

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
Presidential Candidate
Administrators Faculty Forum
Session III
LOCATION: Graham Center Ballrooms
Florida International University
11200 S.W. 8 Street
Miami, Florida 33199

DATE: Wednesday, May 21, 2025

TIME: 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM

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 III 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, Ms. Jeanette M. Nunez. Our third</p> <p>7 session is a forum with the faculty. As a part of</p> <p>8 our university community, we strive to foster a</p> <p>9 respectful and open environment. All perspectives</p> <p>10 are welcome. Please be mindful, though of</p> <p>11 maintaining decorum. Unruly, threatening, or</p> <p>12 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 university president or chancellor searches over the</p> <p>20 past 40 years, and our relationship with Florida</p> <p>21 International really extends back at least two and</p> <p>22 maybe even two and a half decades. And we were</p> <p>23 delighted to be involved in this search. We</p> <p>24 appreciate the board reaching out to us to include</p> <p>25 us in the process. In consultation with the Florida</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 4</p> <p>1 cover as many of those as we possibly can. If you</p> <p>2 did not submit a question in advance but you have a</p> <p>3 question that hasn't been covered, we have set aside</p> <p>4 10 minutes at the end of the session where we will</p> <p>5 accept questions from the floor. And we're running</p> <p>6 on a very precise timeline so we will make sure</p> <p>7 though that you get those 10 minutes.</p> <p>8 Jeanette Nunez is interim President of Florida</p> <p>9 International as you well know, a position she has</p> <p>10 held since February. As interim president, Ms. Nunez</p> <p>11 serves as the Chief Executive Officer for the</p> <p>12 university, and is responsible for the operation and</p> <p>13 administration of the university, including</p> <p>14 efficient and effective budget and program</p> <p>15 administration, leading the university to accomplish</p> <p>16 its education, missions and goals, monitoring</p> <p>17 educational and financial performance, and serving</p> <p>18 as the university's key spokesperson.</p> <p>19 Prior to her appointment as interim president,</p> <p>20 she served as the State of Florida's lieutenant</p> <p>21 Governor. She's a proud double alumna earning her</p> <p>22 bachelor's degree in political Science and</p> <p>23 International Relations in 1994, and subsequently a</p> <p>24 master's degree in public administration. Before</p> <p>25 serving as Lieutenant Governor in Florida, she</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 3</p> <p>1 Board of Governors, FIU Board of Trustees Chair,</p> <p>2 Roger Tovar, who's here in the front row this</p> <p>3 morning, appointed a 15-member Presidential Search</p> <p>4 Committee. These individuals who were appointed in</p> <p>5 accordance with the Florida Board of Governors</p> <p>6 Regulations represent the Florida Board of</p> <p>7 Governors, the FIU Board of Trustees, including two</p> <p>8 former chairs of the trustees, FIU Foundation Board</p> <p>9 of Directors, the current faculty senate chair, a</p> <p>10 distinguished professor, the current student</p> <p>11 government president, a former student gov former</p> <p>12 student government president, as well as other</p> <p>13 distinguished members of the community. The</p> <p>14 Presidential Search Committee conducted its process</p> <p>15 in accordance with Florida statutes and the</p> <p>16 regulations of the Florida Board of Governors. All</p> <p>17 of today's sessions are available to the university</p> <p>18 community to attend in person or on the FIU webcast.</p> <p>19 Each session has been scheduled for one hour. After</p> <p>20 the candidate's presentation, we will take time to</p> <p>21 address questions from the university community,</p> <p>22 many of which have been submitted in advance. And in</p> <p>23 fact, the team here has collected all of those</p> <p>24 advanced questions and curated them, and have</p> <p>25 divided it into key themes. And we'll be trying to</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 5</p> <p>1 represented Miami-Dade County in the Florida</p> <p>2 legislature for eight years. MS. Nunez came to</p> <p>3 public office with years of experience as Vice</p> <p>4 President of Governmental Affairs at Jackson Health</p> <p>5 Systems, as similar leadership roles at Kendall</p> <p>6 Regional Medical Center and Aventura Hospital and</p> <p>7 Medical Center. It is my pleasure now to introduce</p> <p>8 MS. Jeanette M. Nunez.</p> <p>9 MS. NUNEZ: Well, good afternoon. Actually, good</p> <p>10 morning. It's an honor to be here and to speak with</p> <p>11 you in what is the third session. So we're kind of</p> <p>12 in the third quarter, and I know this one is</p> <p>13 specifically geared towards faculty but I know</p> <p>14 there's been faculty represented at the first two</p> <p>15 sessions, and I suspect it's a mix of diverse</p> <p>16 viewpoints from the university community. So I'm</p> <p>17 excited and honored to be able to talk to you all</p> <p>18 about my background, my experience, my role serving</p> <p>19 as interim president, and I look forward to engaging</p> <p>20 with Bill, and then with the faculty members that</p> <p>21 may have questions at the end. So just a little bit</p> <p>22 about myself. Born and raised in this community,</p> <p>23 stone throw away from FIU. I was the daughter of</p> <p>24 Cuban immigrants that came to this country fleeing</p> <p>25 communist Cuba in 1961. They instilled in me a love</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 6</p> <p>1 of country. They instilled in me a hard work ethic. 2 And they also instilled in me prioritizing higher 3 education. That's something they impressed upon my 4 sisters and me, and it's something that has stayed 5 with me throughout my entire time. I'm very honored 6 to have had my parents be my role models and really 7 learning from them, like perhaps some of you. 8 My story is not unique in South Florida. I know 9 it's probably similar to some of your stories, and I 10 think that really brings the perspective of 11 understanding our community. And I'm so excited to 12 be here today again. When I first flew on this 13 campus. It was in 1989. I was a high school senior 14 at the time, and I got my first summer job at the 15 registrar's office right there in PC. And it was an 16 interesting time back in the day when you used to 17 have to input by hand every single university 18 document. So as you can imagine, everything from 19 transcript requests to change of names, 20 applications, grades. So it was a much different 21 time back then, and there was just a handful of 22 buildings. And to be able to see this university 23 grow into what it is today has really been very 24 exciting. When I finished that summer job, I guess I 25 made an impression on my boss, and she extended the</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 8</p> <p>1 of working in the legislative process and the impact 2 and the implications it has for institutions like 3 ours. So I spent nine years there. After that, I 4 went to work at Jackson Memorial Hospital and 5 ultimately was their VP of Government Affairs and 6 had a really unique opportunity to work in the 7 healthcare realm, understanding the importance, 8 again, of public policy making and how that affected 9 healthcare and our community. And so that was a very 10 interesting trajectory in my career. But it was 11 midway my time there that I began to ponder and 12 contemplate running for office. It was not something 13 I had thought or embarked upon, even with a degree 14 in political science. Never really was my goal. But 15 I began to interact with legislators and began to 16 think that I had some value to bring to the 17 legislative process. 