



November 12, 2023

HAND DELIVERED

Dr. Stacy Volnick  
President  
Florida Atlantic University

Dear Stacy:

This letter documents my evaluation of your performance as Interim President of Florida Atlantic University for the year 2023. I will present this assessment to the Board of Trustees for their consideration as they conduct an annual performance evaluation of you.

Your self-evaluation is an important component of this process, and I am attaching and incorporating it into this letter. Thank you for preparing a detailed report that comprehensively summarized your and the University's many impressive accomplishments this year. I have carefully reviewed and agree with your self-assessment.

As part of this evaluation, I requested input from the Chair of the Board of Governors and spoke with University friends and community leaders throughout FAU's service area. Your performance as interim president was universally commended, and you received enthusiastic praise for your success at the helm of FAU during some challenging times.

Based on the foregoing, I rate your work at the highest level, **Exceptional**.

Your self-assessment documents very well your and the University's accomplishments from this past year. I highlight just a few:

- Your leadership and engagement have energized the culture overall at FAU. The university continues to attain unprecedented achievements.
- You have overseen the development and ongoing implementation of two transformative initiatives for the University: FAU Health and the college of dentistry. In the near future these projects will create FAU's first ever academic medical center and only the second public college of dentistry in the State of Florida, both of which will have enduring impact on the University and the communities we serve.

- You leveraged exceptionally well the extraordinary opportunity that was presented to FAU by the Men's Basketball Team's phenomenal run to the Final Four. You successfully challenged and supported our Public Affairs team in generating \$1.7 billion in earned media in March -- an incredible 850% increase over the prior year. You also wisely recognized the remarkable value to FAU of Coach May and Athletic Director White and took the appropriate steps to secure long-term employment agreements with both.
- Although we unfortunately lost our Vice President of Advancement this year, you put in place effective interim leadership for the Division and the Foundation, securing the University's successful launch of its first comprehensive campaign in twenty years and raising more than \$68 million in FY2023 – the second highest fundraising total in University history. This demonstrates that you have kept the vital support of the philanthropic community strong.
- These achievements were complemented by equally impressive gains in FAU's student success metrics. This year FAU moved up 19 spots in the *U.S. News & World Report* list of "Top Public Schools" – the largest jump by any institution in the State University System. We also rose to No. 26 in the nation for "Social Mobility", which is a terrific measure of how we transform lives because it is based on graduation rates of students who receive Pell grants. We achieved these milestones while welcoming our largest incoming freshman class ever, with over 4400 freshmen entering our Fall class with an average GPA of 3.89, and while reaching a record-high 84% freshman to sophomore retention rate. Academic excellence is truly thriving at FAU.
- While overseeing these current year successes, you also kept your eye on the future of the University by greatly improving our engagement with the Florida Atlantic Research and Development Authority and by supporting the development of strategic plans for University housing, financial affairs, and athletics.
- Despite the inherent challenges associated with interim titles, you have assembled a high-functioning executive team that is excelling in all areas.

In sum, your performance as Interim President has been nothing short of extraordinary. The University has been incredibly fortunate and well-served by the experience, energy, and wisdom you have brought to the role. On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the entire Owl community, **THANK YOU** for a job terrifically well done! GO OWLS!

Sincerely,



Brad Levine  
Chair, Board of Trustees

Interim President Annual Self-Evaluation  
2022-2023  
Dr. Stacy Volnick  
November 6, 2023

While I didn't officially assume the role of Interim President until January 1, 2023, I immediately began assisting the Board of Trustees Chair in late June 2022 following President Kelly's decision to step down as President. I have not only taken on the interim president role but have simultaneously maintained the responsibilities of chief operating officer. I am pleased with my engagement with the community both internally and externally. This was critical to ensure that the "friends of FAU" felt continued engagement from the university.

Achievements as Interim President  
January 2023 – present

### **Boards and Committees**

Since January, I have been selected to serve on several boards. These appointments assist in strengthening the relationships the university has with the communities we serve. Additionally, it is anticipated that in the activities of the boards, opportunities for Florida Atlantic to collaborate with other organizations will develop.

