

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY  
Presidential Candidate  
Administrators Staff Forum  
Session II Administrators Staff Forum

LOCATION: Graham Center Ballrooms  
Florida International University  
11200 S.W. 8 Street  
Miami, Florida 33199

DATE: Wednesday, May 21, 2025

TIME: 10:15 AM - 11:15 AM

Executive Recruiter:

Bill Funk, Funk Associates

Interim President/Candidate:

Jeanette Nunez

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Carlos Duarte, Committee Chair; Vice Chair

Noël Barengo, FIU Board of Trustees

Eric Eikenberg, CEO, The Everglades Foundation

Francis Hondal, FIU Board of Directors

Albert Maury, Pres/CEO, Leon Medical Centers

Jose Oliva, Florida Board of Governors

Claudia Puig, FIU Foundation, Board of Directors

Selcuk Uluagac, Eminent Scholar Professor

Marc Sarnoff, Committee Vice Chair; FIU Trustee

Francesca Casanova, FIU Board of Trustees

Gerald Grant, Jr., Vice Chair, FIU Foundation

Natasha Lowell, Senior VP Grove Bank

Carlos Migoya, CEO Jackson Health System

Yaffa Popack, FIU Board of Trustees

Alexander Rubido, JD candidate, College of Law

REPORTED BY: Chancelor Merritt, Stenographer  
and Notary Public in the State of Florida at  
Large