18 So in 2010, I decided to run. I embarked in a 19 grueling campaign. As I mentioned previously, if 20 anyone's been involved in political campaigns and 21 you've had to knock on doors in August in Miami, you 22 understand that it certainly is challenging. But it 23 was that process. Knocking on doors, listening to 24 voters from all walks of life, that I was able to 25 appreciate the issues that were important to our</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 7</p> <p>1 offer to come back after graduation. So the 2 following year, I came back to that job. I worked in 3 that job my whole time. I enrolled here. It was 4 actually the only university I applied for. In 5 hindsight, I guess I was pretty confident that I 6 would get in, but I think often what would've 7 happened had I not been accepted but it was really, 8 FIU was a place I wanted to be. I had so much 9 connection to it. 10 My sisters had attended FIU and graduated from 11 here as well. So really FIU was the only institution 12 that I considered. And over the course of many 13 decades, I've been connected to the university over 14 four decades in various capacities. So I earned my 15 bachelor's degree in International Relations and 16 Political science in 1994. I then continued on and 17 pursued my master's degree in public administration. 18 And what I was able to do upon graduating undergrad 19 is I was able to go work in the legislature. I was 20 serving as a legislative aide for a state 21 representative who then went on to the State Senate. 22 And I served nine years in that capacity. And it was 23 there where I developed a deep appreciation and 24 understanding for public service. It was there where 25 I began to understand the impact and the importance</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 9</p> <p>1 community. And that continuous outreach to 2 constituents really made me a better policy maker. 3 And it exposed me to the issues that were important, 4 that were relevant, and that were permeating the 5 challenges that we had as a community in the 6 district that I represented. 7 I served in various capacities, including as 8 chair of Higher Education and Workforce. I served as 9 chair of Government Operations, appropriations. And 10 ultimately, in my last term, my peers selected me to 11 be Speaker Pro Tempore. It was that role that I was 12 responsible for overseeing the management of the 13 chamber, ensuring decorum, ensuring policies and 14 procedures were followed, and ensuring the effective 15 flow of legislation that would go through the house 16 chamber. It was a tremendous experience. I 17 thoroughly enjoyed it. I believe it prepared me very 18 well for this role today. But I was planning on 19 taking a hiatus from politics and going into the 20 private sector. 21 It was that summer of 2018 where I was called 22 by a little-known congressman at the time. I had 23 never met him. Never really knew much about him. And 24 it was Ron DeSantis asking me if I would consider 25 joining him on the ticket as his lieutenant</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 10</p> <p>1 Governor. At the time, it really wasn't something I 2 had decide desired to do. And so I politely declined 3 and thought that was the end of that, and was moving 4 on to my next opportunity. A few weeks later, I 5 started getting a barrage of phone calls from 6 different elected officials, different members of 7 the community, and then ultimately Ron DeSantis 8 again pressing upon me the importance of joining him 9 on the ticket. And so at that time, in consultation 10 with my family, a lot of prayer, a lot of 11 discussions around the community, I decided to take 12 the plunge and run alongside him. I will share with 13 you, it was a very challenging race. It was very 14 competitive, and we ended up winning by the slimmest 15 of margins. And so if that doesn't shake you to your 16 core when you're looking at those numbers coming in 17 on election night, it was a very uncertain outcome. 18 And so we win, it was an amazing opportunity. Little 19 did I know at the time that we would be facing 20 things like a global pandemic, that we would be 21 facing, hurricanes, that we would be facing a 22 building collapse. A lot of crises, a lot of issues 23 that impacted our community, our state, our country, 24 our globe. And really, I was at the forefront 25 alongside with the governor of leading in many of</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 12</p> <p>1 was also tasked with many other areas including 2 combating human trafficking and other things that I 3 think are really important for our State, for our 4 community, and for this institution. So it was a 5 wealth of experience, a wealth of knowledge. And 6 then come February of this year, the board of 7 trustees appointed me to serve as interim president. 8 It has been an amazing three months. I have been 9 able to be with many of you. I have been able to 10 engage with faculty, with staff, with students, with 11 alumni, with donors, with a broader community. And 12 I'm very proud of the work that I've done in the 13 last three months. I know FIU of course, those of 14 you that are engaged as faculty. 15 I don't need to tell you what we represent in 16 this community. We are a preeminent top performing, 17 top 50 public research university. We are a 18 powerhouse in so many areas, probably in many of 19 your respective fields. When you think about FIU and 20 where we were 53 years ago, we were an abandoned 21 airfield, and somebody had the vision to convert 22 this gem of an institution. This area that was an 23 airfield that was abandoned, that no one really 24 thought of that no one thought of Miami as a 25 educational ecosystem. We converted this into a</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 11</p> <p>1 those challenging situations. When you think about 2 having to deal with those issues, when you think 3 about the complexity of state government, when you 4 think about leading teams, part of the portfolios 5 that I was assigned oversaw the Department of 6 Health, 17,000 employees, county health departments 7 in each county. Really important policy issues on a 8 number of fronts. 9 I was also tasked with overseeing our 10 cybersecurity advisory Council. An issue that's 11 relevant for every organization, every institution. 12 It should be top of mind. And so I'm proud of the 13 work we did in improving the posture of the state as 14 it related to cybersecurity resilience as it related 15 to coordinating and collaborating with local 16 government. 17 I was also tasked with chairing Space Florida. 18 It's the State's aerospace and aviation economic 19 development arm. As you all know, Florida is the 20 launch capital of the world, and it is a 21 multi-trillion-dollar industry that we are going to 22 be uniquely positioned to capitalize and take 23 advantage, and I believe FIU needs to be part of 24 that conversation as well. 25 So a lot of interesting areas that I oversaw, I</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 13</p> <p>1 preeminent university today, just 53 years. And 2 we're the youngest university to be able to achieve 3 preeminence. And that is a direct testament to the 4 work that each and every one of you, those of you 5 that are here, those of you that perhaps are 6 watching on the webcast, and those of you that 7 perhaps don't have time to tune in today, it is a 8 direct reflection of the hard work and effort of so 9 many people to get FIU to where it was, to where it 10 is. And again, my connection to FIU stands four 11 decades. I'm honored to be a two-time alum. I'm 12 honored to be the first woman and first alum to lead 13 this institution. I believe you have to have a 14 personal connection, you have to have purpose and 15 passion for what you're doing. And I certainly bring 16 that to the table. 17 If you talk about FIU from the perspective of 18 where we were, I touched a little bit about that. I 19 touched about how it has had a direct impact on my 20 life and the lives of my family. I not only was I a 21 double Panther, but my children are also Panthers. 22 My oldest graduated from here in 2021. My middle one 23 graduated in 2022 and is currently pursuing a 24 professional degree here. My youngest, I will 25 confess, I'm still working on him. He has a year to</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 14</p> <p>1 decide, so I'm hopeful that he will be the trifecta 2 that all three members of my immediate family will 3 be Panthers. But be that as it may, I think it's 4 important when you look at FIU and the impact it has 5 had on my life, certainly I would not be where I am 6 today were it not for FIU. I know many of you can 7 probably say the same thing. And if you think for a 8 second, what if FIU never existed? What if someone 9 didn't have the vision to create a state university 10 in Miami? What if someone didn't have the vision to 11 make us a medical school, to make us a law school? 