thanks for what you do and the alumni board.

12 MS. ROMERO: It's my pleasure. It's a lot  
13 of fun.

14 MR. TOVAR: Thank you.

15 MR. FUNK: Thank you.

16 MS. TRELLES: I actually wanted to share  
17 that we are joined by 27 members online, so we  
18 are getting a good bid of participation, and we  
19 invite anybody who is joining us online to  
20 please provide your comments, your questions,  
21 so that your voice can be heard here today with  
22 us. If you have anything that you would like  
23 to share, this is a really wonderful  
24 opportunity and an important step.

25 MR. FUNK: And we do have someone who is

1 taking copious and good notes, and thank you  
2 very much by the way for that.

3 MR. NIEBLA: So I guess I'll go. I'm  
4 sorry I'm standing all the way over here. I  
5 feel like I should take the microphone and walk  
6 up to talk to you.

7 MR. TOVAR: You can too.

8 MR. NIEBLA: No, it's all right, because I  
9 think they have the -- all that worked out. I  
10 do have a few comments that I think are  
11 important. I'm sure a lot of the things we all  
12 say you will hear often and I think that's the  
13 point, right, to understand the things that are  
14 most important for us, for the community, for  
15 you guys to be thinking about, right. We are a  
16 majority minority institution. We're proud of  
17 that. We've leaned into that since its  
18 founding. Some folks may think of that as a  
19 challenge because you have to find the right  
20 person. We've always thought about it as an  
21 opportunity. We want you to focus on people  
22 who think of our diversity as a student body as  
23 the opportunity because we think that is a key  
24 factor to what FIU is and what it will be for  
25 the foreseeable future. So that's sort of

1 thinking of the first box, think of those folks  
2 that value that opportunity of the makeup of  
3 who we are and what we can offer, right.

4 The second piece I wanted to talk to you  
5 about was what type of person to look for. And  
6 I want to put something out there for you to  
7 think about that maybe you haven't heard  
8 before. How do you think about a person's  
9 politics, and not whether they're republican or  
10 democrat, but whether their political, or  
11 involved, or in part -- in that process, is  
12 that something that you think of as an  
13 opportunity for the right person to have that  
14 political inclination, or do you think in  
15 today's environment it might be a bit of a  
16 deterrent?

17 MR. FUNK: You know, that's a wonderful  
18 question, and I can tell you that -- and I'll  
19 keep it balanced. I recruited Donna Shalala  
20 when she came out of the Clinton Administration  
21 to the University of Miami, and Donna did a  
22 great job. I mean, she moved I remember one  
23 year 26 places in U.S. News and World Report,  
24 and I think did a nice job. We also recruited  
25 Mitch Daniels, former head of OMB, Republican

1 Governor of Indiana. So as you can see, we try  
2 to keep the scales balanced. But Mitch Daniels  
3 has been an incredible president, and he's not  
4 raised tuition at -- Perdue, a public  
5 institution in ten years. I mean, it's  
6 phenomenal. I don't know how he does it  
7 frankly. We're all trying to figure out the  
8 secret sauce. But I think someone needs to be  
9 politically astute without being partisan.  
10 And, you know, you don't want to alienate half  
11 of your legislature from the get go. You know,  
12 you want to work with both partisans, if you  
13 will. But certainly an astuteness, and an  
14 awareness of what the political climate is and  
15 so on so you can be a better leader for the  
16 university. That's my answer. Roger, any  
17 addition to that?

18 MR. TOVAR: Listen, I think we're -- if  
19 we're all being honest, we all have an opinion  
20 and we side one side or the other. To me, the  
21 key for this position is somebody that's giving  
22 all sides an opportunity to speak and listen.  
23 This is an educational institution. And so  
24 what makes me cringe is when you hear that  
25 somebody is in a class and they feel that they