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 2</p> <p>1 (Thereupon, Session II was held:)</p> <p>2 MR. FUNK: Good morning and welcome. It's my</p> <p>3 pleasure to extend a warm welcome to the members of</p> <p>4 the FIU community who've joined here in person today</p> <p>5 for an opportunity to meet and hear the presidential</p> <p>6 candidate finalist, Mrs. Jeanette M. Nunez. Our</p> <p>7 second session is a forum with administrators and</p> <p>8 staff. As a part of our university community, we</p> <p>9 strive to foster a respectful and open environment.</p> <p>10 All perspectives are welcome. Please be mindful,</p> <p>11 though of maintaining decorum. Unruly, threatening,</p> <p>12 or disruptive behavior that may disrupt the forum is</p> <p>13 prohibited. We're not really expecting that at all.</p> <p>14 Any individual violating this rule, though will be</p> <p>15 asked to leave the event.</p> <p>16 My name is Bill Funk, and I'm the founder and</p> <p>17 president of a search firm by the name of Funk</p> <p>18 Associates. Ironically enough we've done over 400</p> <p>19 for college and university presidents and</p> <p>20 chancellors over the past nearly 40 years. We are</p> <p>21 pleased to assist the university on this most recent</p> <p>22 presidential search, and our relationship with FIU</p> <p>23 extends backward of almost 20 years. So we've seen</p> <p>24 this institution grow, prosper, and just do so, so</p> <p>25 well and we've been delighted to be a some small</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 4</p> <p>1 themes and our goal is to cover as many of those</p> <p>2 questions as we possibly can with the time that's</p> <p>3 been allotted. If you did not submit a question in</p> <p>4 advance of today's session and you have a question</p> <p>5 that we haven't covered today, we have set aside a</p> <p>6 few minutes to take questions from members of the</p> <p>7 audience joining us in person.</p> <p>8 I think there's a 10-minute time frame that</p> <p>9 after the questions have been curated in advance,</p> <p>10 we'll take several questions from the floor.</p> <p>11 Ms. Jeanette M. Nunez as interim President of</p> <p>12 Florida International University, a position she has</p> <p>13 held since February. As an interim president, Ms.</p> <p>14 Nunez serves as the Chief Executive Officer for the</p> <p>15 university and is responsible for the operation and</p> <p>16 administration of the university, including</p> <p>17 efficient and effective budget and program</p> <p>18 administration leading the university to accomplish</p> <p>19 its education, missions, and goals, monitoring</p> <p>20 educational and financial performance, and serving</p> <p>21 as the university's key spokesperson.</p> <p>22 Prior to her appointment as interim president,</p> <p>23 Ms. Nunez served as the State of Florida's</p> <p>24 lieutenant Governor. She is a proud double alumna.</p> <p>25 She earned a bachelor's degree in political science</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 3</p> <p>1 part in that progress.</p> <p>2 In consultation with the Florida Board of</p> <p>3 Governors, FIU board of trustee's chair, Roger</p> <p>4 Tovar, who's seated here in the front row, appointed</p> <p>5 the 15-member Presidential Search Committee. These</p> <p>6 individuals who were appointed in accordance with</p> <p>7 the Florida Board of Governors Regulations represent</p> <p>8 the Florida Board of Governors, the FIU Board of</p> <p>9 Trustees, including two former chairs of the</p> <p>10 trustees, FIU Foundation Board of Directors, the</p> <p>11 current faculty senate chair, a distinguished</p> <p>12 professor, the current student government president,</p> <p>13 a former student government president, as well as</p> <p>14 other distinguished members of the community.</p> <p>15 The Presidential Search Committee conducted its</p> <p>16 work throughout in accordance with Florida statutes</p> <p>17 and Florida Board of Governors Regulations. All of</p> <p>18 today's sessions are available to the university</p> <p>19 community to attend in person or on the FIU webcast.</p> <p>20 Each session has been scheduled for one hour. After</p> <p>21 the candidate's presentation, we will take time to</p> <p>22 address questions from the university community. In</p> <p>23 that regard, thank you to those of you who submitted</p> <p>24 questions in advance of today's sessions.</p> <p>25 Your questions were organized into common</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 5</p> <p>1 and international relations in 1994, and a master's</p> <p>2 degree in public administration also from FIU.</p> <p>3 Before serving as Lieutenant Governor, she</p> <p>4 represented Miami-Dade County in the Florida</p> <p>5 legislature for eight years.</p> <p>6 Ms. Nunez came to public office with years of</p> <p>7 experience as Vice President of Governmental Affairs</p> <p>8 at Jackson Health Systems and similar leadership</p> <p>9 positions at Kendall Regional Medical Center and</p> <p>10 Aventura Hospital and Medical Center.</p> <p>11 It is now my pleasure to introduce to you, Ms.</p> <p>12 Jeanette M. Nunez.</p> <p>13 MS. NUNEZ: Well, good morning. It's a pleasure</p> <p>14 to be here in this second community forum. I know</p> <p>15 this one was slated for faculty and staff, rather</p> <p>16 staff and administration, But I know that there are</p> <p>17 members of the community and so it's an honor to be</p> <p>18 here before you today to talk about FIU and my role</p> <p>19 as interim president, and I want to thank Bill Funk</p> <p>20 for that introduction and really for leading with a</p> <p>21 steady hand this search process.</p> <p>22 Let me tell you a little bit about myself</p> <p>23 before I delve into some of the more relevant things</p> <p>24 as it relates to FIU's strategic plan, our future.</p> <p>25 But I was born and raised in this community, a stone</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 6</p> <p>1 throw away from here. I grew up a daughter of Cuban  2 immigrants that came to this country in 1961, from  3 Communist Cuba. They instilled in me many things  4 that I'm thankful to today. They were tremendous  5 role models. They instilled in me the love of this  6 country, a hard work ethic, and most importantly, a  7 priority on education. That was something that was  8 impressive upon me at a young age and so I'm  9 thankful for their involvement in my life and really  10 the trajectory that has led me here today.  11 I first came on this campus in 1989 as a high  12 school senior. It was my first summer job officially  13 at the registrar's office in Maricasa. And it was a  14 job that I enjoyed. And apparently, I made a good  15 impression, so they offered me that job upon  16 graduating high school. So I came back the following  17 year.  18 FIU is the only university that I applied for  19 because I knew it's where I wanted to attend because  20 I was so connected to the university through my  21 sisters that had attended. And just a long history  22 that my family had had with FIU. And when you think  23 about where FIU was, an abandoned airfield 53 years  24 ago, and what it's become I'm so proud that I have  25 been a part of FIU and I have seen its growth.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 8</p> <p>1 could represent their constituents. I thought I had  2 an opportunity to do the same. So in 2010, I  3 embarked to run for office.  4 It was a grueling campaign, and anyone that has  5 been involved in any way, shape or form you know  6 that it's no fun to knock on thousands of doors in  7 the summer heat. But it really exposed me to the  8 needs and the interests of the community that I was  9 looking to represent. So it was a fascinating  10 experience.  11 I was elected in 2010, and I served eight years  12 in the Florida legislature. Eight years in different  13 capacities. I served in leadership roles. I was  14 chair of higher education and workforce. I was chair  15 of government operations, appropriations.  16 And in my last term, I was selected by my peers  17 to be speaker pro tempore overseeing the management  18 of the chamber, ensuring decorum and rules, and  19 ensuring the effective policy making. And so that  20 was a really unique experience, and it was one that  21 I treasured. And I believe that opportunity really  22 lent itself to the role that I'm playing today  23 certainly as interim president of FIU. But I was  24 planning on taking a break from politics and looking  25 to go off into the private sector. And it was that</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 7</p> <p>1 So as I mentioned, I came here. I earned my  2 bachelor's in international relations and political  3 Science in 1994. I then pursued my master's degree  4 in public administration. After graduating from  5 undergrad, I went to work in the state legislature.  6 I worked as a legislative aide to a state  7 representative who then became a state senator. And  8 I spent nine years in state government. And it was  9 there where I really began my passion for public  10 service, my love for state government, and my  11 understanding of the legislative process, the  12 players, all the politics that comes with state  13 government. It was an incredible experience.  