12 Imagine the lives that would've been upended. 13 Imagine the careers that would've been signed in. 14 Imagine the lack of impact we would've had on our 15 community. So many industries that are here today 16 are here today, not because we have great climate, 17 not because our taxes are low, not because we have a 18 wonderful nightlife, it's because FIU exists. And 19 that is a testament to the vision of our 20 forefathers, but also to those of you that are 21 actively engaged in furthering our mission and our 22 vision. So I speak about FIU from the past and my 23 connection to it. 24 I was proud to champion every single FIU 25 priority that they had over the time as I was a</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 16</p> <p>1 institutions in this community have all come 2 together, we've converged to be the epicenter of 3 healthcare delivery for our community, for our 4 state, for our country. 5 Those are things that I'm very excited about to 6 get back to my healthcare roots, to begin to 7 envision what we're going to do on the healthcare 8 front, because I know we have only just started to 9 scratch the surface. And then when you talk about 10 research that we're doing specific to health, but 11 I'm sure across many of your fields and industries, 12 when you look at things like the research being done 13 by Dr. Azzam, the research that she's doing around 14 pediatric cancer, it's not only groundbreaking and 15 transformative, and it's something we get to tout as 16 an accolade, but it has a real impact on lives. 17 A young boy named Logan, who was had a terrible 18 diagnosis. And as a parent, I can't think of 19 anything worse than receiving a diagnosis like that. 20 And you talk about, he came into this clinical trial 21 with very little hope. But yet today, two years 22 later, he remains in remission. And 80% of those 23 children that went through that clinical trial have 24 seen significant improvements. So we are at the 25 forefront of healthcare research that's improving</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 15</p> <p>1 state representative, as well as lieutenant 2 governor. I think you would be hard pressed to find 3 a bigger champion in the halls of Tallahassee than 4 me. I spent many a night arguing, fighting, 5 championing, prioritizing FIU everywhere I would go. 6 And I think that that's a record that I'm really 7 proud of. And that's something that I had from deep 8 within because of my personal connection and passion 9 for the university. 10 But then you talk about FIU in the present, 11 where we are today, we're a top 50 preeminent 12 university. We're a research engine, \$328 million of 13 research. We are doing research in every continent 14 and on every ocean in the globe. That is something 15 impressive, the impact of our research, whether it 16 is around medicine. And I see the dean of our 17 medical school, and we just had our med students 18 graduate. And when you talk about the impact we're 19 having there, you think about where we are. We're 20 training tomorrow's doctors. We're developing 21 tomorrow's cures. We're not only providing 22 opportunities for our students to have hands-on 23 learning. With our new partnership with Nicklaus 24 that we just signed. With our partnership with 25 Baptist Health South Florida. Three major</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 17</p> <p>1 lives and giving hope. We're also so many accolades 2 to tout. I could probably spend 30 more minutes 3 talking about where we are. 4 I see our hospitality school represented. We're 5 top four in hospitality. I see business number two 6 in international business. So many things that we 7 can point to. Our medical school, our graduates, 8 most recently, 100% placement rate. Our law school 9 number one in bar passage rates. So some of the 10 things that you talk about FIU today in the present, 11 we are, as I mentioned, preeminent. We are number 12 one in performance funding. The State of Florida 13 measures us with specific metrics. Things like 14 graduation rates, things like retention rates, 15 things like how do our students, or how do they get 16 employed post-graduation. Those are all really 17 challenging things that the faculty is instrumental 18 in. And so when you look at FIU being number one 19 four out of the last five years, I don't think I can 20 stress to this group and to anyone else that's 21 watching how challenging it is to achieve number 22 one. We are competing against UF, FSU, UCF, USF, all 23 12 institutions. And your FIU has come in number one 24 in those metrics, four out of the last five years. I 25 wish I could say five out of the last five. I know</p>

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<p style="text-align: right;">Page 18</p> <p>1 the four challenges us every time, but that's a good 2 thing. I think our team, especially those of us in 3 administration, and I know the faculty share that 4 this with us, I think our team is focused on not 5 only sustaining our excellence, but improving. 6 I never look at something and I am confident 7 that this is going to be the bar. I'm always looking 8 at how can we improve? What can we do to be even 9 better? What can we do to recruit more faculty? What 10 can we do to retain more faculty? What can we do to 11 ensure our students continue to graduate and they 12 continue to be employed in the community? So there's 13 so much going on presently today at FIU that we have 14 a lot to be proud of, but we also have to take time 15 to look out into the future. And as I look out into 16 the future, I see unlimited possibilities for our 17 students. When you look at our strategic plan, which 18 I believe is very forward thinking, you look at what 19 are the areas where we feel we can excel? And of 20 course, as I rattled off a few of your particular 21 areas and colleges I know you probably think you 22 should be highlighted in our strategic plan, every 23 single one of you. And I think that that's true. I 24 think we view the entirety of the institution as an 25 important piece of our puzzle. But when you look at</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 20</p> <p>1 that they're going to have that full experience. And 2 that includes things like athletics, that includes 3 things like housing on campus, amenities. That 4 includes things like experiential internship 5 opportunities. And so, looking to the future, I 6 believe is incumbent upon FIU to be more aggressive 7 in our outreach with industry, to understand where 8 are the changes? What are the needs of industry? 9 When we talk about things like AI. I'm sure there's 10 varying perspectives here about AI and its role, but 11 I think we have a responsibility to not only provide 12 the tools to embrace AI, because we're going to be 13 teaching a generation of native AI students. They 14 have grown up using smartphones, with tools that 15 allow them to circumvent some of the traditional 16 processes that we would have to undergo. But it 17 needs to be done responsibly. It needs to be 18 invested in, and it needs to be done in a way that's 19 going to enhance not only the education, but ensure 20 we don't minimize the human connection. So those are 21 topics that we're going to have to contend with 22 together, looking out into the future. Disruption is 23 here. 24 As much as we would like to remain in the 25 status quo, I believe instead of protecting the</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 19</p> <p>1 the three areas that we've identified, you look at 2 areas of environment and environmental resilience, 3 you look at the areas of health, and you look at the 4 areas of technology and innovation. All of those are 5 critically important for the future of FIU. When you 6 talk about the importance of working with industry, 7 that is one of our core pillars. Some of the things 8 that I hear most from students is they want to 9 ensure that not only are they getting a great 10 education, which we know we provide, academic 11 excellence, rigor, critical thinking, all of the 12 things that we know they're going to need to 13 succeed. But how does that translate to beyond the 14 graduation stage? 