1 can't voice their opinion because they feel  
2 that the majority of the opinion is on one side  
3 and they don't feel the liberty or the freedom  
4 to speak, or that their grade can suffer. So I  
5 would tell you that, you know, if you have a  
6 strong leader, that person is going to balance  
7 that and make sure that this is truly a place  
8 of learning, of education, and that we're  
9 covering all sides of the spectrum, and let  
10 people make their decisions without feeling  
11 harassed, pressured, or anything else. So,  
12 listen, we -- our past president, you know, he  
13 did a pretty good job balancing, you know, what  
14 his views were versus, you know, making this a  
15 place that opinions could be had and mattered  
16 and that people could speak. So I think, you  
17 know, in today's world you're going to have  
18 people that maybe are qualified for the  
19 position, that do have a political history, but  
20 I think it's the job of the committee, of the  
21 board, of everybody that's looking at that  
22 candidate to say, is this a person that is  
23 going to come and lead the university and give  
24 everybody an opportunity regardless of their  
25 politics, or is this somebody that's going to

1           come and try to impose their politics on the  
2           university community. So I think it's a great  
3           question. And, again, I think, you know, my  
4           opinion of this is we've got to see who the  
5           candidates are out there and why we think they  
6           are or would be a leader of FIU going forward  
7           with the diversity that we have.

8           MR. NIEBLA: So to that point, Mr. Vice  
9           Chairman, I do want to share with you your  
10          third point how I think can push certain folks  
11          that might not be thinking about this career  
12          move to do something like this. Any time you  
13          read about FIU there are many statistics out  
14          there. One of the ones that always jump out at  
15          me is how FIU in terms of providing upward  
16          mobility opportunities for its undergraduate  
17          members is tops in the country. When you think  
18          about what a university does in that regard,  
19          you can think of FIU as probably one of the top  
20          institutions, no matter what industry you're  
21          thinking about, that has the highest impact on  
22          a person's upward mobility in the world, right.  
23          So my family, I'm a first generation graduate,  
24          for college, for grad school, you know, coming  
25          to this university and doing all the things

1           that we're giving -- the opportunities that  
2           were given to me, I pretty much guaranteed  
3           myself a middle class, upper middle class life,  
4           you know, for the rest of my life, assuming I  
5           do all the right things moving forward, right.  
6           So I think about as a person to have the  
7           opportunity to impact that across a number of  
8           people, across an entire community, I think  
9           that's a pretty powerful statement.  If I'm a  
10          person of purpose which most of the folks I'm  
11          sure you're going to see are folks of purpose  
12          and interest in serving, I think if you frame  
13          it that way, that FIU is a place that gives  
14          people the biggest opportunity to move their  
15          lives in the right direction, regardless of any  
16          opportunity that you look at across the board,  
17          you're going to see that FIU does that, and I  
18          think a lot of people are going to be  
19          interested in participating in that process.  
20          So I just leave you with that thought.

21                 The final question I do have, you have  
22                 three open positions in the state university  
23                 system for presidents.  Is that something that  
24                 creates competition, is that an opportunity for  
25                 us, how do you navigate that process in terms



1 of the field of folks that you're looking at?

2 MR. TOVAR: And the three you're referring  
3 to, one of them is UF and the other one is  
4 North Florida; is that correct?

5 MR. NIEBLA: I believe that is correct,  
6 yes.

7 MR. TOVAR: Okay. I'll let Mr. Funk speak  
8 in a minute, but I'm going to tell you my point  
9 of view. I think this is -- you know, each of  
10 one of these universities, institutions,  
11 they're very different, and they -- they're  
12 similar in that they're state universities, but  
13 they're different as to the makeup, as to who  
14 they serve, who they admit. The medical school  
15 in one is not the same medical school in the  
16 other. Their locations are different.  
17 Obviously I'm bias. I think the best one of  
18 those three positions is FIU because we're in  
19 Miami, because who we serve, because we're  
20 still a young institution, and, you know, to me  
21 the person that fills the next presidency, the  
22 legacy that that person will lead because of  
23 the growth. If you look at on campus, and it's  
24 not all about building, but it's amazing how  
25 when I went to school here, the only dorms that

1 were here were those little buildings there on  
2 the corner of 8th Street. Now today you see  
3 the amount of on-campus housing. We're  
4 bringing online over 650 beds near the football  
5 stadium. I was at the scrimmage game on  
6 Saturday night, and to see that building lit up  
7 and the neon lights, it's just -- I don't know,  
8 but I would invite Bill to give us his point of  
9 view, but the first time I met Bill it was  
10 here. I said, Bill, let's just walk a little  
11 bit and you'll feel the vibe, and it's a  
12 different place. So, yes, there is three other  
13 searches going on out there, I would just tell  
14 you they're all different. And I think whoever  
15 comes here is walking into a unique, amazing  
16 opportunity to continue moving us up and  
17 forward.

