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Members of the University of Nebraska Presidential Search Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter and the supporting materials regarding the University of Nebraska Presidency search. I am truly humbled by the invitation to do so and at the same time excited about what I believe will be an excellent match and remarkably good timing. My career long journey in higher education and health care is one of lived experience in large complex organizations and particularly in the setting of public universities with successful academic health centers serving large, highly matrixed institutions as well as a broad spectrum of diverse rural and urban communities. My last decade of real-life experience as a proud and dedicated Nebraskan, across the rural and urban landscape of our state, only strengthens my excitement about the future of the University of Nebraska and for the broad expanse of the communities that we serve every day. It is my hope that within this letter that I can bring some examples of these synergies and my experiences to life.

I have reviewed the materials provided regarding the University of Nebraska along with several of the on-line materials describing this highly regarded system including in depth knowledge of the distinct statewide campuses and programs. However, most of my interest in this leadership role is derived from the faculty, students, patients and community partners benefiting from the learning, research and clinical care in the University of Nebraska system. In addition, I have been strongly encouraged by countless students from all campuses, faculty, elected leaders, corporate leaders, key philanthropists and most importantly by the rural and urban working families who want the very best educational experience for their children and grandchildren here in Nebraska. In response to your invitation, I am pleased to share a sampling of my broad leadership experiences, and my perceptions of the forward-looking challenges and opportunities for the very best university systems of public higher education.

Please know that I have been incredibly fortunate to have a very stable and closely knit family, providing a solid foundation for all aspects of my ongoing career journey. It is only after a series of very heartfelt discussions that we together as a family look forward to the opportunity to lead the University of Nebraska system. In addition to my family, all of the achievements described in these documents and so much more are the result of superb teamwork with which I have been honored to actively participate. Over this past decade I have been honored to work closely with all of our NU presidents, closely with our elected and student Regents, three governors and most importantly have officiated at over ninety commencement ceremonies, helping to build the most critical future component for our state, our future leaders. I am not very comfortable in telling my own story but would much rather credit and build the confidence of others. So...with all humility and due respect for the process...

I have long defined strong leadership as *“the ability to inspire others to do great things”* and then, and only then, *“to bask in their reflected glory”*. Said differently, the best leadership that I have been privileged to experience and work hard to emulate brings out the best in others, in their teams and in the institutions for which they are responsible. This type of leadership, referred to by some as *“servant leadership”*, always puts others above self, rarely if ever takes credit for success, always shares deeply in all situations of loss and failure, and does so with a consistent style of optimism, exemplary communication, transparency and trust. The trust is in turn based upon a foundation of a demonstrated mission driven vision and clearly demonstrated core values. Therefore, it is the ability to consistently inspire others, those within the system at every level of service, those at all levels of public office, those in philanthropic roles and perhaps most importantly, those learners, scientists and families who place their trust into the hands those whose future careers, livelihood and health depends. From my very first days, the focus has been on building teams of professionals to care for patients with very complex heart disease, to my current day, as I have had the same focus, continually interacting in our nation’s capital, state governments, county boards, community organizations, youth mentorship groups and so much more. In each instance, it is about providing inspiration, and in many ways, providing confidence, hope and healing in the broadest sense to those most in need.

Leading the future of university systems, such as the University of Nebraska system, will truly require a “transformative” style, with a highly energetic and experienced leader with proven deep academic roots, a leader with mature and experienced business acumen and a leadership team that always balances both and in so doing inspires others. As clearly stated in the University of Nebraska mission “Through its three primary missions of teaching, research, and service, the university is the state's primary intellectual center providing leadership throughout the state through quality education and the generation of new knowledge.”

This statewide leadership starts with establishing a clear, cohesive, and inspiring mission and vision of true excellence, establishing relevant priorities, aligning critical resources, creating new and novel opportunities, and then nurturing the process over and over and over again. As President Abraham Lincoln has repeatedly said “the only way to truly see the future is to build it.” We must together build the future of higher education.