15 How am I going to ensure that I am ready and 16 I'm going to be able to obtain a job and to be able 17 to further get into my profession? And so we do a 18 great job of working with industry, but I believe 19 looking forward to the future, we have to do an even 20 better job. Part of the strategic areas that we 21 focused on, again, are the student experience. Our 22 students 55,000 strong, we have more than 330,000 23 alumni. We have a wealth of students that are 24 focused, that are engaged, that are committed to the 25 mission of being excellent but they want to know</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 21</p> <p>1 present, we have to imagine the impossible. And I 2 think some of those things come and center around 3 technology. Will we ever lose that human connection? 4 I hope not. I certainly hope not. My kids like to 5 say that I'm dated and old fashioned, and I'm not 6 hit with all the technology advances, and so I 7 sometimes rely on their expertise. But our younger 8 generation, they use it to their benefit. So we have 9 to harness that power. We've seen in the marketplace 10 that 83% of businesses in the private sector have 11 identified AI as a top priority. The US AI market is 12 going to reach \$300 billion in the next year. So 13 those numbers are only here to stay, and it's only 14 going to grow as we continue to see year over year 15 growth of over 120%. 16 So I know we have excellent faculty that are 17 leaders that have been recognized as top scholars in 18 those particular areas of technology and innovation. 19 I know that we have so many of you here that are 20 representative of those colleges that are leading. 21 But I don't think that we can afford to miss the 22 moment. I don't think we can afford to be losing 23 sight of the importance of technology, whether it 24 relates to business, or medicine, nursing. And so I 25 think that FIU can absolutely be a thought leader as</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 22</p> <p>1 we move into the next round for FIU. So my goal and 2 my vision for FIU is to be a top 30. And by 2030, I 3 hope that we continue to excel and we continue to 4 grow. I hope that we continue to be a school of 5 first choice. We know people have a choice when it 6 comes to where they invest their higher education 7 dollars. I'm a consumer of that. My children as 8 well. And I felt strongly that FIU is a great 9 investment. We are a top school designated by the 10 Wall Street Journal, recognized for innovation, 11 recognized for economic mobility, recognized for 12 ROI. So we have really so much to tout, so much to 13 explain to the community. 14 My job as interim president in the last three 15 months has really been to shout those statistics 16 from the rooftop to make sure everyone knows that 17 FIU is leading. And so the future for us is top 30. 18 The future for us really is to dream bigger. And 19 that I think is an important concept because we can 20 all of course sit here and think about what we would 21 like FIU to look like in the future. Just this past 22 weekend, we had the opportunity to acknowledge our 23 alumni and to bestow the highest honor to our Torch 24 Award recipients. And that was something that they 25 made a comment. They made a comment about how FIU</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 24</p> <p>1 FIU into the future. The other two candidates that 2 were considered as finalists to demanded to be sole 3 finalists. They did not want to compete for whatever 4 reason. And I don't cast any dispersions on that. 5 But I wanted to be very clear, I was happy to 6 compete for this job because I believe ultimately 7 had those other candidates come before you come 8 before the board. I believe that I would've earned 9 the trust and the responsibility of being the next 10 president of FIU, the seventh president of FIU. So 11 thank you for this opportunity and I look forward to 12 engaging with you all. 13 MR. FUNK: Thank you, Jeanette. Let's start with 14 an easy question that's been curated by the team 15 here. What is your view on shared governance? 16 MS. NUNEZ: And thank you for that question. I 17 know it was asked in the previous session and I 18 think it's an important question for this session in 19 particular. What I have approached and how I've 20 endeavored to interact with faculty from a 21 governance perspective is to be open, to be 22 accessible, to be forthcoming with them. And I think 23 I've accomplished that. Over the course of the last 24 three months, I have gone to the faculty senate 25 meeting twice. I have met with the union</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 23</p> <p>1 impacted them and how, looking to the future, 2 they're in the tops of their fields, they are 3 leaders in their own right. They talk about hiring 4 FIU grads. They talk about mentoring FIU students. 5 They talk about dreaming bigger. The private sector 6 does not see limitations for FIU. We should not set 7 them ourselves. We should endeavor to ensure that 8 the future is FIU, that our reputation matches our 9 reality. And I'm honored to be considered as the 10 seventh president of FIU. 11 I will just touch briefly on the process 12 because I know that has come up quite a bit. And so 13 I wanted to just be very open and candid about it. 14 The search committee, as was described by Mr. Funk 15 had a number of qualified candidates. Five were 16 selected as finalists that were interviewed. Of 17 those five, three were put forth by the search 18 committee to be considered and to be undergoing this 19 forum and interviews by the board of trustees. I was 20 the only candidate throughout the entire process 21 that did not demand to be the sole finalist. I was 22 content to stand here before you and anyone else 23 that would listen to compete for this job to show 24 why I believe I'm uniquely qualified, to show why I 25 believe I have the vision and the skill-set to lead</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 25</p> <p>1 representation. I have met with any faculty member 2 that's reached out to me independent of whether 3 they're part of faculty senate or not. I believe 4 that the faculty has an important role to play. 5 Certainly, I know the provost is sitting here in the 6 front. She engages with faculty on the academic 7 side. I know that we have had historically good 8 relationships with our faculty, and I hope to be 9 able to further those relationships and that 10 rapport. I said it at the very first faculty senate 11 meeting, I want to say it was stage two or day three 12 of my role as intern president. But what I said 13 then, and I mean to this day, and I hope that will 14 be a continuation, is that I'll always be available, 15 I'll always be accessible. I think my goal is to be 16 honest and open with him, and I'm happy to sit with 17 him at any point. 18 Our trustee who serves on the faculty senate as 19 president and serves on our board, he has reached 20 out a number of times. I have always sat with him. I 21 have always listened to his concerns. We may not 22 always agree. I think some of the things that we all 23 care about, of course, from a faculty perspective, I 24 would assume faculty recruitment, faculty retention, 25 faculty salaries, I think we're aligned. I believe,</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 26</p> <p>1 and this question was asked previously, so I don't 2 want to reiterate it too much. I believe we need to 3 compensate our faculty appropriately. I believe we 4 need to work in tandem with them as it relates to 5 those particular issues. 6 Again, as it relates to the outreach, the 7 approach to shared governance I hope to be able to 8 improve rapport, improve opportunities for outreach. 9 And can I stand ready to meet with anyone at any 10 time. 11 MR. FUNK: One question that we haven't touched 12 on in the two earlier sessions, but it's a very 13 important one is what are your priorities for FIU's 14 other academic campuses, not just the Maidique 15 campus? 