18 MR. FUNK: Yeah, I feel very similarly to  
19 what Roger has described. I would start by  
20 saying, I'm just going to go out and recruit  
21 those guys at U of F. Also, there are two  
22 other schools, one in the system, Florida  
23 Gulfcoast is looking, and then also Florida  
24 Institute of Technology, a private institution  
25 is looking, so I don't know why this epidemic

1 of university president vacancies occurring.  
2 But it is interesting. You know, I think we  
3 have so much to offer. And I -- not only is it  
4 that the schools are different, but the  
5 locations are different in many ways. I mean,  
6 Gainesville, very, very great quality of life  
7 place to live, but you can't compare the  
8 dynamism and the energy of Miami with almost  
9 anywhere. And I think the visionary person  
10 that we'd like to attract will recognize that,  
11 and will use it, and lean into it. So I think  
12 we have a lot of advantages, and we really will  
13 play on that when we talk to people. But  
14 anytime you do these searches, I mean, if you  
15 look around the country right now, the  
16 University of Wisconsin at Madison is looking,  
17 the University of Arkansas is looking for a new  
18 president, TCU, George Washington University.  
19 There's always competition in the marketplace.  
20 And so what we've been trying to do, and really  
21 what a great team here at FIU, and they're  
22 putting together materials that will make any  
23 other institution look like they're in the  
24 first grade. You know, we're going to put our  
25 best foot forward. I think you'll see the ad

1 is a great ad. I think you'll see a friends of  
2 the university letter that will be a great one.  
3 And we just have to be aware. I mean, you  
4 know, it's putting our best foot forward though  
5 and trying to get the best.

6 MR. TOVAR: That's --

7 MR. FUNK: Delighted you were here. Thank  
8 you.

9 MR. TOVAR: Any input, any suggestions,  
10 recommendations, please, reach -- there's 15.  
11 You can reach out to myself or any of the other  
12 committee members that are there. The input is  
13 welcome. So thank you. Thank you.

14 MR. FUNK: We're going to do our best.

15 MR. TOVAR: We're going to work hard.  
16 Sofia?

17 MS. TRELLES: So we don't have any  
18 questions yet, but between our previous session  
19 and this one we did miss a comment and I wanted  
20 to take the opportunity to mention it because  
21 we want to make sure everybody gets that  
22 opportunity to share their voice. And it kind  
23 of ties in with what you had just said, Bill,  
24 about the ad. So a member of the community  
25 mentioned that: If they were designing the ad,

1           that they would add a sentence on the  
2           international reach and ambitions of FIU  
3           because that is an important component to who  
4           we are as an institution.

5           MR. FUNK:   And I think that's a great  
6           point really.  Javi, what do you think?  It's  
7           not too late to add something like that, right,  
8           or have we placed it?

9           MR. MARQUEZ:  I think they were finalizing  
10          that today, but I will reach out and get right  
11          back to you.  We may have some time.

12          MR. FUNK:  Yeah, that international  
13          dimension I think is a good thought.  It's a  
14          very good thought.

15          You know, one thing I was going to mention  
16          is that these searches, you know, obviously the  
17          focal point is trying to recruit a person to be  
18          in that presidential role.  But when you think  
19          about the process and even what we're doing  
20          now, there's some institution building going  
21          on.  It's always amazing to me, things get  
22          filtered before they get to the board  
23          sometimes, and when you have these sessions, we  
24          hear about them, so there's some positivity to  
25          that.  I think it's a case where the university

1 and the board can say, you know, this is a time  
2 to take stock of where we are, are we headed in  
3 the right direction? You know, a new president  
4 is a new beginning in many ways. You know,  
5 there are always donors and supporters that  
6 somehow fall by the waist side under one  
7 presidency, and this is an opportunity now to  
8 bridge to those folks at the beginning of this  
9 search. So there's more to a search than just  
10 finding the right person, although that's the  
11 ultimate goal, but it should energize the  
12 university, it should build excitement about  
13 the new president so that when they come in,  
14 they'll feel the support of all the  
15 constituents, so, you know, I think we need to  
16 look at the totality of what these searches  
17 entail sometimes.