14 And from there, I went to go work at Jackson  15 Memorial Hospital. I ultimately became their Vice  16 President of Government Affairs and was responsible  17 for all aspects of the hospital's, government  18 affairs, local, state, and federal. And it was  19 really there where I began to consider and ponder  20 the opportunity of running for office. I was as I  21 mentioned, interfacing and interacting with local  22 and federal and state elected officials working on  23 complex healthcare issues and budget issues. And I  24 certainly thought that these individuals can lend  25 something to the process and can bring value and</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 9</p> <p>1 summer of 2018 that I got a call from a little-known  2 congressman at the time by the name of Ron DeSantis.  3 And he asked me if I would consider running  4 alongside him as his lieutenant governor. I will  5 share full disclosure that I politely declined the  6 first time, and it was not something that I was  7 really contemplating doing, talking with over with  8 my family. So I thought I had closed that chapter of  9 my book. A few weeks later, I got a number of calls  10 from people in the community, from other elected  11 officials encouraging me to reconsider. Ultimately,  12 DeSantis called again and impressed upon me the  13 importance of joining in as a lieutenant governor.  14 And I thought about it, I prayed about it, and I  15 went through a lot of ups and downs, but ultimately,  16 I agreed to run alongside with him.  17 In 2018, we were elected by the closest of  18 margins, really. It was a very challenging race. It  19 was very competitive. And so that began my career as  20 Lieutenant Governor. And what I'll tell you is at  21 the time, we knew we had gone through a grueling  22 campaign. It was going to be a challenging four  23 years. At the time, we didn't understand quite  24 exactly how that was going to play out. Fast  25 forward, we had multiple hurricanes, wildfires. We</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 10</p> <p>1 had a COVID pandemic that really changed so much of  2 the trajectory of state government at the time, and  3 then of course, dealing with the building collapse.  4 So it was through those very unique experiences that  5 I got to further hone my leadership skills,  6 developing understanding of complex processes,  7 leading teams at the state level, and really  8 appreciative of that opportunity.  9 We got reelected in 2022 by historic margins  10 and got to continue working alongside webinar and  11 challenging issues, of course leading on things like  12 higher education and really being exposed to a lot  13 of complex issues that I think really are true for  14 universities and other complex organizations as  15 well.  16 So that's sort of my background and obviously  17 very proud of my public service. I think that has  18 been centerpiece of my career. And I can tell you  19 from the perspective of serving currently as interim  20 president the last three months that role is about  21 public service, and that public service is geared  22 towards our students.  23 So I'll talk a little bit about FIU as it  24 relates to my past, as it relates to my present, and  25 hopefully you all will understand what I see for the</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 12</p> <p>1 lives that would've been impacted, think about the  2 careers that would've been stymied, think about the  3 industries that would not have come here because,  4 but for FIU providing the excellent service, the  5 excellent educational product that we provide, many  6 industries could not support their fields because we  7 know we provide top talent.  8 We know that we're graduating 55,000 students.  9 We know that we have 330,000 alumni, and the vast  10 majority of them, 80% stay in this community and  11 they continue to work alongside industry. And so  12 that, from my vantage point is something that's so  13 inspiring because I know that FIU, their  14 fingerprints, their DNA is all over the State, all  15 over this country.  16 We're excited about where FIU is currently  17 today. We are a powerhouse, preeminent public  18 research university, top 50 designated. And so we  19 have so much going on, and we're leaders in so many  20 fields. One of the challenges I think FIU has is we  21 don't tell our story enough. We don't tell our story  22 proudly. And so I'm going to challenge everyone in  23 this audience, I think if you're here, you care  24 about FIU, you care about the future of FIU.  25 Perhaps you work here, perhaps you have</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 11</p> <p>1 future for FIU. So as I mentioned, very connected to  2 the university. It has been a central part of my  3 life and that of my family. Both my husband and I  4 graduated from FIU. Every member of my immediate and  5 extended family have either attended, have  6 graduated, my oldest two graduated undergrad. My  7 middle one is currently attending, pursuing a  8 professional degree. My little one is a question  9 mark. I continue to press upon him that he cannot be  10 the only member of my family that is not a Panther.  11 So I guarantee you he's not watching, but if by any  12 miracle he is, know that you're coming to FIU very  13 soon, even if you don't know it just yet. But I say  14 that facetiously, but I really do believe that FIU  15 has had such an imprint on my life.  16 And as I look into the audience, I'm sure many  17 of your stories are similar to my stories, so it's  18 not unique. But what I will say is FIU is unique  19 from the standpoint of what it means to our  20 community, what it means to our state, and really  21 what it means to our country.  22 If you think for a second 53 years ago FIU was  23 created and opened its doors, if you think about  24 where we would be individually, professionally as a  25 community, if FIU did not exist, think about the</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 13</p> <p>1 children that attend here. But whatever your reason  2 for coming here today to hear from me, I hope you  3 leave here inspired to be more engaged, to be more  4 connected, to learn more about all the wonderful  5 accolades that we have to tell. If you don't tell  6 the FIU story, somebody else will tell it for you.  7 And I guarantee you it will not be as exciting as I  8 want to tell it.  9 And so I think when you see, we have a number  10 two international business school in the country.  11 Our law school is number one in terms of our passage  12 rates. We're graduating students from every field.  13 We're making an impact.  14 Our healthcare what we're doing with our  15 partnerships with Nicklaus that we just signed  16 earlier this week and Baptist Health South Florida,  17 we are going to be training tomorrow's doctors and  18 developing tomorrow's cures. If that doesn't excite  19 you from a community perspective, I don't know what  20 does.  21 So when I go to sleep at night, and when I wake  22 up and I come to work, I constantly think about what  23 are we doing to improve the lives of our students? I  24 sent out a communication on day one, and what I said  25 then rings true today. I said, everything we do must</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 14</p> <p>1 begin and end with the student. So those of you  2 that are here, that interface with students directly  3 or perhaps you feel that you don't, what I would  4 encourage you to challenge you really is that you  5 understand that we have to be student focused. We  6 have to drive student success. And that's one of the  7 most exciting things.  8 When I walk into my office, when I come to GC,  9 when I go grab something to eat and I see students  10 and I see the enthusiasm. We just commenced. last  11 Friday, our very busy commencement season in which  12 we graduated 5,500 students this semester. Our last  13 graduation was our law school graduation. But what I  14 can tell you is that I saw such optimism, such  15 promise, such excellence, our students across that  16 graduation stage.  17 The future is really unlimited for those  18 students, and FIU is a central part of that. So when  19 you talk about where we're headed, the future for  20 FIU just this past weekend, we celebrated our Torch  21 Awards, which is the highest award and alumni can  22 receive. I know there are many alums in here, so  23 clearly there's opportunities for you to be a Torch  24 Award recipient in the coming years.  25 What I heard from those that were being</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 16</p> <p>1 FSU, we beat UCF, USF, all the other institutions.  2 We are the gold star, so we need to begin to start  3 acting like that.  4 So I'm excited about the future of FIU. I think  5 we have so many opportunities to share, to partner  6 with industry. When you think about FIU, we are a  7 Carnegie R1 designated institution. Only 3% of  8 universities across the US have that designation.  