The president of the University of Nebraska is expected to lead with integrity and humility, and to articulate and execute a bold vision while embracing, embodying, and championing the University's mission and values. These inspiring words in addition to the Core Leadership Pillars, describe a university system that connects to my strongly held values and at the same time describe a university system that is well poised for future bold leadership and global impact. Well-defined within the position profile are the nine Core Leadership Pillars. In many ways, these nine pillars represent the fundamental building blocks to address the myriad of challenges and opportunities facing today’s leading university systems. A small sampling of my reflections and experiences demonstrating leadership within these nine key leadership pillars are as follows:

The University of Nebraska System is truly a statewide campus, spanning hundreds of miles of diverse urban and rural communities, serving the expansive agribusiness landscape to the highest quality health care needs, building the future workforce and creating the economic prosperity of tomorrow. My past decade here in Nebraska has not only built the critical sustainable relationships across all of higher education but has also provided me with a unique and very fertile field to leverage new and different successful collaborations. Adding the truly national and global sister university relationships on five continents has created remarkable opportunities to continually leverage the power our university system worldwide. While advanced technology has in many ways facilitated communication and collaboration, in many other ways, it has not substituted for my consistent presence across each campus site statewide and worldwide, meeting with faculty, students and staff, community leaders, future students and other key stakeholders to build and sustain powerful and enduring Nebraska centric relationships. Indeed, I have not missed a single commencement event, except once when grounded by snow in Scotts Bluff.

The ability to create system wide collaboration with all of our campuses has been the core of the responsibility of my role as the NU EVP-Provost engaging the chief academic and chief research officers, enrollment management, faculty senate leaders, student senate leadership teams as well as serving as the liaison staff to the Nebraska Board of Regents for all academic matters. In each of these instances and many others, there is no direct reporting relationship, but instead each are based upon mutual trust, system level advocacy, and demonstrating ways to make each campus-based constituency successful. In so doing, we are sure that the uniqueness of their all their voices are heard and amplified such that the whole is always greater than the sum of the parts. The collective wisdom in these settings is remarkable and the most powerful sources of innovation, resilience and deeply rooted wisdom.

A key role of great universities is engagement with the communities that they serve. This occurs through the traditional educational and scholarship excellence, but also in critically important ways such as the engagement created by the arts, literature, performance, athletics, business development, technology and so much more. In many ways, these components of the university mission add critical elements to the “glue” that binds great university systems such as the University of Nebraska to their communities. These

are particularly important as strong athletic programs; the arts and the critical IANR extension programs bind the rural and urban communities and increase the value of our great university on a daily basis. In addition to the highly significant economic impact of each of our campuses, growing employment and continuous commercialization of intellectual property all feed the economic engines of rural and urban community vitality. My experience in the five-hundred-mile-wide campuses of UNMC, the work with countless urban and rural school boards during my four years of leadership at UNO as well as my current role in cochairing the NU Water Resource Advisory Panel, comprised by our NRD, farming, ranching and water safety leaders has given me great perspective to the incredible opportunities for collaboration and as such defining the future roadmap for all of our university campuses.

Of many examples of this type of collaboration has been our work to strengthen forward and reverse articulation agreements with our statewide community colleges, state colleges and across our system. Creating seamless academic career trajectories, high impact internships and job placement to enhance our future workforce and strengthen social mobility has been the goal, all while we maintain access and affordability for current and future learners. Ensuring the academic success and degree completion has also been an area of keen focus, creating dynamic tools to help advisors, students and families plan their optimal academic journey and at the same time implement new tools to significantly reduce the incidence of a D, F or W grade along the way. In addition, building a system wide healing arts program, high school athletics shared venues, sports medicine programs for the K-12 school districts, digital agriculture research applications and much more are just a few examples that continue to leverage the excellence of the system wide university programs that has strengthened and sustained powerful community engagement.

It is clear that the truly statewide, national and global impacts of the University of Nebraska and its partners are extensive and growing. The scale and scope of this impact and the continued ability to leverage the breadth and depth if this impact will surely continue define the future this world class institution of higher education.