- Broward Workforce Development Board (BWDB) – Appointed to the board of directors.
  - *Serve on the BWDB's Strategic Planning Committee.*
  - *The BWDB is the governing board for CareerSource Broward. This is an excellent opportunity to collaborate with CareerSource Broward to enhance employment opportunities from internships to post-graduation full-time employment for our university students. The Board of Governors' Performance Funding Metrics include post-graduation salaries. This position not only serves our Broward constituents but also engages in ways to increase visibility and employment opportunities for our student body.*
- Florida Atlantic Research and Development Authority (FARDA) Board – Appointed to the board of directors.
  - *Being an active member of the FARDA Board has without a doubt improved the university's relationship with the Research Park. This is critical as we look to enhance our collaboration with businesses on research opportunities, internships, and post-graduation employment for our students. I have seen a tremendous improvement to this collaboration with not only the Authority administration but the developers in the park. The park has seen an increase in occupancy and significant aesthetic improvements. My engagement with Authority leadership has included participating in multiple joint meetings with potential tenants so I can discuss not only their field but how that*

- corresponds to current university-led research and other opportunities such as student internships.*
- FAU Foundation Board – Ex-officio voting member
    - *As an ex-officio member of the Foundation Board, I attend each Foundation Executive Committee meeting and full board meetings. This provides me an opportunity to not only represent the university but also ensure that the two entities are working collaboratively to provide funding opportunities that directly support existing university initiatives. This provides an opportunity for board members to engage with university leadership to enhance the collaborative spirit needed for a healthy foundation/university relationship.*
    - *I worked closely with university and foundation leadership to assist in the funding needs for several significant personnel contracts. This was a striking example of the positive relationship the two entities have.*
  - American Athletic Conference (AAC) Board member
    - *FAU joined the AAC with the 2023-2024 season being our first in the conference. As a voting member of the board, I most recently participated in the discussion and subsequent action item to accept Army into the conference.*
  - FAU/Broward Health Academic Practice Plan Board of Directors - Chair
    - *As part of the FAU/Broward Health Affiliation Agreement, a newly formed FAU/Broward Health Academic Practice Plan Board was formed. At the inaugural meeting, I was elected Chair of the Board. The Board is designed to serve as the overarching Affiliation governance structure for all joint activities between FAU and Broward Health to drive coordination of resources and to create balanced decision-making. Additionally, the Board provides oversight of Affiliation activities and makes recommendations on shared strategic alignment and planning to support all aspects of the Affiliation. I am thrilled to serve as the Chair – the first chair – of the Board and look forward to this partnership evolving into an entity that assists in transforming health care.*

## **Faculty Appointments**

*Upon completion of my dissertation and earning my doctoral degree, it was important to me to continue my academic pursuits. Working with the chairs of my dissertation committee, we have submitted proposals for presentations related to my research. Additionally, the College of Education appointed me as an **Affiliate Clinical Professor** in the College. In this capacity, I am available to serve on dissertation committees. I am currently serving on one dissertation committee for a doctoral student. I was certified as an affiliate faculty member in the College of Business and am waiting on the official letter notifying of such. Additionally, I participate and assist in sponsoring of the Scholar's Dinner at annual ASHE conference where FAU graduate students come together to discuss their scholarly and research activities. This is an opportunity for students to gain insight from faculty, graduates and administrators who participate.*

## Personal Acknowledgements

- Palm Beach 100 – selected for 2023 and 2024 list (Palm Beach Magazine).
- City and State South Florida Power 100 – selected for 2023 list.
- South Florida Business Journal – Power Leaders – selected for 2023 list.

## Personnel and Work Force Initiatives

There were several personnel matters that needed to be addressed from the start. When you are amid a presidential search, filling open executive leadership positions becomes challenging. While several of the positions had internal professionals that could be considered, the Chief Financial Officer role did not. I am pleased with where we are although having interim roles for a prolonged period creates a set of challenges in itself.

- Selection of Jayson Iroff to serve as the new (permanent) Chief Financial Officer – *Jayson comes to FAU with significant higher education experience in Florida. His addition to the team comes at a pivotal time as we look to several university priorities in the financial sphere.*
- Selection of Dr. Gregg Fields to serve as the Interim Vice President, Division of Research
- Selection of Dr. Russ Ivy to serve as interim Provost – *When our former interim provost announced she would be retiring at the end of the fiscal year, we needed to move forward with a plan to select the next interim. With the assistance of the Faculty Senate President, we formed committee to hold an internal process. We accepted nominations, held open forums, and invited faculty to participate. Dr. Ivy assumed the role and has been working closely with the entire leadership team, the Deans, and the faculty. Dr. Hawkins agreed to stay on through August which assisted in the transition.*
- Selection of David Green and David Kian to serve over Advancement and the Foundation. *David Green is serving as the interim Vice President, Advancement while David Kian as serving as the interim Chief Executive Officer of the Foundation. This is David Kian's second time serving in the interim CEO role over the Foundation. With both individuals at the helm, it allows the university to continue the goals of Transform Tomorrow – FAU's comprehensive fundraising campaign. Current fundraising numbers are in line with prior years and the team is confident they are on their way to meeting this year's ambitious goal.*
- During the amazing basketball run, it became clear that we needed to address both Vice President Brian White's and Head Men's Basketball Coach Dusty May's contracts. *To continue a positive trajectory in Athletics, stability of leadership was critical. While on the road during the Final Four, Brian and I met several times to discuss terms and in working with our legal office, the Foundation, and others, we successfully negotiated and executed contracts with White and May. The necessary parties came together as these negotiations had to happen quickly. This demonstrated both individuals' commitment to the university and the program and provided the stability needed as we grow our athletic programs.*
- University-wide personnel initiatives – *With a myriad of changes at the university coupled with the economic conditions (housing and rental market, increases in cost of living), the general*