9 Our Green School of International Public Affairs is  10 a member of the APSIA. Only 25 other institutions in  11 the United States have been designated in this very  12 elite designation. We have so much to be proud of.  13 We have so many accolades to tout.  14 And I believe that is the role of the  15 university president. And if I'm blessed to be the  16 seventh president of FIU, the first woman and the  17 first alumna, I can tell you that I will make that  18 my life's mission to ensure that everyone knows that  19 FIU is the future. Because when we look at the faces  20 of our students, when we talk about where we're  21 headed, what direction we're going in, FIU currently  22 is a top 50. In the next few years, I want us to be  23 a top 30. And the sky's the limit. After that. I'm  24 not setting top 30 as the ceiling. I'm setting it as  25 the floor. We want to ensure that our students, that</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 15</p> <p>1 bestowed the highest honor is the impact that FIU  2 has had on their lives. And it really warmed my  3 heart because I too felt like were it not for FIU I  4 would not be on this trajectory, I would not be  5 where I am today. And so when I heard one of the  6 recipients when she was asked for, what would be the  7 advice you would give? And this is really how I  8 approached this role. I was told by many of our  9 board that they wanted us to be thinking about the  10 future, about focusing on fundraising. But one of  11 the things that someone told me, and I took it to  12 heart, is I want you to dream big. And I think that  13 when you think about what we're dreaming about, her  14 response and her advice, which I took to heart, is  15 don't just dream big, dream bigger. And I really  16 want everyone that's involved with FIU to have that  17 mindset, that sense of urgency.  18 We cannot rest on our laurels. We are the top  19 performing institution. FIU is graded by a series of  20 metrics that have been identified by the Florida  21 Board of Governors. And these metrics include  22 everything from graduation rates to retention rates  23 to employment after graduation. FIU is number one.  24 Think about that. Number one out of all 12  25 institutions. That means that we beat UF, we beat</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 17</p> <p>1 they have those employment opportunities, that we  2 work with industry, that industry looks to FIU to  3 solve the complex challenges.  4 We have a number of areas which are strategic  5 areas of focus for us. If you look at things that we  6 excel in, environment and environmental resilience,  7 we are doing research that would blow everyone's  8 mind. We are researching in every continent and in  9 every ocean in this globe. And when we talk about  10 environment and environmental resilience, the State  11 of Florida has designated us as a university of  12 distinction in that area.  13 When you talk about healthcare, I mentioned our  14 partnerships with Nicklaus and with Baptist. We're  15 going to be building a clinical facility on our  16 campus. People will be walking to FIU to have  17 clinical services to understand that our research is  18 impactful. Because I think it's important when you  19 talk about our research and where we are today, \$328  20 million of research expenditures, my hope is in the  21 next few years to double that. But again, it has to  22 be research that's impactful. It can't just be  23 research for research's sake. We want it to be  24 impactful. We want it to be able to save lives, to  25 bring home to families.</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 18</p> <p>1 I think about the work that Dr. Azzam is doing  2 around pediatric cancer, something that we're really  3 proud of. And the work that she's doing is  4 impressive, not only from the standpoint of the  5 functional precision medicine and all of the  6 breakthroughs on the medicine side, but really what  7 it translates is hope and saving lives.  8 A young boy, Logan, had a rare pediatric cancer  9 diagnosis. Not a good prognosis, hadn't had any real  10 improvements in the treatment protocols he had been  11 undergoing. He signed up for her trial, and within a  12 short time, he not only was cancer free, he remains  13 in remission two years later. If that doesn't move  14 you, again, I don't know what will. But those are  15 the types of things-- Those are the types of things  16 that FIU is going to be involved in.  17 And as you look to the future, FIU will  18 absolutely be a powerhouse as it relates to  19 delivering healthcare throughout our community. Just  20 the fact that we're going to be training the doctors  21 of tomorrow, the leaders of tomorrow, I think those  22 opportunities are limitless for FIU. So there's a  23 lot of areas that we focus on, technology,  24 innovation.  25 We're doing great things, especially, and I'll</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 20</p> <p>1 asked to continue to chair Space Florida, the  2 state's economic arm as it relates to aviation and  3 aerospace. And those are unique opportunities for us  4 to continue to show our dominance, to continue to  5 show our excellence. So again, lots of exciting  6 things for the future for FIU. And as I look out  7 into the audience, I see so many people that are  8 pivotal part of that future, of that growth and of  9 those dreams to dream bigger. So with that, I will  10 sit down and look forward to answering some  11 questions.  12 MR. FUNK: Thank you, Jeanette. And all of the  13 questions that were submitted prior to the session  14 were curated and put into themes by the team here at  15 the university. I think we were able to get through  16 seven of 11 themes in the last session but I'm going  17 to pick up on one that we didn't cover on that  18 occasion. And that is shared governance, something  19 near and dear to all the constituents in the  20 university. What is your view on shared governance?  21 MS. NUNEZ: Absolutely. I know the next session  22 we'll probably have a keen interest in that as well,  23 but certainly there's a mix of people in the  24 audience. So I think it's a great place to start  25 given that we didn't get to that question last time.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 19</p> <p>1 just touch on it briefly. I'm sure it might come up  2 in a question. AI is the future. Disruption, what  3 are we doing? How are we staying relevant? When you  4 look at the community, the private sector, 83% of  5 businesses have identified AI as a top priority for  6 them in their business plans. When you look at the  7 US market for AI, it's going to grow to \$300 billion  8 by 2026. Those are opportunities that are ripe for  9 FIU.  10 Our excellent faculty, the work that we do on  11 research, the collaborations that we have with  12 industry, it really lends itself for FIU being a  13 leader in that space. And so I'm also excited about  14 the work we're going to do around that. You look at  15 the space industry, it is on pace to be a  16 multi-trillion-dollar industry. Florida's the launch  17 capital of the world, but we know that there's a lot  18 more going on in the space industry than just rocket  19 launches, as exciting as those may be. So I'm  20 excited about FIU leading in that particular  21 industry as well.  22 Over my time as lieutenant governor, I was  23 charged with a number of responsibilities.  24 Everything that included healthcare, it included  25 cybersecurity, it included space. And so I've been</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 21</p> <p>1 So shared governance, academic freedom, those are  2 cornerstones of higher education. I know they've  3 been around since the very early days. And I think  4 it's important to note that as we talk about shared  5 governance and we talk about academic freedom, I  6 think it's important to recognize that I have from  7 my very first day, have been open and accessible,  8 have met on two occasions with the faculty senate.  9 In fact, one of my very first meetings with our  10 trustees, and I might get in trouble with the first  11 row here of trustees when I say this, but one of my  12 very first meetings was with Trustee Barengo, who is  13 the head of the Faculty Senate, and the next one is  14 our Student Government Association President. So,  15 again, I might hear from that from the rest of the  16 board. But I think that interaction and that  17 continuous rapport with Trustee Barengo as it  18 relates to faculty senate in particular, is  19 something that I committed to.  20 And at that meeting I know that there are  21 various perspectives on my presidency, but what I'll  22 say, and I'll say it again for everyone to hear, is  23 that I'm open and accessible to have those  24 conversations as it relates to shared governance. I  25 know that's something probably more appropriate in</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 22</p> <p>1 the academic sphere. And I know the provost has  2 ongoing conversations and opportunities to interact  3 with faculty as well. But those are principles that  4 are important and what I committed to doing, and  5 I'll continue to commit to doing is being available,  6 being accessible showing up to as many faculty  7 senate meetings as they'd like me to. Certainly,  8 understanding that there's a role to play. And then  9 I think it's important, it's healthy to have that  10 dialogue. And I just encourage faculty to reach out.  11 Many have, even outside of the faculty senate, many  12 have reached out. Many want to talk to me. They want  13 to understand my vision for the university. And what  14 I said then again, I think it ring true today, if  15 what you care about is the students, what you care  16 about is our student success, I think we should be  17 able to get along. I think we'll be aligned. There  18 may be times where that isn't necessarily the case,  19 but I'm not afraid to have the tough conversations.  