The University of Nebraska Strategic Plan and the Plan for Reinvention together form an inspiring call to action across a broad expanse of mission sets, all with specified outcomes and carefully defined metrics. The “dashboards” for the accountability metrics convey a message of coordination and focus. The critical ability of a university leadership team to articulate a clear mission and vision, both aspirational and exciting, has never been more important across all of the mission sets of our leading universities. The bold Five Point Reinvention Plan is a blueprint for the future, a blueprint that will need to grow, morph, develop and truly become in its final stages, foundational to our future. In so doing, the exciting and inspirational future will need to be equally well defined. A future that will create high energy across the system for generations to come. A future that will inspire generations of students, faculty, alumni and all Nebraskans alike. This type of planning with defined outcomes has been a focus of my leadership for more than three decades. This mission driven focus has been intensified recently as more and more learners, families and social institutions question the “value” of the higher educational process and its outcomes. We must have a not only a clearly stated mission and viable strategy, but accompanying metrics, outcomes and accountability to our current and future internal and external stakeholders. My leadership experiences in the EVPP role and the UNMC and UNO Chancellor roles have clearly demonstrated the ability to create exactly this type of needed future vision and at the same time the needed alignment and accountability.

Our current unifying goal, regaining membership in the Association of American Universities (AAU), is more than an aspiration. It is a badge of honor to represent the spirit of the NU system, years of hard work, careful planning and above all a never before accomplished team effort to regain membership. While the invitation to rejoin the AAU is clearly dependent upon others, the system wide planning and dedication to achieving this goal is not. This will surely take hard work, clear strategy and steady leadership, as well as the ability to boldly and clearly articulate the value of the journey itself. Having appreciated my own educational journey in all AAU institutions and having served in leadership roles as well, I believe that this journey is not only highly worthwhile in itself but will result in our ability to

demonstrate the strength and excellence of the NU system to the AAU leadership and most importantly demonstrate our excellence to our faculty, students, staff and our fellow Nebraskans.

The chorus of different voices are particularly important within our system as they relate to the development of our shared system-wide vision, strategies, centers of excellence and exciting opportunities for today's undergraduate and graduate learners as well as for new and exciting trajectories for research and creative activity. A bold aspirational vision is also important for clear communication with our philanthropic supporters, for advocacy at the state and federal levels as well as for creating new opportunities for extramurally supported science and community outreach. This type of strategic collaboration has been highly significant among our many campuses to standardize quality and at the same time meet the unique local needs for academic, clinical and engagement programs.

Our team engages annually in a revision of our planning process and then "stress tests" the initiatives, metrics and outcomes using a future scenario planning "dress rehearsal" for every UNMC campus, college, institute, center and business unit. Almost a decade ago we developed and implemented a planning and implementation cloud-based software application that houses all such goals, strategies and initiatives for each academic and business component of our system including real time dashboards on metric-based progress for every component and academic unit.

As an example, we planned, built and fully operationalized the largest augmented and virtual reality learning center in the US and networked the technology across all rural and urban campuses such that all faculty and learners benefit from the high technology AR/VR experiential learning. We planned, built and operationalized the Buffett Cancer Center, achieving all of the predetermined academic and clinical five-year goals by the end of the second year of operations. As you know, we also are currently working to build a new fully funded rural health academic campus which will be among the largest and most interprofessional satellite health science campuses in the nation with over 600 learners from 6 colleges and 14 health professions situated on a truly rural campus. All of these have been accomplished on schedule and on budget, the latter of which will be opening in the late Fall of 2025.