16 MS. NUNEZ: I'm actually glad that you asked 17 that because I don't think we had done a good job in 18 the first two sessions about talking about our other 19 campuses and our other sites. As you all know, we're 20 a multi-campus institution. We have another campus 21 down the road in Flagler, the engineering campus, 22 and then we have our Biscayne Bay campus. And I 23 really view all three as integral to the mission of 24 the university. As we know, the Biscayne Bay campus 25 is beautiful. It's on the water. It's pristine. And</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 28</p> <p>1 isn't specific to your question. But I do believe we 2 have a unique asset in BBC that we need to grow and 3 we need to identify strategic areas along with our 4 strategic plan, with the board's vision for what we 5 want to do in that campus. And as you know, we have 6 sites elsewhere and we have sites in Port St. Lucie 7 that focus on research. We have sites in Largo. And 8 so when you have to look at all the assets FIU 9 brings to bear, I think sometimes people lose sight 10 of that. And my goal really when I became interim 11 president was to spend a lot of time interacting and 12 engaging with the other sites. I have been to BBC 13 multiple times. I was there I think my first week, 14 and I've been back several times and never fear I'll 15 be back again probably very soon. But we do have 16 opportunities to grow our footprint and to look at 17 areas that are strategically important for us to 18 make sure that we're measuring up to what the 19 community needs are and what the industry demands 20 are. 21 MR. FUNK: Something that would be important to 22 this group and all the groups we hope is research 23 and in response to state and federal budget 24 challenges such as suspension of federal grants, 25 reduction of F&A and other funding pressures, what</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 27</p> <p>1 it has, in my opinion, opportunities for growth and 2 development. And I'm eager to look at those. 3 Biscayne Bay is the home of our hospitality school. 4 It is the home of our-- Home of a lot of our 5 colleges, and we have many programs that have space 6 on both campuses, including nursing and business and 7 others. But I believe BBC is right for growth. I 8 think when you look at the opportunities there, one 9 of the challenges, and I'll be very candid with this 10 group and with anyone that cares to listen, is that 11 currently there's a situation that we only have one 12 road in, one road out. And so that creates a safety 13 issue that creates an issue with regards to campus 14 development. And so we're working very closely to be 15 able to remedy that, because I believe it's 16 imperative for the university, obviously for safety 17 and security issues, but also because they have 18 three schools, three K-12 schools. They have Mass 19 Academy, they have Tracy Alonzo Mourning High 20 School, and they have David Lawrence K-8 physically 21 located on our campus. I don't know if any of you 22 have been there or faculty there. When you have to 23 leave at the time we go that's on. I see a lot of 24 people nodding their heads. It is a traffic jam. So 25 I think that that's the conversation that perhaps</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 29</p> <p>1 are some short and also long-term decisions FIU 2 should consider to ensure continued success? FIU is 3 a preeminent top 50 Carnegie Research 1 major 4 research university. What is your vision for FIU as 5 it relates to research? 6 MS. NUNEZ: Well, I was hoping we could change 7 up a little bit and maybe do some proud 8 participation, if that's okay. I might have read it, 9 but if you're a faculty and you're engaging in 10 research, would you mind raising your hand? Okay. 11 That's important, that's a good group. So let's talk 12 about research because we are, as you mentioned 13 Carnegie R1 research designated university. Only 3% 14 of universities in the country are designated as 15 such. So the fact that we are there is a testament 16 to the work that you all are doing, \$328 million in 17 research expenditures, we are the fastest growing in 18 terms of our research enterprise of the state 19 university system. I think I stated in my opening 20 statement, my goal is to grow research by double. 21 Hopefully to be somewhere in the \$600 million 22 research expenditure space in the next several 23 years. So the work that you're doing, of course, is 24 extremely important. And I know right now we're 25 facing a little bit of a challenge as it relates to</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 30</p> <p>1 research. What's going on, primarily most of our 2 research is federal, what's going on in DC, all of 3 the cuts, all of the elimination of grants, agencies 4 that have had significant shortfalls in terms of 5 personnel. So we have a lot of challenges as a 6 research institution. So the responsibility that I 7 bear as president is to not only identify what are 8 the challenges, but what are the opportunities. So 9 when you look at some of the challenges that we've 10 had, and you've mentioned some of them, we've had 54 11 grants terminated thus far at an impact of \$36 12 million to the university. I don't know if anybody 13 in the crowd were suspicion of any of your grants 14 have been terminated. You want to raise your hand? 15 Yeah, we had one, two. So so certainly if your 16 grants have been terminated, that is a challenge for 17 you as a researcher. That is a challenge for us as a 18 university, especially because we have a stated goal 19 to continue to grow the research enterprise. It's 20 part of our strategic plan. So when you look at the 21 grants that have been terminated, \$36 million, when 22 you look at the potential application of a 15% FNA 23 rate across the board, across all government 24 agencies, that's another \$18 million. So a 25 significant impact to the university, to our</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 32</p> <p>1 that he shared with me which I believe is true, I 2 think from an administration perspective, I think 3 the federal government is looking at maybe 4 minimizing the research that's being done in a 5 handful of schools. And of course, they seem to be 6 the Ivy Leagues or those that are private 7 universities that have for many decades consolidated 8 their control over research at every level of the 9 federal government. So I think what they're hoping 10 to do, and I believe FIU is uniquely positioned to 11 take advantage of that, is change up the structure, 12 change up the consolidation of research portfolios, 13 and allow institutions like ours, public 14 universities, aligned with the mission, focused on 15 impact making, real significant progress. I think 16 all of those things go well for FIU to not only make 17 sure that the shortfall of research that we're able 18 to build those gaps, but also how do we grow that 19 research portfolio under this new approach of 20 challenging some of the research that's being done. 21 Having research grants terminated. We continue as an 22 institution and I think perhaps some of you are also 23 in this space. We continue to focus on providing new 24 proposals, so we have not slowed down our cadence of 25 proposals. And just recently, I know our VP of</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 31</p> <p>1 research portfolio, and perhaps to the impact of the 2 research that you all are doing, one of the things 3 that I've talked about a lot in the community, both 4 the policy makers with our board, is that we want to 5 make sure our research is relevant. Of course, we 6 want to make sure it's impactful, we want to make 7 sure it's solving the problems of today and of 8 tomorrow. And I do believe that the research we're 9 doing is extremely important. And when you look at 10 the areas that we've identified, environment and 11 environmental resilience, we have been designated as 12 a university of distinction on environmental 13 resilience. I talked a little bit about our health 14 research, which is only going to grow exponentially. 15 With our partnerships being able to recruit top 16 researchers in the clinical space, people that are 17 doing groundbreaking things. And I know that we are 18 only yet scratching the surface on that front. But 19 then when you talk about all of those challenges and 20 where FIU is going to end up when the dust settles, 21 I was in Washington last week and part of the reason 22 I was there was to talk to policymakers about the 23 research, to talk about impacts. I'm hoping to have 24 a meeting very soon with the NIH director. I had a 25 brief conversation with him, and one of the things</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 33</p> <p>1 research indicated that there's been some productive 2 conversations happening. So we feel good about some 3 research grants that we've appealed in terms of 4 those that have been terminated. And we also feel 5 good about where we're headed in terms of new 6 research proposals. 