20 I'm not afraid to dive into topics where they feel  21 there perhaps is a disconnect because I'm always  22 going to be available and accessible to them.  23 MR. FUNK: Great. I recently did a podcast with  24 Michael Crow from Arizona State University, and we  25 were talking about shared governance. And Michael</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 24</p> <p>1 the next step in their career trajectory. And I  2 think it's important to hear from employees, what is  3 it that concerns them? What are the things that they  4 feel disconnected from? Because ultimately if you're  5 an employee, you should be aligned, you should be  6 swimming in the same direction.  7 Our goal, our mission, is to make FIU a top 30.  8 Our mission is to make sure our students succeed and  9 are well prepared for life. And so I think it  10 doesn't matter if you're a member of the janitorial  11 staff, if you're a member of the registrar's office,  12 or if you're a faculty member. Everyone should feel  13 connected to the university and what is the  14 responsibility of the president?  15 And I think the president bears a tremendous  16 amount of responsibility to be active, to be vocal,  17 to be engaged, and certainly from the perspective of  18 employees they want to hear from you, they want to  19 see you, they want to talk to you.  20 They have plenty of suggestions. Some of them  21 are really good ones. So I think there is room for  22 improvement always in an organization. And I think  23 that's the beauty of FIU. We're constantly measuring  24 ourselves and we're constantly looking at  25 opportunities to improve. I know in the previous</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 23</p> <p>1 pointed out what the difference is in corporate life  2 and life in higher education. And he said, the CEO  3 of a corporation will announce a new policy, and  4 it's put into effect. He said, "When you announce a  5 new policy in higher education, that's the signal  6 that the debate will be." So I do think it's an  7 interesting area and one which is important to all  8 of the constituents. Another question though that we  9 didn't hit last time was employee engagement. How  10 would you define employee engagement? What role do  11 you believe leadership plays in operationalizing  12 that engagement to support the strategic plan  13 experience impact 2030?  14 MS. NUNEZ: I think employee engagement is  15 tantamount to student success. When you look in the  16 audience and you see people from all different  17 departments they want to be engaged, they want to  18 understand what the mission is, they want to  19 understand the direction of the institution, they  20 want to know that their voices are heard. Which is  21 why I spent a good amount of time engaging with  22 employees as well. Just recently, I attended what we  23 call our LEAP program, in which we provide  24 mentorship opportunities for those that are in  25 supervisory roles and are probably looking to take</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 25</p> <p>1 session you talked about the grade you would give  2 FIU and I don't know if that'll come up again or  3 not. But I'm never content to say we are at the  4 pinnacle of our success. It is just a part of the  5 journey, and I think employee engagement is  6 significant in terms of the journey of where we're  7 headed. So I welcome opportunities and forums like  8 this one and others to engage with employees to make  9 sure that they feel connected to the mission of the  10 organization.  11 MR. FUNK: A question that was posed is how has  12 your experience in public service shaped your vision  13 for the future of FIU? And can you share how your  14 background and experience have prepared you for this  15 role?  16 MS. NUNEZ: Well, I think public service is  17 critical. Obviously, for the future of this  18 institution. When you think about a university, you  19 think about the practical things we have to do. We  20 have to provide our students with academic rigor,  21 and we have to expose them to great faculty members  22 that are going to teach them their skills, hone  23 their trade. But I think it's important that you  24 talk about how FIU is really in a service role. And  25 I think that the interim president has to balance</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 26</p> <p>1 that impact on public service because we are 2 providing an important service. 3 FIU is an anchor institution. We are one of the 4 most important, I would say, the most important 5 institution in this community. Not only in terms of 6 what we provide educationally, but also from an 7 economic perspective. 8 FIU is an amazing economic engine. And I 9 referenced it, think about what would our community 10 look like if FIU did not exist? But certainly, I 11 think that we have to continue to drive excellence. 12 And I think as you look at the future FIU is going 13 to be in that public service role. And so my 14 experience in leading state government at the 15 highest levels, in serving in the legislature, 16 understanding the nuances of state legislative 17 process, I think that brings a tremendous benefit 18 and I'm uniquely positioned to lead FIU at this 19 time. 20 We're facing very challenging times from the 21 standpoint of higher education. Broadly speaking, 22 when you talk about higher education and you look at 23 some of the data coming out, it's actually quite 24 troubling for an institution that prides itself on 25 education and learning.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 28</p> <p>1 the state level. So we have to be mindful that in 2 this role as interim president, I have to balance 3 the needs of very complex and competing 4 constituencies. And so the role is to stay focused 5 on the goal. The goal is to be top 30. There's a lot 6 of things that occupy my time and the time of our 7 executive team and the time of our board that are 8 kind of whirlwinds and they're crises, but they're 9 not the goal. And so really need to be mission 10 focused, focused on the goal. And of course, FIU, I 11 think has a really unique, we're uniquely positioned 12 to lead and to be number one on the number of 13 fronts. So I'm excited about the future and the 14 prospect of taking FIU into new heights. 15 MR. FUNK: You've been in this interim role 16 since February. During this time as interim 17 president, what is something you have seen that you 18 think we do great at FIU and what do you think we 19 could do even better? 20 MS. NUNEZ: Well, full disclosure, that question 21 was asked previously so I had a little bit of time 22 to think about it and reflect on my answer at the 23 first session, but I don't think I would change a 24 thing about my first answer. And really what I think 25 we do great, and the proof is in the pudding, right?</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 27</p> <p>1 What you see going on in other parts of the 2 country, there is a steep enrollment decline in many 3 States. You're seeing challenges on campus. Campuses 4 devolving into violence and chaos. When you look at 5 the affordability crisis, many of the institutions 6 throughout the country, very expensive, very 7 challenging for students to be able to afford. I'm 8 proud that Florida and FIU in particular, we don't 9 have necessarily those same challenges, but that 10 doesn't mean we won't. 11 In terms of affordability, FIU is number one 12 across the country in terms of tuition 13 affordability, and I know that that's always top of 14 mind. But very few percent, very small percentage of 15 our students take out loans. And the loans that they 16 take out are very low vis-a-vis some of the other 17 institutions across the country. So again, points of 18 pride. But there's a lot of challenges in higher 19 education. 20 What you're seeing what's coming down from the 21 federal government with regards to research and the 22 challenges that we're facing on the research front, 23 I mentioned FIU is a research institution. We have 24 \$328 million worth of research expenditures. 25 There are cuts coming, there are challenges at</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 29</p> <p>1 So FIU as I mentioned, is number one in performance 2 funding. And those are metrics that are very hard to 3 attain. Graduation rates, employment upon 4 graduation, retention rates, all of those things 5 that are very data-driven. So FIU was ranked number 6 one for the last five years. So from a student 7 success standpoint, we do phenomenally well. We have 8 done a great job in ensuring that FIU is focused on 9 performance, on being preeminent. We're the youngest 10 institution to be designated as a preeminent 11 institution. There's only four in the State that 12 have that designation, and that comes with a burden 13 of ensuring we're awarding a certain number of 14 doctoral degrees, that we have a certain number of 15 patents that we're putting out. FIU is recognized 16 worldwide as a leader in patent production. So many 17 things that obviously occupy my mind in terms of 18 what we do well. 19 What I would say we don't do well, and this is 20 a criticism I take very personally, is that FIU 21 doesn't tell its story enough. I think we have to 22 really delve into what are the accolades that we 23 need to tout? How do we tout that? How do we make 24 sure the entire community, how the entire country 25 really looks to FIU? Because my goal is to make FIU</p>