The legacy and current prominence of the academic health centers of the University of Nebraska and the partner organizations are truly legendary. The pioneering work in my field, cardiac surgery as well as transplantation, neuroscience, immunology, cancer care, and so many others has not only led the region but created large parts of the foundations of today's best respected health care systems. Over my career I have been privileged to provide leadership on many key levels and continue to do so on a regular basis across the wide spectrum of health care delivery, from as small as single provider rural clinics, through highly respected multibillion dollar academic health systems. Having spent more than twenty-five years as a front-line clinician in some of our nation's very best academic centers I have a broad and deep understanding of the importance of quality, safety, patient experience as well as key fiscal operations, capital stewardship, vertical integration, strategic partnerships and so much more. Most importantly, my clinical experience has deeply ingrained my values around professionalism, patient and family care and caring and the humanistic interface that is truly the foundation of all health care. As we always say, "serious medicine and extraordinary care". Based upon these simple principles, over my two decades of leadership of our clinical delivery systems here in Nebraska and Ohio, we have not had a single year of "red ink" on the bottom line. This will be increasingly important in the operations and governance of our clinical partners across Nebraska.

I have also been very active with our federal, state and local governments to continually improve quality, access, equality, affordability and appropriateness of health care. My frequent visits to the Whitehouse, US Congress, as well as a wide spectrum of federal departments and agencies have built a tight network of elected members, appointed civilian and military leaders and their supporting teams. This has spanned multiple administrations since 1995 in multiple focus areas including access to higher education, student debt, health care payment, workforce development, quality of care, equity in access, health security and

many others. These efforts have resulted in successful federal and state authorization, appropriation and study for every legislative cycle over the past decades. I have always worked hard to share the opportunity to study, testify, editorialize, advocate and develop legislation with a wide spectrum of our leadership teams, but also with faculty and learners, whose voices in most instances have great influence and therefore, have the largest advocacy impact on our continued success.

In addition, my leadership roles in national accrediting bodies, professional organizations, cultural organizations, two NCAA athletic conference boards and others have reinforced the value of shared governance, the strength of diverse opinions and at the same time, the enduring impact of the thoughtful implementation of forward-looking governance and policy. My ongoing participation in National Academy of Science, Engineering and Medicine (NAEM), National Association of System Heads (NASH), Association of Public Land Grant Universities (APLU), American Council on Education (ACE), Higher Learning Commission (HLC), National Council on Competitiveness (NCC) and others have also created a network of trusted colleagues. These relationships continue to elevate the local community of higher education and health care systems by creating new and exciting opportunities to lead needed change. As one example, I have been highly engaged two separate NCAA Division one Boards, the National Collegiate Hockey Conference (NCHC) and the Summit League, chairing the Summit League Board during the pandemic and during a critical leadership transition period. I was also recognized by the NCHC for “Exemplary Leadership” for charting a course to complete a full schedule of successful competition during the peak of the pandemic in the “Hockey Bubble” without a single instance of COVID transmission or the need to cancel a single competition. I have also been highly engaged for decades with the National Academy of Science, Engineering and Medicine on work groups in health security, public health, pandemic response and in the Clinician Well Being Action Collaborative for more than six years. These lessons regarding individual and system well-being are also directly applicable to undergraduate and graduate institutions faculty, students and staff in many important ways.

My career journey as a first-generation student has been one of great contrasts, including a decade serving the predominantly affluent upper east side community of Manhattan Island, followed by a decade serving the predominantly populations in poverty of the north Bronx. This latter experience was then followed by a decade serving northwest Ohio, a truly blue-collar community going through the great recession, the demise of the auto industry, creating an unprecedented degree of poverty and despair, defining the very core of the “rustbelt of our nation”. For the last decade, as a proud Nebraskan by choice, where the communities of underserved inner-city neighborhoods are contrasted daily to the equally underserved but very different communities of the vast rural agricultural and ranching regions of our nation. This is where I have set down my roots.

Over these years I became all too acutely aware that race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age and many other factors determine access to higher education, outcomes of health care as well as life expectancy, social mobility and so much more. Going back to the very beginning, I have dedicated my career to addressing inclusivity and raising the bar on quality, safety, access and learner/patient holistic experience. As a career long cardiac surgeon, I can assure all that the human heart beats strong. When diseased, the human heart fails mightily in the same ways independent of race, ethnicity, financial status or sexual orientation. In the operating room one can see no difference, but much of what has happened before and much of that which will happen after is to this day significantly different. Similarly, all of our faculty, students and staff bring unique strengths to our campuses. Our responsibility is to learn from and build upon these unique strengths while creating new opportunities for learning and meaningful experiences.