18 MR. TOVAR: The other thing I'll mention  
19 and, you know, for the benefit of the alumni  
20 board is what fascinates me is just the  
21 constant movement that this university has.  
22 You know, this morning we were inaugurating the  
23 what used to be called Tory Pines, the Center  
24 for Translational Science, and really that's  
25 amazing in and of itself that we're able to add

1           that component that's doing the type of  
2           research that they're doing, and you see the  
3           growth that we've had in research and that's  
4           one of the items that are on our ad, 200  
5           approximately 50 million dollars in research  
6           per year. You look at the botany center that's  
7           being built over there in Coconut Grove, you  
8           look at the three museums that we have, the  
9           division one athletics, the building that are  
10          constantly being built either on this campus or  
11          over in North Miami Beach. It's just we're  
12          constantly moving, we're constantly striving  
13          for more, we're -- you know, our goal to be top  
14          50 as to a public university in U.S. News and  
15          World Report. You look at the top 25 and top  
16          50 rankings and many of the schools, you look  
17          at our school of public health as to the  
18          trajectory that they have, you look at the  
19          opportunities we have in a medical school that  
20          I don't even think is 15 years old yet, the law  
21          school and the rankings there as far as our bar  
22          pass rate, so the -- you know, what we've  
23          accomplished, what this university has  
24          accomplished in 50 years, who we serve, and  
25          then where we realistically think we can be,

1 this provides a great opportunity for the  
2 future leader of FIU. So we'll go out there  
3 and we'll work hard to find the right  
4 individual. But, again, even Bill has said, he  
5 welcomes any input as to any recommendations,  
6 suggestions as to folks that anyone in any of  
7 the groups have identified that says, hey, this  
8 could be a possible candidate for the FIU job.

9 MR. FUNK: Yeah, absolutely. In terms of  
10 even any of the constituent groups has a  
11 network of friends and acquaintances, some of  
12 whom might be associated with other  
13 universities, come in contact with really  
14 potentially good candidates, and if you do have  
15 someone recommended to you, please pass them  
16 along to us. Our e-mail address will be on the  
17 ad and in the leadership statement. And we  
18 want to have the committee, the constituents  
19 help us build the pool of candidates. We  
20 honestly don't have any ownership of where the  
21 candidates come from. We just want as many  
22 good candidates as we can possibly surface, so.  
23 I know we have some comments now.

24 MS. TRELLES: We do. So this is one of  
25 the comments from our community members: Our



1 faculty and students conducting amazing  
2 research, our regional focus on Latin America,  
3 and our location in Miami could position us to  
4 be recognized on a global scale as an  
5 institution with expertise in the region and  
6 its future. Our student body is truly diverse.  
7 And the School of International Public Affairs  
8 recently became an -- school. We are a young  
9 university with a lot of raw potential that is  
10 need of a capable leader.

11 MR. FUNK: That's great. Absolutely. And  
12 that's the message we need to share with  
13 prospective candidates. And then we have  
14 another comment?

15 MS. TRELLES: We do. This one says: I  
16 think that the ideal person would be someone  
17 who is only here for a few years because based  
18 on the above this person is going to have to  
19 take drastic action, make unpopular decisions,  
20 be bold in their statements, eliminate  
21 services, and be willing to challenge the  
22 status quo. I do not think that this person  
23 should have any prior ties to FIU. This is not  
24 only because we need new ideas, but also  
25 because if FIU is truly posing itself as a

1 global R1 campus, it needs to recruit from  
2 outside its regional area to make the next step  
3 in its development.

4 MR. TOVAR: There's a lot there.

5 MS. TRELLES: There is.

6 MR. TOVAR: Listen, I don't know what  
7 those drastic decisions are or hard decisions,  
8 but, again, we're open to listening to anyone's  
9 suggestions, recommendations. I think we're in  
10 a very good place. There's always in any  
11 organization that is this large, there's always  
12 tough decisions to make. We're determined not  
13 to say that the person should be from South  
14 Florida or should not be from South Florida.  
15 We want people that think that they're  
16 qualified and can move the university forward  
17 to put their name out there and be one of the  
18 candidates for this position, and I'm certain  
19 we're going to find an amazing leader.