<p style="text-align: right;">Page 30</p> <p>1 the school of first choice. Whether you live in  2 Monroe County or whether you live in Escambia County  3 in the State of Florida, I want students to seek out  4 FIU, I want them to look at us as their first  5 choice.  6 I hear that a lot in our med school and in our  7 law school, but I also want that to be true in  8 undergraduate. And if you are from a State as far  9 west as California or as far north as main, I want  10 you to look at FIU and be like, that is the  11 institution I want to attend, because it's  12 excellent, because it's going to provide  13 opportunities, because it's relevant. So those are  14 just some things that I think we need to do a better  15 job of marketing ourselves, of telling our story, of  16 sharing our excellence far and wide.  17 MR. FUNK: A topic that might be of keen  18 interest to this group. What are your plans with  19 regard to flexible work options?  20 MS. NUNEZ: I hear rumbling in the audience.  21 Surprised. So I think that is something that is  22 reviewed regularly. And that's probably been going  23 on for many years. Pre-COVID, of course, COVID sort  24 of changed the dynamic. If we would be having this  25 conversation five years ago, we may be saying that</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 32</p> <p>1 and I think it'll be done in a way that's strategic,  2 that's mission focused. And that aligns with our  3 strategic plan.  4 MR. FUNK: In light of growing national  5 conversations around political ideology and its  6 interface with higher education, how do you create a  7 campus that supports open dialogue while at the same  8 time upholding the rights and dignity of all  9 students? How do you plan to ensure that our  10 university remains a welcoming and safe environment  11 for students from diverse backgrounds, including  12 international students, undocumented immigrants, and  13 LGBTQ+ individuals?  14 MS. NUNEZ: So I think I'll answer the second  15 part first, and I'll go back to the first part about  16 the politicization of college campuses. And I see  17 Chief Casas here. He wasn't in the first session, so  18 I'm calling you out, but I gave you a shout out in  19 the first session and I'll continue to do so  20 throughout each of the sessions. Chief Casas, the  21 men and women of FIU PD, they do a phenomenal job  22 and so I want to publicly thank them for keeping our  23 campus safe. And as you mentioned, certain pockets  24 of community and certain pockets of students I would  25 challenge the mindset to be, we need to keep our</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 31</p> <p>1 people were never going to go back to the office.  2 The market has changed and I think those types of  3 issues ebb and flow depending on the organization,  4 depending on the mission. So what I would say is  5 that we're reviewing it as an executive team. I know  6 that there are many positions in many areas where  7 perhaps it makes sense. So if it makes sense, it  8 will obviously be reviewed and we'll look to it and  9 we will make the decisions. But right now, we're  10 assessing to make sure. And I want to be very, very  11 candid because I think it's important to recognize  12 that if you are student facing, if you are engaging  13 with our students, I feel like we have a  14 responsibility to be present. And I think something  15 that I didn't mention on this topic in the previous  16 session is that we also have to be mindful that if  17 you're not present as an employee and there's  18 probably good reason for many and perhaps, we'll  19 maintain good reasons for many to continue to be  20 remote. But if you're not present as an employee,  21 you're missing out on mentorship, on interacting  22 with your peers, on engaging in new opportunities.  23 And so I think there's a balance, and certainly I  24 think we'll look at it and make decisions. There's  25 going to be as I mentioned, assessments and reviews,</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 33</p> <p>1 campus safe for everyone. It doesn't matter what  2 your background is, it doesn't matter what your  3 ethnicity is, it doesn't matter what your  4 orientation is. We have to be a welcoming and safe  5 campus. And I believe we accomplish that each and  6 every day. And for the record, not just for our  7 students, for our staff, for our faculty, for  8 visitors, that we have many people that come on this  9 campus on a regular basis. So I'm really proud of  10 the work we do. We're always mindful of how we need  11 to be focused on campus safety and security, but  12 that extends to everyone. And I'm not in the  13 business of separating our students and saying, we  14 have to make it more safe for this group, or less  15 safe for that group. No, I think we have to make it  16 safe. And that's going to be our perspective each  17 and every day, making this campus safe and welcoming  18 for all students. All Panthers.  19 Then with regards to the politicization of  20 college campuses, yes, I think that's the reality.  21 And I think tragically that's part of the problem,  22 what we've seen.  23 When you talk about a campus and look, we have  24 protests on campus, sometimes they're against me,  25 sometimes they're against something else, but that's</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 34</p> <p>1 okay. I'm okay with that as long as they're done in  2 a manner that comports with our policies that's  3 respectful, that doesn't devolve into violence.  4 There is no place on this campus for inciting  5 violence or for hateful persecution or rhetoric  6 that's going to incite violence. So that I am  7 inequitable about. I will not allow this campus to  8 devolve what we've seen throughout other areas of  9 the country.  10 I think it's an indictment on higher education  11 and the leaders that lead those institutions. But be  12 that as it may, I think it's important to also  13 recognize there are places and spaces in our  14 university to have that debate, to have diverse  15 viewpoints, to have those challenging arguments in a  16 civil manner. And one of the initiatives that I'm  17 rolling out is a presidential speaker series. And I  18 sort of preview it in the first session. I'll do it  19 again. Stay tuned.  20 We're going to be bringing a really exciting  21 duo renowned professors from a renowned institution.  22 And I'll share probably in the coming days. We're  23 going to be bringing two individuals that could not  24 be more opposed in every single political, every  25 single charge topic that you can imagine.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 36</p> <p>1 MR. FUNK: Maybe a related question but under  2 the heading here of immigration, how does FIU  3 police's participation in ICE 287 G program make FIU  4 safer? And how does it reflect the values of FIU?  5 What is your message to faculty and staff on H-1B  6 visas?  7 MS. NUNEZ: Okay. So two separate but related  8 topics so we'll cover both. With regards to the 287  9 G, the signing of the program that you process  10 signed onto, as did all other state universities, I  11 think there was a lot of, I would say media  12 sensationalism, a lot of-- Some of our  13 mischaracterizations and misinformation that was  14 shared. And so we thought it was important enough.  15 I went and I spent an hour and a half with the  16 faculty senate. I know the chief actually was there  17 a little bit longer talking about why did FIU decide  18 to sign onto that program? Why would FIU do that?  19 What was the purpose of it? Why does it make it  20 safer for us on campus? And I think what the chief  21 shared that day, and I firmly believe, is that FIU  22 PD wants to be in control of that situation.  23 There is nothing signing or not signing that  24 agreement that will prevent ICE or any other law  25 enforcement agency from coming on our campus. Even</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 35</p> <p>1 They are diametrically opposed. And they're  2 going to be coming and they're going to engage the  3 students, the faculty, the staff in what will be a  4 debate series. I want to bring more of that to our  5 campus. I want to ensure that we have more  6 opportunity for people to hear those diverse  7 viewpoints. Because quite frankly, for far too long,  8 it has been one sided. And so when you talk about  9 bringing diverse viewpoints, you have to be open to  10 all viewpoints. You cannot just argue and pound your  11 chest because you want one particular viewpoint that  12 aligns with you personally. I think with the more  13 robust of a debate you have, the more opportunities  14 you have to hear as many viewpoints, the better our  15 students will be for it.  16 Again, as I mentioned earlier, when you go into  17 the real world and you're going to be entering into  18 industry, or you're going to be leading teams, you  19 have to be able to argue, to make your points, to  20 engage civilly. And at the end of the day, when you  21 make decisions, you have to be able to work  22 collaboratively with your peers. And so I think FIU  23 has a responsibility in that regard to ensure that  24 we're providing those types of educational  25 opportunities.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 37</p> <p>1 absent that program. It could have been the  2 Sheriff's office, it could have been FDLE, it could  3 have been FHP or any other law enforcement entity.  