To: Steven Leslie, Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs UT System, Presidential Search Committee Chair

Through: James B. Milliken, UT System Chancellor

From: UTEP Faculty Senate

Re: UTEP Faculty Senate’s Perspective on Priorities in the Hiring of the New UTEP President

Date: November 5, 2018

The UTEP Faculty Senate Executive Council conducted an online survey accessible to all UTEP faculty. The survey asked faculty to present their top institutional and/or community priorities in the hiring of the new UTEP President. We also sought to identify key issues pertaining to faculty that should be voiced by the faculty representatives on the search committee and considered by the search committee as a whole during the Presidential selection process. Below we present the key findings of the survey results.

Survey feedback includes 94 faculty, who responded within a seven day period representing all UTEP Colleges and Schools. Responding faculty represent all academic ranks and have a mean employment history at UTEP of 11.2 years. Final survey analysis reveal the following set of priorities.

1. Background and Personal Experience of the Presidential Candidate. The selected candidate should have a PhD in a major research discipline, strong research background with a history of publications, and previous grant funding experience. The candidate should have an academic background with undergraduate and graduate teaching experience, as well as administrative experience in higher education settings. Ideally, the candidate should be a competent Spanish language speaker and should have a servant leader character with a transparent leadership style, while being able to handle debates with the UT System, TX government, and local leadership. The candidate should also have experience in the development of public-private partnerships.

2. Alignment with UTEP’s Mission. The Presidential candidate must understand and value UTEP’s mission of access and excellence, which has given UTEP a national/international visibility, and has been a true game changer for our students and community. The candidate must be aware that this mission is a difficult and challenging one, and must be able to effectively communicate to the Regents, as well as to UTEP’s internal administrative structure to solidify the direction the university is taking. The candidate should also value the UTEP Edge efforts and demonstrate an ability to foster high impact practices. The candidate must also continue UTEP’s efforts to strengthen secondary education in the region to ensure regional students are college-ready. Also, the new President should sustain our existing successful EPCC partnership to ensure that students are university-ready.

3. Research Vision. The Presidential candidate must be able to advance UTEP towards the Tier 1 university status, while also appreciating the role community-based and interdisciplinary research efforts play in achieving this status. UTEP’s internal funding opportunities and faculty research
incentives must be strengthened, to include grant writing administrative support, research travel support, and the option of faculty leave for research and professional development.

4. Faculty Support. The Presidential candidate must have an academic faculty background in order to ensure a commitment to faculty governance with input from faculty to guide institutional business, budget, and operational decisions. The new President must be supportive of UTEP faculty (including contingent faculty), commit to faculty retention, and pay close attention to nationally competitive faculty salaries and fix current salary compression trends. Fostering faculty professional development is also critical, as well as recognition and incentives for outstanding faculty performance, and encouragement of innovative and entrepreneurial efforts.

5. University Commitment. The candidate must have a long-term commitment to UTEP, to its teaching and research development efforts, and to its student and faculty diversity. The new President should value and commit to UTEP’s current efforts on achieving social mobility of students, serving students in a culturally sensitive manner, and strengthening support mechanisms for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows in order to be nationally competitive. The new President should also advocate for authentic measures of institutional success that are congruent with UTEP’s unique mission, and be supportive of current program accreditation efforts. The new President should continue improving UTEP’s teaching and research infrastructure through efforts that include but not limited to recruiting and retaining quality faculty and staff, new or updated facilities, cutting-edge classroom and laboratory technologies, and strategic service contracts for facilities and instruments.

6. Community Commitment. The Presidential candidate must understand UTEP’s unique relationship with the local community, and should have a bicultural competence to work in El Paso’s bilingual and binational border context. The Presidential candidate should demonstrate an understanding of the demographics, culture, and challenges of the El Paso community. The candidate must value and support serving the local and regional communities at all levels, and should be attentive to community concerns and ideas. The Presidential candidate must foster El Paso’s economic development by collaborative initiatives with local business and industry partnerships to foster local job creation for UTEP graduates. Also, the new President must be committed to improving the quality of life and the environment for the El Paso community, and should appreciate and reward efforts of the UTEP faculty in this regard.

In summary, the new President must continue elevating UTEP to national and international recognition, effectively communicate UTEP’s impact on the region, and articulate the unique nature of our institution in both the national and international context. The new President must have strong fundraising skills, should work with policymakers to increase state funding, attract private investment, and bring economic development to the region through products and services from UTEP research and entrepreneurial efforts. Above all, the new President must be supportive of student access and student success.

UTEP Faculty Senate Executive Council, Signatories

[Signature]

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Representative of the College of Health Sciences
Guillermina G. Núñez-Mchiri, PhD, Faculty Senate Vice-President
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