20 MR. FUNK: I had a chancellor at LSU tell  
21 me once, only half kiddingly that every time --  
22 he identified 35 different constituent seats  
23 that he had to keep happy, and he said, Bill,  
24 every time I make a decision, 17 of them are  
25 not happy. But I do think there's that element

1 to leadership anywhere. Sometimes you have to  
2 make those tough calls, and you do have to, you  
3 know, maybe cut a program. But a good leader  
4 will find a way to take those moves and do them  
5 well. And I'm not so sure -- I also mentioned  
6 in an earlier session that the average tenure  
7 of all four year presidents right now,  
8 according to the American Council in Education,  
9 is 6.5 years. It used to be 8.5, 9. But I do  
10 think the job is getting increasingly  
11 difficult, not only for financial reasons,  
12 funding reasons. I think campuses are more  
13 unsettled right now. There's more activism on  
14 the campuses. I think it's wearing a lot of  
15 presidents out. But maybe it's partly because  
16 they've had to make some of these tough  
17 decisions as well. That's an interesting  
18 comment. I think that no other comments by  
19 wire, right, I don't think.

20 MS. TRELLES: At this moment we do not  
21 have any other comments, but, please, we invite  
22 any member of our community that is joining us  
23 through our virtual platforms to please provide  
24 your comments or any questions so that we can  
25 hear your voice.

1 MR. FUNK: I -- and I may have said this  
2 to Roger when we first talked, that's a  
3 question that I always get from the board when  
4 we -- our first contact, and I always say,  
5 well, we can go as quickly as you want or as  
6 slowly as you want, but it'll take six months.  
7 And it really -- I've had very few searches  
8 that have gone beyond six months. You know,  
9 we've done some in less time because I remember  
10 in one case the state legislature was going to  
11 meet in January and the particular institution  
12 wanted to have their president in place before  
13 the legislature met, so we did it in an  
14 expedited fashion. Still a full search, but we  
15 really ran fast. So I think six months will  
16 hold here. Roger and I have talked about not  
17 really having a timeline cast in concrete. At  
18 the same time these searches have a certain  
19 momentum. You know, you just can't throw it  
20 out there and let it lag. So you kind of have  
21 to keep it moving. We have, you know, this  
22 infrastructure of the search is what we're  
23 putting in place now, the listening sessions,  
24 the ad, the leadership statement, and then  
25 we're going to turn to that point where we're

1 really doing the nitty gritty, reaching out to  
2 candidates, getting nominations, seeing if we  
3 can nurture and cajole people in. I think the  
4 ad is going to say June 15th as a soft deadline  
5 for candidate materials. And then sometime  
6 after that the search committee will review all  
7 of the active candidate files and make a  
8 decision. We'll distill the pool to an  
9 interview group, first round interviewees.  
10 That could be as early as in late June or it  
11 can be later in the summer. And then after  
12 those first round interviews, the search  
13 committee will decide who the three or more  
14 finalists are that they would like to present  
15 to the board, recommend to the board. And then  
16 the board really would be the one to invite  
17 those candidates to the campus, would interview  
18 them, and then would select one, maybe bring  
19 that person back for a second or third  
20 interview. And, you know, in a perfect world  
21 this person could conceivably be here before  
22 the fall term, you know, and may not be. And  
23 what Roger and I have emphasized is we want the  
24 right person, not -- we want to be right, not  
25 quick, if we have to choose one of those two.

1 But six months is usually how long these take.  
2 Which is not the same. Sometimes academic  
3 searches for chairs, and even deans can take  
4 longer. But because of that what I call the  
5 momentum of these presidential searches, the  
6 competition for talent, you know, you want to  
7 keep it moving at a certain pace, and that six  
8 month timeframe is kind of it.