7 MR. FUNK: One of the things identified by our 8 local team is in the area of political ideology. And 9 the question has come in is in light of growing 10 national conversations around political ideology and 11 higher education, how do you create a campus that 12 supports open dialogue while upholding the rights 13 and dignity of all students and faculty? How do you 14 plan to ensure that our university remains a 15 welcoming and safe environment for students and 16 faculty from diverse backgrounds, including 17 international undocumented immigrants and LGBTQ+ 18 individuals? 19 MS. NUNEZ: And this for full disclosure, this 20 question, I think has been asked in each of the 21 three sessions thus far. So important question and 22 what I'm happy to answer. So let me start by saying 23 this. And I know I was asked at probably the first 24 faculty senate meeting, and I've probably been asked 25 in multiple interviews and in multiple interactions</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 34</p> <p>1 over the course of the last three months. I firmly 2 believe FIU does an exceptional job of being 3 welcoming and safe for all of our students. I know 4 the chief is here. I've said this in the previous 5 two sessions. I believe our police department and 6 chief process does an excellent job of ensuring 7 safety and security on this campus, making sure our 8 campus is welcoming. I have not had many student 9 interactions in which they have come to me and said 10 that they do not feel safe. I cannot think of one. I 11 know there's been discussions around a lot of the 12 challenges that other universities are facing and I 13 think it is something that we have to contend with 14 that we have to address. It is sad to see what some 15 campuses across this country have devolved into 16 chaos and violence and students overtaking buildings 17 and in camping and things that I don't think have 18 any place in an institution of higher learning for 19 what we hope to accomplish, what our mission is to 20 bring students to a place where they can pursue 21 critical thinking, they can pursue truth, they can 22 pursue knowledge. And so I think that what you see 23 happening in other universities is really a sad 24 state of affairs. It's an indictment. I think, on 25 some leaders, in some institutions. I don't think</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 36</p> <p>1 other universities should look to FIU to be that 2 thought leader, to be that model. And I think that 3 what FIU provides because of where we're located, 4 our cosmopolitan nature, because of the work that 5 we've done, the administration, the board, the 6 faculty, our student groups, our student government 7 leaders, I think that many other places could look 8 to FIU and say, that is what we want to emulate. So 9 I'm really proud of that. And while, yes higher 10 education, I believe, and perhaps maybe some of you 11 agree, some of you disagree, we're at a precipice. I 12 think that higher education is facing some real 13 significant challenges. Some of them I've already 14 addressed. But when you look at across the country 15 enrollment cliffs and the shark decline in 16 enrollment, when you look at some of the challenges 17 we're seeing, again with violence, I think all of 18 those things don't necessarily go well for higher 19 education at the macro level. But I think the FIU is 20 really where you can differentiate the bad from the 21 good, the good from the great. And FIU is in indeed 22 been great in that space. And I'm really proud, 23 again, of the work that we've done to ensure that 24 our campus is safe, secure, it's welcoming 25 regardless of where you fall in, in those different</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 35</p> <p>1 there should be violence ever. There should never be 2 violence on campus. We have students that protest 3 all the time. We have faculty that engage in that as 4 well. I think that's perfectly fine, as long as it's 5 done respectfully, as long as it's done civilly. I 6 will always be willing to listen to people's 7 concerns and their issues. But the politicization of 8 college campuses is really from my perspective, 9 something very, very sad. And especially, and I'll 10 talk about the issue of combating anti-Semitism. 11 What we've seen in many cases, students, Jewish 12 students, have been prevented from going to class, 13 have been subject to persecution, harassment, 14 violence that will never happen here on this campus. 15 I will not allow it to happen on this campus. I 16 don't think we can afford for any student regardless 17 of your background, your heritage, your ethnicity, 18 to ever be exposed to that type of violence. And FIU 19 has earned an eighth grade in terms of our approach 20 to dealing with anti-Semitism. And that's something 21 that I'm very proud of. The ADL only designated 22 eight universities in this country, eight 23 universities to be leading the moment as it relates 24 to combating anti-Semitism. And I think that that's 25 something, again, we should be very proud of. And</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 37</p> <p>1 categories of students. And that's something that 2 we're going to continue to forge ahead. Can we do 3 better? Yes, I think in various questions you've 4 asked me about kind of where we're at, I'm always 5 going to strive to do better, and I'm always going 6 to listen to input if there's an area where we're 7 not meeting expectation, where we're not exceeding 8 what the community expects of us, what our students 9 expect of us, and what our faculty expects from us. 10 MR. FUNK: Maybe related issue related to 11 immigration, how does FIU police's participation in 12 ICE 287 G program make FIU safer? And how does it 13 reflect the values of FIU? What is your message to 14 faculty and staff on H-1B pieces? 15 MS. NUNEZ: So clearly that was an issue that 16 faculty was very concerned about. I know they 17 continue to express concerns about it. That is why I 18 agreed to attend the faculty Senate meeting, I think 19 was probably a month ago. That was an issue that at 20 the time and continues to be top of mind for 21 faculty. So let's address both issues as we-- I 22 think you referenced H-1B, but I know we're talking 23 about F1 visas as well from the perspective of 24 student visas versus faculty visas. So I just wanted 25 to delineate that. When we're talking about the</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 38</p> <p>1 issue of 287 G and it was an area, again, a lot of 2 passion, a lot of concern. I know we had the faculty 3 senate meeting, Chief Casas was there, and he 4 explained, and I supported his decision to be in 5 control. And so there was a lot of back and forth 6 about why would FIU participate, why would FIU be 7 engaged? And I think what chief explained then, what 8 he did a good job of being very transparent, is that 9 at the end of the day, if ICE or if another law 10 enforcement agency, albeit it could have been the 11 Sheriff's Office, or it could be FDLE, or it could 12 be FHP, were to come on campus. They can do. So 13 whether we sign the agreement or not. They have the 14 authority to do that. But Chief Casas, and to his 15 credit, he wants to be the one at the tip of the 16 spear. He wants to be in control of that process. He 17 doesn't want random agents, whether they're from 18 Arkansas or whether they're from New York, to swoop 19 in on our campus because he understands our campus 20 best. He understands our students best. And so he 21 believes firmly, as do I, that it is better for FIU 22 to be in that role than to delegate that 23 responsibility to someone else. Again, it could be a 24 point of disagreement and continued disagreement but 25 I believe that Chief Casas really explained why he,</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 40</p> <p>1 worked. They followed the process. I'm certain that 2 there were many students that had a lot of 3 questions, and I'm certain that our teams were 4 available to them and provided them support 5 throughout that process. But again, didn't want the 6 opportunity to go by without me addressing what I 7 heard third party through the faculty senate 8 president, because I wanted to make sure that you 9 all understand that I care about all of our students 10 regardless of what bucket or category you want to 11 put them in. 12 MR. FUNK: Thank you, Jeanette. And now, as 13 promised we saved 10 minutes here at the end of our 14 session for questions from the floor. I've dubbed 15 the two individuals with microphones as our roving 16 reporters. But if you have a question, they will 17 share the microphone with you. And Jeanette is 18 prepared to respond right here in front. Then next. 19 FACULTY MEMBER: Good morning. Thank you, 20 President Nunez. My name is Dr. Sumit Kundu. I'm a 21 professor of International Business in the College 22 of Business, Associate Dean International Affairs. 