4 They could come on our campus without signing an  5 agreement.  6 Chief Casas explained, and I think he did a  7 fabulous job of explaining why he understands our  8 campus, he understands our students. He doesn't want  9 to-- He doesn't want to give up his duty, his  10 responsibility. He wants to be that tip of the  11 spear. And so some may disagree with it. I know the  12 faculty have really strong feelings about it. But I  13 think he shared the perspective of FIU wanting to be  14 in control of that situation. If I were to come on  15 campus because there is an arrest warrant, and let's  16 be clear in some cases it could be a dangerous  17 individual as it could be for any other law  18 enforcement entity. He wants to know about it. He  19 wants to be responsible for that. He wants his men  20 and women that understand our students to be the  21 ones that leading in that regard. And also ensuring  22 that there is consistency and ensuring that there is  23 integrity in the process as it relates to the way  24 you interact with students in a very challenging  25 situation. And I'll acknowledge that.</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 38</p> <p>1 Then with regard to the H-1B visas, and again,  2 I want to be very public about this because it was  3 brought to my attention by the faculty senate  4 president that some faculty members were upset  5 because I mentioned it was only 18 students. I think  6 what they took from that was really not in context.  7 Not that I was minimizing whether it was 18  8 students, one student, or 55,000 students. It wasn't  9 that I was dismissive of those 18 students in their  10 predicament because they had received notice that  11 their visas had been terminated. I was just trying  12 to provide context that there was a very small  13 number, albeit it was important to them. But  14 certainly, also from the perspective that FIU has no  15 jurisdiction whatsoever over whether visas get  16 terminated. We simply follow the law, we simply  17 acknowledge that those visas have been terminated.  18 But fast forward a few weeks later, all 18 of those  19 students had their visas reinstated. The process  20 worked. Sometimes we're very quick to speak out. And  21 certainly, in this case, it was appropriate, concern  22 about those students, what was it going to mean for  23 them mid-semester and what they were working on,  24 whether it was research or graduate studies. But I  25 think what you saw is that the process worked, but</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 40</p> <p>1 portfolio. \$328 million of research expenditures.  2 Our hope is to grow that and double that in the next  3 few years, be at \$600 million in research, research  4 that is impactful, that's solving the problems of  5 today. That's ensuring that FIU is relevant with the  6 challenges of industry. What we've seen at the  7 federal government, the vast majority of our grants  8 are federal grants. 54 roughly have been terminated.  9 And that's a \$36 million impact, FIU certainly top  10 of mind for those of us that are looking at every  11 single dollar, every single penny.  12 With regards to the cap, the 15% cap on  13 administration, that would be an additional \$18  14 million impact. So certainly, big numbers that we're  15 going to contend with. But what I've seen and what  16 I've had discussions with in the federal government  17 with people like the NIH director and others, is  18 that they believe there is going to be a unique  19 opportunity to sort of reinvent what research looks  20 like today. Whereas it's consolidated and  21 concentrated primarily in the big institutions, the  22 IVs and other institutions. The privates more so  23 they want to free up. And I'm not speaking for the  24 federal government, but from what I understand, they  25 want to free up some of those connections to those</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 39</p> <p>1 unfortunately the two issues at the same time were  2 being completed. And so they were sort of intimidating  3 that FIU was involved in this ICE issue and then  4 involved in the termination of the pieces. And so it  5 became a much bigger more sensationalized topic than  6 what we had hoped it would be. We wanted to be very  7 factual that's why I went to the faculty Senate. I  8 know that's why the chief, I believe, is having  9 another town hall around it. I'm not sure if it's  10 today, I'm sure it is today. So if you're interested  11 and you want more details and you want more  12 information, I think that you should attend that  13 town hall to learn more, to understand more.  14 MR. FUNK: We'd be remiss if in our 1 minute and  15 34 seconds remaining for this part of the session  16 not to touch on the research. In response to state  17 and federal budget challenges such as suspension of  18 federal grants, reduction of F&amp;A and other funding  19 pressures, what are some short and also long-term  20 decisions FIU should consider to ensure continued  21 success? FIU is a preeminent top 50 card 81 major  22 research university. What is your vision for FIU  23 when it comes to research?  24 MS. NUNEZ: I see I have less than a minute, but  25 certainly research is an important part of our</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 41</p> <p>1 institutions and see institutions like ours, public  2 universities with a mission, with the focus, with  3 the expertise, with the researchers to be more  4 active. And so I think when the dust settles, of  5 course we're concerned about the changes in  6 research, but I think we'll actually have more  7 opportunity to grow our research. And we continue to  8 submit proposals at a very regular cadence. We have  9 proposals in many federal agencies, everything from  10 the National Institutes of Health, of course,  11 department of Defense. And we're doing really  12 important work on a lot of those areas. And I  13 suspect that when all is said and done, FIU will  14 continue to grow in the research here. So I'm going  15 to continue to plow ahead short term and long term  16 we're going to continue to look to grow our research  17 expenditures and to make sure that we're providing  18 that value from a research perspective.  19 MR. FUNK: Great. And thank you. We've promised  20 that we would allow questions from the floor for the  21 final 10 minutes of our session today. I know that's  22 not a long time, but certainly time for two or three  23 key questions. We have roving reporters on either  24 side of the auditorium who will share the microphone  25 with you, but who would like to go first in asking a</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 42</p> <p>1 question from the floor? Not everybody at once. Here</p> <p>2 we go.</p> <p>3 STUDENT MEMBER: Good morning. My name is Eda</p> <p>4 Montero, (phonetic) I just graduated from FIU and I</p> <p>5 wanted to ask Mr. Madam President, if there was a</p> <p>6 way that you could incentivize either the private</p> <p>7 sector or industry in the way that you were talking</p> <p>8 about, focusing on students to provide more</p> <p>9 privately funded scholarships for students whose</p> <p>10 immigration status may not be or make them eligible</p> <p>11 for full-time scholarships, like the way that Bright</p> <p>12 Futures would, and what could you do as president to</p> <p>13 increase more awareness, I guess, in the community</p> <p>14 for this need that the students have? Thank you.</p> <p>15 MS. NUNEZ: Great question. What year did you</p> <p>16 graduate?</p> <p>17 STUDENT MEMBER: 2024.</p> <p>18 MS. NUNEZ: Oh, very good. Very good. Excellent.</p> <p>19 So obviously I think that's an important point, and</p> <p>20 there's a lot of issues we probably haven't covered</p> <p>21 in the first two sessions, so maybe we'll get to</p> <p>22 them in the third or fourth session. But I think</p> <p>23 it's important from the perspective of how we're</p> <p>24 working with industries, not only again from</p> <p>25 aligning programmatic content and rigor the</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 44</p> <p>1 the way that it's going to be. No. We have to be</p> <p>2 proactive. We have to be aggressive in importing</p> <p>3 industry. And I think from your perspective of</p> <p>4 scholarships, we've seen a lot of private sector</p> <p>5 scholarship opportunities. I can think of a</p> <p>6 relationship we have with Code Path and being able</p> <p>7 to launch that. I think those are really important.</p> <p>8 We're one of four universities that are part of</p> <p>9 their emerging engineers' program. And so that is</p> <p>10 something that I think is really specific in that</p> <p>11 field, in engineering. And of course, everything</p> <p>12 around innovation and technology. But I think we can</p> <p>13 do more of that, especially when we see our students</p> <p>14 that are eager to complete their degrees. We are</p> <p>15 measured, as I've talked about, our performance</p> <p>16 metrics. We're measured on four-year graduation</p> <p>17 rates. So we want people to come in to get their</p> <p>18 classes done and to graduate on time because</p> <p>19 otherwise we're penalized. And our performance</p> <p>20 funding will suffer because of it. So if the</p> <p>21 challenge for a student is I don't have the ability</p> <p>22 to pay for a full-time load then I think it's</p> <p>23 incumbent upon us to work with our financial aid and</p> <p>24 to work in the private sector to see perhaps there</p> <p>25 are partnerships that we can continue to work on to</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 43</p> <p>1 academics, ensuring that it's relevant for industry,</p> <p>2 but I think we have a really unique opportunity as</p> <p>3 we've seen so many industries come to South Florida.