9 MR. TOVAR: And the other thing I will add  
10 is the university itself and some of the people  
11 that are involved in the process got out in  
12 front of this relatively quickly as far as  
13 starting to create an ad, starting to create  
14 the statement that needs to be created, a  
15 website that needs to be created, how quickly  
16 the chair and then the board acted on creating  
17 a search committee, so there's been things that  
18 have been put in place that sometimes takes  
19 weeks if not months that had moved relatively  
20 quickly just because people's commitment,  
21 dedication, and involvement. Like Bill said,  
22 ideally if we could identify candidates quickly  
23 and take them in front of the board, and the  
24 board feels that those are viable candidates  
25 and they vote, we can have somebody in place in

1 the fall, that would be great. But we've also  
2 seen different institutions that have made  
3 mistakes by pushing too hard too quick. And so  
4 this is not something that, you know, we're in  
5 a vacuum and we don't have leadership. We have  
6 great leadership, we have great folks running  
7 FIU today, but, you know, the sooner we do  
8 decide on a president, that's the next chapter,  
9 and that's -- you can move onto the next  
10 chapter and figure out your strategy, your  
11 direction, where you want to go. So it's a  
12 combination, and I know -- I'm trying to answer  
13 your question fully, directly, but just to tell  
14 you the thought process is not that it has to  
15 be done by the fall. It would be good, but if  
16 there is roadblocks along the way, we're not  
17 going to get pressured into saying it has to  
18 happen. I think it can, and I think we put  
19 everything in place to make that happen, but,  
20 again, if we don't have the right candidates,  
21 we'll continue our search.

22 MS. TRELLES: So we do have some other  
23 comments that we've been collecting as we have  
24 prepared for this listening session from our  
25 community, and I wanted to take some time to

1 ask a question and to share some of those  
2 comments, but I'll start with a question first  
3 since we just received it: In your experience,  
4 how long does it take from when someone is  
5 selected to being put into place and getting  
6 the work -- to getting to the work.

7 MR. FUNK: Very interesting question. You  
8 know, candidates will ask us, you know, when  
9 does the board want the new person to step into  
10 the role, so they'll be kind of -- you know,  
11 we'll have had that discussion with the  
12 candidates and with the board, and it -- with  
13 that anticipation and with that foreknowledge,  
14 I think the candidates will do -- will try to  
15 do what the board has asked. But what  
16 typically happens, you know, in higher  
17 education it's kind of unusual. Sometimes you  
18 can announce a president in higher education  
19 six months before they begin their term, and  
20 yet what happens is, you know, they might come  
21 in once every two weeks after they're first  
22 named, then it will be every week, and then  
23 before you know it they're coming in for two or  
24 three days a week, and by the time they start  
25 six months later, you know, they're there.



1 It's kind of an evolution of rolling in. But  
2 typically, you know, someone will say, gee, you  
3 know, I'd like to have a month off before I  
4 start this because I'm really going to come in  
5 and hit it. But not many people would want  
6 more than a month. Of course you then get into  
7 the questions to -- we have candidates that  
8 say, gee, I just can't leave, I have -- I have  
9 some things I'm in the middle of here, I owe it  
10 to my current board that I can't leave until X  
11 date, and of course we respect that, and the  
12 board would respect that, because you want a  
13 person who feels some loyalty and so on.  
14 Sometimes it's not the candidate's choice.  
15 Sometimes the home board, if it's a sitting  
16 president, as soon as they find out that the  
17 person is looking at another opportunity, will  
18 say, get the heck out of here. But it's a  
19 pretty quick turnaround. I don't think  
20 candidates need more than a month, if you will,  
21 except in unique circumstances.

22 MS. TRELLES: And now to share some of the  
23 comments that we've received. It is imperative  
24 that the person has an outstanding research  
25 record themselves so that they fully understand

1           how research at FIU works. That the person  
2           needs to be committed to equality, diversity,  
3           inclusion, and be respectful of all employees,  
4           and the affect that their decisions have on  
5           their individuals. The person also needs to be  
6           unafraid of confronting change and making  
7           decisions that will be best for FIU as a whole.  
8           I think that this will be a major challenge,  
9           but it needs to be done.