23 And we have a center called the Center for 24 International Business Education Research, which is 25 called Innovation Grant. We are one of the 16</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 39</p> <p>1 along all the other state universities are in that 2 collaborative agreement. Now I'm going back to the 3 visas, and I will be transparent with this group 4 because it was brought to my attention by faculty 5 Senate President, Barengo. He told me that some 6 faculty, perhaps some of you that are here today 7 were upset that I referred to those F1 student visa 8 terminations as only 18 students. I did so just to 9 provide context about the number because I know 10 there was a lot of media sensationalism around the 11 topic, conflating two issues insinuating in some 12 cases that perhaps FIU was in a position to 13 challenge or to change those visa terminations. And 14 so my comment really was not to be flippant towards 15 those 18 students that were undergoing a very 16 challenging situation. It was just to provide 17 context. I believe that whether you're 18 students, 18 one student, or 55,000 students. I certainly care 19 about the challenges that you're facing. However, 20 what we were trying to convey, and what I was trying 21 to share was we really need to be mindful that FIU 22 had nothing to do with that from a jurisdiction 23 standpoint. We simply got the notification but I am 24 happy to report that all 18 of those students that 25 were terminated have been reinstated. So the process</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 41</p> <p>1 centers of excellence in, the United States of 2 America. These grants we got in 1994, and we have 3 continued the tradition. And it helps our rankings 4 to be number two in international business by the US 5 Department of Education, as well as MBA 6 international program number five by US News and 7 World Report. Given that suddenly we are facing with 8 modification, the grant is still on. And the grant 9 is the third year. The third year ends in September, 10 the 30th. The fourth year, because October 1st, we 11 don't know where we stand. I was in Washington DC 12 and I met the congressional staff members of 13 Congressman Diaz-Balart. Then a couple of others 14 congressmen and they were looking into it. So my 15 request is that we continue on this journey because 16 we need this grant for our rankings, for work we do 17 for our international students, IV1 students in the 18 College of Business. We are known for our IV College 19 of Business. And a follow up question is that given 20 our university is international. I wanted to also 21 hear a little bit about your vision of where the I 22 stands -- international. I have been with this 23 institution for 22 years, I've seen how FIU has 24 grown tremendously. And so we want to see what holds 25 for us, for our international students, given the</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 42</p> <p>1 issues facing in this day and age. Thank you.</p> <p>2 MS. NUNEZ: So certainly, from the perspective</p> <p>3 of international students, international business, I</p> <p>4 know is one of the premier majors that we're very</p> <p>5 proud to tout. I think you mentioned it, number two,</p> <p>6 in the country, we're going to get it to number one.</p> <p>7 But when you talk about international students in</p> <p>8 Miami, because of its location, I think draws a</p> <p>9 tremendous amount of international students. I</p> <p>10 believe we're roughly 4,500 international students.</p> <p>11 I know there are many students that perhaps aren't</p> <p>12 "international" students, but that have very</p> <p>13 significant interest in international programs as</p> <p>14 well as study abroad. So I think we have a really</p> <p>15 unique opportunity given our location, given our</p> <p>16 excellence, given the rankings, how do we take it to</p> <p>17 the next level, I believe is an important part of</p> <p>18 the passion that I'm going to bring to this role, to</p> <p>19 be able to work with the excellent programs that we</p> <p>20 have with the faculty that is renowned, that they</p> <p>21 are national scholars, that they're providing</p> <p>22 expertise in their fields. But I believe it is a</p> <p>23 team effort and working with the academic side,</p> <p>24 along with, on the administrative side, we have</p> <p>25 unique opportunities in and around business,</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 44</p> <p>1 connections. What I want to hear from you, and if</p> <p>2 any faculty would also be interested, FIU already</p> <p>3 has a great standing in Sipra, but what is your</p> <p>4 vision as President for taking it even further?</p> <p>5 MS. NUNEZ: Excellent question. And yes, we met</p> <p>6 twice. We met early on in my tenure at the Campong,</p> <p>7 and then I believe you were at the Adam Smith</p> <p>8 Center, one of the lecture series. You asked a</p> <p>9 question then, so great to see you engaged. And I</p> <p>10 got to say this is a third time. And it's always</p> <p>11 wonderful to see students develop keen interest on</p> <p>12 not only their particular programs, but for where</p> <p>13 you are today, but how we're going to take it to the</p> <p>14 future. And you talked about Sipra. Yes, Sipra was my</p> <p>15 home. Although it wasn't called Sipra back then. I</p> <p>16 didn't have the benefit of going to the Green School</p> <p>17 of International Public Affairs, but that was my</p> <p>18 major. And then certainly we know that they have so</p> <p>19 many great faculty members and so many great</p> <p>20 programs. They are one of only 25 universities that</p> <p>21 have been invited to be members of APSIA. That's the</p> <p>22 National Association that identifies public schools</p> <p>23 of international affairs. And so we are in great</p> <p>24 company. If you look at the 25 institutions that are</p> <p>25 invited to be members of APSIA, I think you'll be</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 43</p> <p>1 certainly. But I'm sure that would probably be true</p> <p>2 amongst all of your colleagues and your peers. So</p> <p>3 I'm looking forward to continue to grow not only</p> <p>4 from the perspective of rankings because rankings</p> <p>5 are a number and it's good to say we want to be top</p> <p>6 30 by 2030. We want to be number one in this</p> <p>7 particular major or in this category. But I don't</p> <p>8 think rankings without a real purpose and a shared</p> <p>9 vision mean anything other than just a random</p> <p>10 number. So I think the rankings and the reputation</p> <p>11 and the reality all have to combine for what the</p> <p>12 board has obviously endeavored to do, which is make</p> <p>13 us on the top tier institution. And certainly, I'm</p> <p>14 eager to continue to work along that space.</p> <p>15 MR. FUNK: Lady in red.</p> <p>16 STUDENT MEMBER: Good day, everyone. My name is</p> <p>17 Shalatu Acuna. I've actually had the pleasure of</p> <p>18 meeting the president more than once -- twice. So</p> <p>19 this makes three. So first of all, I want to say</p> <p>20 it's great to hear that you were a student in the</p> <p>21 Sipra School. I have a lot of respect for the Sipra</p> <p>22 School, I'm going to be adding a political science</p> <p>23 major. And the big reason why I picked FIU over the</p> <p>24 other schools, I got into UF and FSU, was that Sipra</p> <p>25 school, because you guys have remarkable</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 45</p> <p>1 blown away to see that FIU is absolutely at the top</p> <p>2 of their game with regards to Sipra. So we have a</p> <p>3 tremendous amount of interest and a tremendous</p> <p>4 amount of support both from the donor community as</p> <p>5 well as from the alumni, and ensuring that that Sipra</p> <p>6 is going to continue to grow, it's going to continue</p> <p>7 to excel. And I think those are one of the examples</p> <p>8 of programs that draw a lot of students because of</p> <p>9 the resources they provide, because of the support</p> <p>10 we provide academically because of the opportunities</p> <p>11 to engage in things like FIU in DC. Have you been</p> <p>12 part of that cohort?