</p> <p>4 And looking at Miami in particular as a tech boom,</p> <p>5 the tech capital of the world, those are things that</p> <p>6 are top of mind. I had an opportunity to bring Mayor</p> <p>7 of Miami to talk about crypto here on campus. We</p> <p>8 also have participated in things like Emerge, in</p> <p>9 things like the Miami Tech Summit. So those areas</p> <p>10 are really important. And I think that we're going</p> <p>11 to continue to look for strategies around how do we</p> <p>12 grow in that particular field?</p> <p>13 With regards to private industry providing</p> <p>14 scholarships, so private scholarships, I think</p> <p>15 that's a really important point. And I'm glad that</p> <p>16 you brought it up, and I don't think we've got to</p> <p>17 talk about that so much. And so one of the</p> <p>18 priorities that I have is, of course, engaging</p> <p>19 directly not just myself, but our deans as well as</p> <p>20 our department chairs, as well as our executive</p> <p>21 teams, and really reaching out and being proactive</p> <p>22 and going out to industry. We can't just sit here in</p> <p>23 our offices in PC or wherever your offices are and</p> <p>24 think that everyone's just going to come to FIU</p> <p>25 because we're a top 50 university. And that's just</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 45</p> <p>1 develop those funding sources. And I think that's</p> <p>2 one of the things of our strategic plan. And I don't</p> <p>3 know whether we've really gone through the strategic</p> <p>4 plan experience impact 2030 in depth.</p> <p>5 We've touched on it in different parts, but one</p> <p>6 of the pillars is strategic alliances. And that</p> <p>7 really is the focus on developing those</p> <p>8 relationships with private sector, with industry,</p> <p>9 not just from an employment standpoint, but also to</p> <p>10 develop those linkages from a long-term perspective.</p> <p>11 MR. FUNK: Who would like to be next? Next</p> <p>12 question. There we go.</p> <p>13 FACULTY MEMBER: Good morning. A faculty member,</p> <p>14 I was also an adjunct and a student here at FIU</p> <p>15 and I work closely with our staff. Do you think that</p> <p>16 one of our main problems is the salaries that we are</p> <p>17 currently paying our staff that we are understaffed,</p> <p>18 that we need more people to come in and stay? And</p> <p>19 how do you plan to address that?</p> <p>20 MS. NUNEZ: I think salaries and what we pay our</p> <p>21 staff and the competitive nature of our employee</p> <p>22 packages, I think it is a challenge. Of course, in</p> <p>23 South Florida, we've seen costs grow exponentially.</p> <p>24 Everyone here is no stranger to that. I think what</p> <p>25 we've seen is FIU provides a really competitive</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 46</p> <p>1 package. And while it may not be entirely on the  2 salary side, I know we are probably at the top of  3 our game as it relates to the benefits package. And  4 I'm looking at our VP of HR over there, she's  5 nodding her head. But yes, there is work to do. I  6 know that one of the important aspects of the role  7 as a president, and one of the areas where I believe  8 I need to be qualified is to work with the  9 legislature to provide additional funding, not just  10 capital funding, but operational support to be able  11 to acknowledge that we have unique challenges, even  12 within the state university system, It is much more  13 expensive to live in Miami than it is to live in  14 Gainesville. So certainly, from that standpoint, if  15 we can get additional dollars to help and from a  16 faculty recruitment and a faculty retention  17 standpoint, that is something that I pledge to work  18 towards and to prioritize. Yes, we want to keep our  19 best and brightest. We want to ensure that our  20 employees are well compensated. So that is a big  21 focus. And I know of course, for those that are  22 under collective bargaining, those agreements were  23 put in place. I think we probably compared to some  24 of our other institutions, did a really good job.  25 And so I think that is an ongoing conversation that</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 48</p> <p>1 our roots. Of course, and that's something that I  2 take deep pride in. Having been from this community  3 grown up here, as I mentioned, every member of my  4 immediate extended family has come through FIU at  5 various points in their lives. And so, I think when  6 you look at our mission, of course that's going to  7 continue, but it's getting competitive. And what I  8 want FIU to be is the school of first choice. I  9 don't want kids in our community to think about FIU  10 as a backup school. I don't want kids from other  11 communities to think about FIU as secondary on their  12 wish list, on their stretch, on their stretch list.  13 So I think that it is going to be a challenge. We  14 would of course, you know, look at how do we grow  15 capacity, but that comes with funding challenges.  16 That comes with faculty improvement challenges that  17 we're going to need to continue to build the  18 infrastructure if we are going to grow  19 strategically. But we also, I don't know if everyone  20 in this room knows, but we are limited as a state  21 university system. So all 12 universities have to  22 maintain a 90/10 split. And I think that's  23 appropriate. So 90% of our statewide system seats at  24 the universities have to be reserved for Florida  25 residents. And I think that's appropriate because we</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 47</p> <p>1 you have, I know with Provost and the faculty Senate  2 and all of those that are involved in that part. But  3 certainly, from just the staff administration  4 standpoint, of course, we would love to see salaries  5 be measured with some of the cost-of-living  6 increases.  7 MR. FUNK: We have time for one more question.  8 Anyone like to take that?  9 FACULTY MEMBER: Good morning. Christie  10 Martinez, University Advancement. I like you, I only  11 applied to FIU and I knew I would get in 2006, now,  12 not so much. But taking that into consideration, how  13 can we ensure that FIU will remain of this community  14 and accessible to our students?  15 MS. NUNEZ: As we've seen in the world of higher  16 education, especially in our Florida State schools,  17 it is becoming very competitive. Even before I came  18 to FIU as interim president I can tell you one of  19 the constant things I would hear is, oh, my child  20 got waitlisted. Oh, I have a student that got into  21 this school, but not that school. How is it that we  22 can ensure that we're providing more opportunity?  23 And throughout the search committee process, one of  24 the search committee members in their closing  25 statements to me reminded me that we cannot forget</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 49</p> <p>1 are a state university, we are funded by the  2 taxpayers. And so I think that that is-- A lot will  3 evolve, we'll continue to maintain that. FIU as an  4 institution is slightly below that 90%, but as they  5 exist, the aggregate has to be 90/10. So yes, as we  6 see more and more students apply, I think we had the  7 largest freshman class in our history. And that's a  8 great thing. But we also have transfer students  9 coming in, and we have a lot of challenges, a lot of  10 competition for a select number of seats. But I  11 think it's an important thing, and I know the board  12 shares that perspective that we have a  13 responsibility to our community.  14 MR. FUNK: Unfortunately, our time has now  15 expired, but we want to thank you so much for  16 attending this live session. Please tune in to the  17 presidential search webpage which will have the  18 narrative of all the sessions. And also, we'll have  19 webcasts for all three or four sessions of the day.  20 We will cover a couple of the topics differently in  21 each session. So please tune in. Interim President  22 Nunez, thank you for your time. And thank you very  23 much for being here.  24 (Thereupon, Session II was concluded at 11:15  25 AM)</p>

## 1 CERTIFICATE

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STATE OF FLORIDA )

SS:

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COUNTY OF MIAMI DADE )

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I, Chancelor Merritt, FPR 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.

8

I further certify that I am neither attorney  
or party, nor am I related to or employed by any  
attorney or party connected with the action, nor am  
I financially interested in the action.

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Dated this 21st day of May, 2025.

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*Chancelor Merritt*

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Chancelor Merritt, FPR

Notary Public - State of Florida

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My Commission No. HH454299

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