10           MR. TOVAR: Good point.

11           MS. TRELLES: Some other comments that we  
12           have received is: The person will need to be  
13           an excellent team player. And I would like to  
14           see them making primarily external leadership  
15           appointments for all of the key roles in the  
16           university. This is a common practice at the  
17           top universities that I know. And the person  
18           needs to be honest, to have integrity, and to  
19           be open and transparent about the university's  
20           plan and direction.

21           MR. TOVAR: 100 percent.

22           MS. TRELLES: They're really good  
23           comments.

24           MR. FUNK: Great. God on a good day, as  
25           they say.

1 MS. TRELLES: We do have a comment from a  
2 member of the public.

3 MS. DUCUENNOIS: Good evening, everyone.  
4 My name is Sara Ducuennois and I serve -- I  
5 have the great fortune of serving as the new  
6 associate vice president of alumni relations  
7 here at FIU, and I wanted to share a  
8 compliment, comment, and also a request.  
9 First, I want to recognize you because the  
10 search committee is so well represented by  
11 alumni, and that's very important, and our  
12 alumni have taken notice of that, so first I  
13 wanted to make that statement and  
14 acknowledgment. And I hope that as we build  
15 out the institutional profile for this  
16 position, we equally spotlight the power of the  
17 FIU network. Our alumni represent one of the  
18 largest and fastest growing bases of alumni in  
19 North America, and I've noticed from other  
20 institutions that sometimes the profile is so  
21 student centric, that sometimes they forget the  
22 alumni piece. So I hope you keep that in mind,  
23 and I certainly know Vice Chair Tovar will keep  
24 that at the top too as a proud alumnus at this  
25 institution.

1 MR. TOVAR: Thank you for those comments.  
2 And you're 100 percent right, and I -- you  
3 know, you look through the 15 individuals that  
4 are on the search committee, there's a number  
5 of them, I don't remember the exact number, but  
6 I counted it, and truly everybody brings  
7 something different to the table as to how that  
8 search committee comes together. But obviously  
9 if you've had the experience here, you have a  
10 passion, an outlook, an experience that adds so  
11 much as to where FIU has come from, how it has  
12 grown, and how it can continue to grow, and one  
13 of the fastest growing cities in this country.  
14 And the alumni involvement and, you know -- we  
15 had the opportunity to see that in full force  
16 on Saturday night at the scrimmage game, and  
17 the more of that that we can get, it just -- it  
18 creates a force like none other, and you see it  
19 throughout the country in the great  
20 universities that a lot of that drive and -- it  
21 comes from the push of the alumni and them  
22 giving back, and their dedication, and  
23 everything else, so I would agree with you 100  
24 percent. Thank you. Thanks for those  
25 comments.

1           So I don't think we have any other  
2           comments or questions, if there's none other  
3           here? So I'll just conclude by saying, a  
4           university wide listening session will take  
5           place at 10:00 a.m. on April 13th to get input  
6           from our students, faculty, and staff regarding  
7           the qualities and qualifications we want to see  
8           in our next president. Please join us in the  
9           Graham Center Ballrooms. This too will be live  
10          streamed. Thank you very much. Thanks for you  
11          alls participation. Thank you. Thank you.

12                           (Whereupon, the proceedings  
13                           concluded at 5:51 p.m.).

14                           - - -

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CERTIFICATE

1  
2  
3 THE STATE OF FLORIDA )  
4 COUNTY OF MIAMI-DADE )  
5

6 I, Daisy L. Amador, a Court Reporter, do  
7 hereby certify that I was authorized to and did  
8 report the proceedings, had and taken at the Graham  
9 Center Ballrooms, Florida International University,  
10 11200 S.W. 8th Street, Miami, Florida, 33199, on  
11 April 12th, 2022, for the Presidential Search  
12 Committee; that the foregoing pages, numbered 1 to  
13 38, inclusive, constitute a true and complete record  
14 of my notes.

15  
16 I further certify that I am not an  
17 attorney or counsel of any of the parties, nor  
18 related to any of the parties, nor financially  
19 interested in the action.

20  
21 Dated this 19th day of April, 2022.

22  
23 <%17328,Signature%>

24 \_\_\_\_\_  
Daisy L. Amador  
Notary Public for the State of Florida  
25 Commission No.: HH175493  
Expires: 10/17/2025

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