</p> <p>13 STUDENT MEMBER: Yeah, I actually went in March.</p> <p>14 MS. NUNEZ: Okay. She went in March to FIU in DC</p> <p>15 if you have not visited, if you haven't been to that</p> <p>16 space, I think that you should definitely make it a</p> <p>17 priority to go and spend some time at our office in</p> <p>18 DC. We have become known, not just in Florida, but</p> <p>19 throughout the country as leading with regards to</p> <p>20 interfacing and engaging, developing, and curating</p> <p>21 opportunities for discussion for high level</p> <p>22 researchers. That program and that office, again,</p> <p>23 talking about our remote sites, our campuses, that</p> <p>24 really is I believe a crown jewel, and it's probably</p> <p>25 a little bit of a hidden secret. So my goal is to be</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 46</p> <p>1 up in Washington, DC frequently to engage with 2 policy makers. And what we've been doing is outreach 3 to all of the administration. We have many Sipa 4 alums that are currently in high positions. We have 5 one of our alums is going through the confirmation 6 process to be the US Marshal. And he's a proud Sipa 7 alum. We have individuals like Secretary Rubio that 8 is a Sipa professor. So there's a lot of linkage to 9 Sipa and there's a lot of opportunities. And 10 sometimes the FIU in DC it's not here, it's not 11 present in the forefront, but I can tell you there 12 are so many programs and so many interesting 13 opportunities to really take advantage of our FIU in 14 DC office. So thank you for the question, and it's 15 great to see you again. 16 MR. FUNK: Time for one more question. And that 17 was the first -- 18 FACULTY MEMBER: Thank you, President Nunez for 19 answering the questions today. I'm a little nervous, 20 so I'm going to read from my notes. 21 MS. NUNEZ: Turn on the side of the microphone. 22 FACULTY MEMBER: So just to introduce myself, 23 I'm Marianne Lamonica and I run the Humanities Edge 24 program, which is a Mellon Foundation funded program 25 that's a pathway from MDC to FIU for humanities</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 48</p> <p>1 that we are complying with, and so from the 2 perspective of DEI, I personally believe that we 3 need to view our students from the standpoint of 4 meritocracy, character development, competitiveness. 5 And so I don't believe personally that we should be 6 putting certain outcomes or putting certain people 7 in different categories, separating our students and 8 being divisive. That's my perspective. And we're of 9 course going to continue to elevate all of our 10 students. With regards to the particular question 11 around certain courses and whether those courses are 12 being offered. Again, I think I talked a little bit 13 about some of the measures that we have to perform 14 in order to fund, in order to be able to continue to 15 recruit and retain faculty. And so it's almost like 16 a cycle, right? So when we look at the programs, 17 when we look at the courses, and that really falls 18 under the provost from an academic standpoint, we're 19 constantly reviewing courses and looking at what 20 makes the most sense from a general education 21 curriculum. We know there were changes at the state 22 level. We know that some of those courses are no 23 longer required for general education requirement, 24 but they continue to be able to be offered. And 25 those could be as electives. And so-- But we have to</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 47</p> <p>1 students. And I also support a lot of humanities 2 programs here on campus. So I just wanted to bring 3 attention to your answer to the question about FIU 4 being a welcoming and safe campus for immigrants, 5 LGBTQ and others. And in your answer, you mentioned 6 the FIU police department and other things like that 7 and talked about safety. But however, I wanted to 8 ask you to address the role that the humanities play 9 in building cultural competency, empathy, and 10 critical thinking skills because some of our 11 students have expressed that they're concerned that 12 the anti DEI, whatever you want to call it, rhetoric 13 on campus these past few years has really affected 14 the programs that they're interested in. And so I 15 just wanted to ask if you do have a plan for the 16 humanities here at FIU? 17 MS. NUNEZ: Sure. I think that's an important 18 question. I know that the DEI question was answered. 19 It was asked earlier in the first session, so I want 20 to be very mindful of the question because it was 21 the DEI component and also the humanities. And so 22 talk about students' interest and students' concern 23 about perhaps some of the course selections and 24 course offerings. So there is, I think everyone here 25 acknowledges there is a state and federal mandates</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 49</p> <p>1 balance the needs and the demands of students from 2 industry perspective. We also have to balance how we 3 are going to ensure the value of what we're 4 investing in. Because as you know we have unlimited 5 demands. We have limited resources. And so as we 6 look to what are the courses that are going to yield 7 the most "ROI", and I know some of the humanities, 8 you can't fit into that little box, into that 9 bucket. But certainly, there's going to be a vast 10 array and a plethora of courses that are offered for 11 all interests of students. But ultimately, we're 12 measured, we're graded, we're impacted, we're 13 penalized, or we're incentivized to meet some of 14 those important metrics like employment upon 15 graduation, ensuring students are graduating on 16 time. So that's going to be a constant ebb and flow 17 as we look to what are the courses that are going to 18 be today that are required general education 19 curriculum versus what may change in the future. I 20 don't think really touched too much on AI but I know 21 that's a topic very, very near and relevant to all 22 of you on faculty. How is that going to change the 23 way you teach? How is it going to take change how 24 your students interact? So lots of things that are 25 going on. Lots of things that are under</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 50</p> <p>1 consideration from an administrative viewpoint as to 2 how we identify what courses are taught and what 3 courses are offered. So I hope I answered your 4 question. 5 MR. FUNK: Unfortunately, we're on a very tight 6 timeline given the next group that's coming in. 7 Perhaps you can address the president on-- 8 MS. NUNEZ: Send me an email. 9 MR. FUNK: But please feel free to go to the 10 president's search website. The transcripts from all 11 of these sessions will be posted there as well as 12 webcast tape. So please. And we do cover a couple of 13 different themes in the different sessions, so if 14 you didn't-- 15 MS. NUNEZ: All the questions have been 16 different too. 17 MR. FUNK: Yeah. So you may want to tune into 18 that. But we can't thank you enough for being here 19 today. We thank the interim president for spending 20 this time with us and God speed. 21 (Thereupon, Session III was concluded at 12:30 22 PM) 23 24 25</p>	
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 51</p> <p>1 CERTIFICATE 2 3 STATE OF FLORIDA) 4 SS: 5 COUNTY OF MIAMI DADE) 6 7 I, Chancellor Merritt, FPR certify that I was 8 authorized to and did stenographically report the 9 foregoing proceedings, and that the transcript is a 10 true and complete record of my stenographic notes. 11 I further certify that I am neither attorney 12 or party, nor am I related to or employed by any 13 attorney or party connected with the action, nor am 14 I financially interested in the action. 15 16 Dated this 21st day of May, 2025. 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Chancellor Merritt</i></p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin-left: 0;"/> <p>Chancellor Merritt, FPR Notary Public - State of Florida My Commission No. HH454299 Expires: 10/20/2027</p>	

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