*morale of the staff had a noticeable decline. Over the years, staff salaries had not been addressed in a consistent or meaningful manner. In working with our Executive Leadership Team, we developed a compensation program that met the guidelines of regulation and our authority to do so. During and since COVID, workforce challenges continue to impact the organization, including recruitment to an area with housing costs that have increased dramatically.*

- *To meet these challenges, we provided a staff base salary increase in October and a retention bonus (payable in November). We are currently exploring long-term compensation plans to meet the challenges of recruitment and retention of our work force and the negative impacts of high turnover rates. Stability in the work force provides an optimal setting for the university to continue its upward trajectory.*
- *The President has the authority to designate university holidays. In another way to express gratitude to our university team, I have designated the day before Thanksgiving and the day after New Year's as university holidays.*
- *Hold team appreciation happy hours – held monthly during Spring semester and Fall semester. These are open to all faculty and staff and have been well attended.*

### **Addressing the response to the attack on Israel and antisemitism**

- Messaging – Florida Atlantic issued three messages during the week of October 9<sup>th</sup>.
- Engagement – reached out to members of the community.
- Became a signatory on Universities United Against Terrorism organization. Four members of the SUS were among the signatories – FAU, FIU, FSU, and Chancellor Rodrigues. This appeared in a full page add in the October 28-29 Wall Street Journal.
- Managed the safety of the university campuses in collaboration with our university police, mutual aid agencies, federal partners, and university leadership.
  - This included law enforcement assistance from the Florida Department of Highway Patrol.

### **University-wide Initiatives and Achievements**

- FAU Health initiative – *This initiative began in June 2022 where several community meetings were held to communicate the vision of a coordinated plan to establish an academic medical center here at Florida Atlantic.*
- Broward Health Memo of Understanding – *This agreement was approved by the Board of Trustees at the June 2023 meeting. This agreement sets the foundation for the partnership between the two entities going forward, including the establishment of FAU's first Academic Medical Center.*
- College of Dentistry – *worked closely with the Board Chair, Vice-Chair, Interim Provost(s), the faculty, and external consultants to develop a program plan to submit to the Board of Trustees and the Board of Governors to obtain approval for a college of dentistry. The team worked to develop a plan for an academic dentistry program which was approved by both the BOT and*

*BOG. Subsequently, a legislative budget request was developed and the university received significant funding in this last legislative session. The team continues to work closely with the BOG as updates are required as part of the approval process.*

- *Budget Redesign – Began the work for Phase II of this project with our CFO, the working committee and our outside consultant Deloitte. We expect Phase II to assist us in making a recommendation for a budget model that makes sense for FAU and an implementation plan. This process will include significant collaboration from all units in the university, including faculty participation.*
- *Men’s Basketball – Final Four.*
  - *I personally traveled to all games in Frisco, Texas, Columbus, Ohio, New York City, and Houston. In each location, we hosted several formal events to engage with the university community, alumni, donors, and the like. Additionally, it gave me an opportunity to engage one-on-one with friends of the university.*
  - *I am very proud of the work of Public Affairs in maximizing the exposure this “run” meant for FAU. FAU had an earned media value of \$1.7 billion for March 2023. This compared to ~\$200 million for the prior year’s March.*
  - *FAU received additional attention when selected to ring the bell at the New York Stock Exchange before the first game in NYC.*
- *Athletics Master Plan – Upon the conclusion of the basketball season, it became evident that to compete at this level on a go-forward basis, a look at our facilities was needed. Further, to be forward thinking, it was determined that a look at our Athletics’ facilities in general was needed to determine long-term needs. We have begun that process.*
- *Successfully negotiated Zeiss agreement to provide space for world-class imaging equipment in the Stiles-Nicholson Brain Institute. This provides resources for not only FAU researchers but also those at UF Scripps and Max Planck.*
- *Enrollment – while educational institutions are facing enrollment challenges, Florida Atlantic University is instead celebrating our largest incoming freshman class ever with over 4400 freshmen entering our Fall class with an average GPA of 3.89. We also reached a record-high 84% freshman to sophomore retention rate. We are without a doubt transforming to a university of first choice.*
- *Jupiter draft plan for reimagining the campus – it is critical as we continue to grow in all areas as an institution that we examine our campuses to determine optimal utilization which includes branding those locations. We need a defined path of which academic programs and activities might be housed at our varied locations. Jupiter is one such campus. The home to UF Scripps, Max Planck, FAU High Jupiter, Harriet Wilkes Honors College, The Stiles Brain Institute, and OLLI Lifelong Learning Jupiter, it has the unique opportunity to create synergy with each of these parts. The draft plan for reimagining the Jupiter campus gives us a document to begin the conversation of doing just that.*
- *Housing – As the off-campus housing market (including rental) continues to present challenges in cost and inventory, the desire for on-campus housing will continue to rise with our student body. To meet the demand, we have worked with our partners in the field to develop a long-range plan to include a three-phase approach to meeting this demand. Additionally, workforce*

