

February 2, 2021

University of Nebraska at Omaha
Chancellor Search Committee

Dear Search Committee,

I am writing to offer my candidacy for the Chancellor position at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO). The successes that this university has achieved throughout its history as an agent of change demonstrate its entrepreneurial character and unwavering spirit to both embrace and shape the future. The university has a robust portfolio of assets that include a diverse and successful student body, teaching excellence, strong research productivity, strategic partnerships across the system and within the state, geographical advantages, and an acute sense of responsibility for the community.

I am the Dean of the College of Business at Florida International University (FIU Business). Florida International University (FIU) is a comprehensive university with 11 colleges, over 58,000 students, and the fourth largest university in the country by enrollment. FIU is a Research 1 university and as of June 2019 also

As a Chartered Financial Analyst, I have great interest in understanding difficult financial models and believe I have strong business acumen to manage a complex organization. During my tenure with FIU, I have worked diligently to build trust, create teams with complementary skillsets, foster creativity, and promote connectivity across many academic and operational units through reorganizations and retraining of existing staff and faculty. The results are evident in the high morale of the college, growth in enrollment in Chapman Graduate School, introduction of new programs, improvement in reputation and rankings, increase in financial reserves and endowment accounts, impactful performance in university metrics, and stronger partnerships in the community and beyond. As higher education continues to be confronted with challenges, we must continue to build trust with our internal and external stakeholders, be a good steward with our financial resources, and always commit to provide an affordable and quality college experience for our students as well as fostering an environment for research discovery. After reviewing the materials, I believe UNO has several comparative advantages to thrive in the market and I have the right skillset to lead it in this journey.

Successful universities build on a strong commitment to stakeholders. On the student side, UNO has made impressive strides in recent years in creating an impressive portfolio. With 29.5% of the student are ethnically diverse, UNO articulates diversity and inclusiveness. As a first-generation college graduate, I am excited to learn that 37.3% of your student body is first-generation college students and that your 795 international students come from 65 countries. I am equally impressed by UNO's recognition as one of the Top 10 four-year institutions for military friendliness. I believe the opportunity to train this diverse group of students in this coming decade will define the success of a university in talent development and that UNO has laid some important groundwork. On the faculty side, I am thrilled to learn that UNO's mission to foster multi-disciplinary and intercampus collaboration through your centers and institutes, and across the system. The commitment to leverage the community resources is indeed encouraging. I speculate the growth of faculty in both research and collaborative partnerships in the community and beyond is indicative of a thoughtful strategic plan of UNO.

Diversity of mindsets goes beyond the inclusion of ethnicity, religions, genders, experiences, sexual orientations, backgrounds, and complexions of our skin color. It is a commitment to open-mindedness, willingness to listen to disagreements, tolerance of discomfort, acceptance of differences, and appreciation of humility. Recent events have forced higher education to rethink our existing assumptions. Like many industries, higher education needs to come up with disruptive tactics to confront this challenge and focus its efforts in creating diversity of thoughts and inclusive mindsets. Through intention and deliberation

year, I appointed a female faculty to an endowed professorship after she became the first Black woman to receive full professorship in the School of Accounting at the college. I also serve on multiple international advisory boards and panel discussions on these issues because I believe we must change the conversation and demonstrate with our actions. Doing nothing about diversity is simply no longer acceptable at this time in history.

During the current pandemic, higher education institutions came to suspect their business models were not working. From teaching modalities and reliance on residential revenues to brick and mortar facilities and narrowly focused enrollment strategy, many universities around the world awoke to recognize the cost of being stagnant. UNO, as a metropolitan university, has some advantage over universities that are heavily rely on residential campus. As a public university, UNO must continue to explore opportunities to manage student enrollment, reduce student loans, and promote timely graduation. How do we navigate this financial challenge? We need to capitalize on partnerships to share resources and leverage comparative advantages. With four universities in the Nebraska system, UNO should continue to leverage resources across sister schools and streamline processes. To stay truthful to its core as a public university by serving the community and beyond, UNO needs to stand out as a strong partner for parents and students to help manage their cost of attendance. Currently, tuition and fees of UNO are among the lowest in the system. Geographically, UNO is located at one of the nicest and affordable cities to live in the Midwest. At FIU Business, we understand that to survive in this financial challenge, we must quickly master our relationships to prevail in this crisis together. 1.584 437.9 455.63 Tm0 g0

Government Relations to promote university's agenda at the state level in Tallahassee and at the federal level in D.C. FIU Business is a partner in our university's economic development agenda, such as creating a technology hub in Miami with focus on computational science and artificial intelligence, identifying solutions for environmental resilience, co-founding the preeminent program in Cybersecurity, and attracting hedge funds/venture capitalists to the region. FIU Business also has a close relationship with state officials. For instance, former mayors of the county and city, including the current mayor of Miami City, Francis Suarez, are our alumni and build working relationships with the school.

I am committed to fundraising because I am a first-generation college, non-traditional, and an international student. However, among all things I am a product of scholarships. Without donors' generosity, I would never have been able to finish college, let alone graduate studies. I consider myself a natural fundraiser because I enjoy being with people and truly comprehend the impact of philanthropy. Since joining FIU Business in 2017, I have worked alongside our advancement team to set two records in fundraising in the history of the college. Over the past three years, charitable contributions have totaled over \$12 million, representing a 70% year over year increase in private donations to support FIU Business's funding priorities. Along with our advancement team, I am excited that we are on track to set another record for the college in this academic year with quite a few corporate donations to support economic development, diversity and inclusion, and social mobility for students. I am eager to partner with UNO in its advancement efforts to support faculty research/discovery, create economic impact in community, and transform student lives.

Why seek a chancellorship now? The reason is personal. I came to the U.S. in 1988 from Hong Kong. I did not have guidance because my parents settled in Hong Kong when they were barely teenagers. Through hard work and the lack of alternatives, they became entrepreneurs despite never finishing high school. As a first-generation college student, I did not receive concerted training at home and was short of financial resources. Significant scholarships allowed me to attend college and graduate in three and a half years with summa cum laude. I went on to my Ph.D. studies as a full-ride scholar. I am tremendously grateful to