*housing continues to present challenges as well. To address such challenges, we have explored opportunities for affordable workforce housing by evaluating our properties to determine the viability of such a project(s).*

- Housing master plan – *This process is critical in ensuring that we select the appropriate location for building, assess the needed infrastructure to support the facilities including parking, and determine the additional services needed to support the increased resident population.*
- Housing project for additional resident halls (Boca) – *Created a plan to develop resident housing in a three-phase approach. This included demand assessment, market condition survey, housing type assessment, cost analysis, financing options and other pertinent factors in developing such a plan. This will be presented to the Board of Trustees at the January 2024 meeting and then once approved go next to the Board of Governors for consideration.*
- Several milestones the university has reached:
  - *U.S. News & World Report* list of “Top Public Schools” for 2024 – FAU ranked No. 112, up 19 spots from last year.
    - This was the largest jump by an institution in the State University System.
    - We rose to No. 26 in the nation for “Social Mobility”, which is based on graduation rates of students who receive Pell grants.
    - We ranked No. 50 for graduates with the least amount of debt.
  - On the *Wall Street Journal’s* list of the “Best Colleges in America” – which emphasizes timely degree completion and post-graduation salaries – Florida Atlantic ranked No. 79 among the nation’s top public universities.
  - *Washington Monthly’s* annual College Guide ranked FAU at No. 46 overall among the nation’s best public and private universities, based on factors including social mobility, research, and community service.
    - They also ranked us at No. 13 in the southeast for universities offering the “Best Bang for the Buck”.

## **Community Engagement**

I attended numerous events representing FAU. Additionally, I met one-on-one with members of the donor community. I gave remarks at many events and meetings to reinforce the university’s presence in the community. There are numerous events and meetings hosted or attended to further engage with our donors and community at large. Some highlights are below:

- Attended Boca Hospital Go Pink Luncheon
- Attended the Boca Raton Hospital Annual Ball
- Attended the Boca West Children’s Foundation Gala
- Attended Boys and Girls Club annual cocktail party.
- FAU Presidential Gala (*annual fundraising/friendraising event for scholarships*)
- FAU Concert for Kindness
- Italy in Transit – 7<sup>th</sup> International Symposium



- Symposium on the American Presidency (Laura Bush & Barbara Pierce Bush) – provided opening remarks.
- Hosted donors and community members in the suite for basketball and football
- City of Boca Raton Community celebration of the men’s basketball team – I received a key to the city.

## **Legislative**

I worked closely with our Board Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the university community to socialize our legislative priorities. This included numerous meetings starting in January through the legislative cycle. Additional highlights:

- Participated in FAU Days in Tallahassee
- Gave remarks at the Broward County and Palm Beach County Legislative Delegation meetings.
- Traveled to Tallahassee with our Board Chair and members of our men’s basketball team to be recognized on the senate floor and provided a Florida Senate Resolution. This recognized the success of the team.
- Had an outstanding legislative year receiving significant funding towards the College of Dentistry among other FAU Health related priorities. Total funding was ~\$70 million with a mix of both recurring and non-recurring funding.

I am very pleased with what has been accomplished this year. This coupled with the day-to-day operations with a team of like-minded professionals who have committed their efforts in challenging times. We have several interim roles and while those serving are managing well, they are also maintaining responsibilities of their former roles. This is a challenge. With that said, we are not maintaining the status quo but rather consistently working to improve our university in every area including student success, research, and implementing university priorities such as FAU Health. FAU has transformed over the 30 plus years I have served this institution. The exciting news is that while we have transformed, we are still evolving. This provides challenges but more importantly it provides opportunities. I am excited about the future and honored to be part of such times.