Over my years in leadership roles as a first-generation student, I have worked to improve our outreach educational programs at the levels of faculty, students and staff across both rural and urban settings. We do this to increase opportunities for all and most importantly to improve social mobility and quality of life. We have developed high school and middle school pathway programs, summer educational and research experiences, internship and mentoring programs in partnership with local and statewide K-12 schools and

community colleges. These programs continue to enhance the demographics of our student body and reflect the communities that we serve.

For the past decades I have also had the honor to work extensively with many of our regional tribal communities to provide access to undergraduate, graduate and professional programs, to provide access to sustainable employment opportunities and to provide access to much needed disease prevention, wellness programs and clinical care. As such, I have become well aware of the regional tribal communities and the prominence of the University of Nebraska leadership roles both locally and nationally. We here at UNMC have partnered with the Indian Health Service (USIHS) to sustain tribal hospitals and clinics and use them to not only provide care, but to educate and mentor K-16 students, employ graduates, and support the tribal economy.

The same types of partnerships have been formed for a myriad of our highly ranked programs that support of our active military, veterans, national guard and others who benefit from enhanced access to higher education and high-quality health care. I have worked closely with the leadership teams at US Strategic Command, the Veterans Administration, the National Guard, and many other parts of our domestic and global national security team to answer the needs when asked and to innovate on a routine basis. I am particularly proud of the master agreements we recently created with the Defense POW MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) to build new programs for UNL, UNO and UNMC to identify and return those lost defending our freedom back to their native soil and their loving families.

The University of Nebraska is highly regarded for successful external partnerships across the educational, research and community/state engagement spectrum. This is not only reflected in the strategic outcomes, but is exemplified through the well-respected extension programs, satellite educational programs, corporate interactions and many others. As mentioned above, the ability to convene system wide leaders and community members to global partners inspires not only collaboration around current challenges but also accelerates campus specific and system wide innovation. This process also facilitates the development of new programs and services with key external public and private stakeholders. I have been privileged to lead such efforts with multiple federal departments, literally all state agencies as well as our statewide private colleges, state colleges and community colleges. Outreach into middle schools and high schools to inspire the careers of future students as well as supporting countless developmental programs in schools, religious groups, correctional facilities and more are only possible due to the innovation generated from the productive partnerships developed by the academic and clinical system combined. In almost all instances this ongoing innovation has required new resources, frequently in the form of public-private partnerships. Speaking with a single voice and addressing truly innovative university facilitated partnerships to deal with both long-standing challenges and new opportunities inspires confidence in the shared wisdom and perseverance earned by the university system and has resulted in substantial (hundreds of millions of dollars) of public and private capital and operating support investments.

The above referenced chorus of diverse voices are particularly important outside of our system as they relate to the development of new and innovative community, regional, and global partnerships. By example, over the past decade we have built solid partnerships with the Federal DOD, DHHS, DHS, DOE, DOA and many more. The DOD/DHHS Global Center for Health Security, the DOA Food For Health Center, the DOA Agricultural Research Center, the DHHS National Center for Health Security the DHS National Center for Cyber Terrorism , as well as our DOD University Affiliated Research Center, known as the National Strategic Research Institute, all supporting our national defense strategic mission sets. These are but a few Federal examples of these sustaining partnerships that define our dedication to those who protect our freedom every day.

The success of ongoing corporate start-ups and the sustained corporate partnership development by the University of Nebraska is also impressive, but there is also a great opportunity to grow this impact. Our research scientists, authors, poets, performers, clinicians and more are constantly innovating in ways that

improve the quality of life and economic prosperity. We have also established a myriad of partnerships with small and large businesses to commercialize intellectual property as well as to support workforce development needs and the educational needs of their employees and their families. These programs need to be nurtured and support continued growth.

As a continuous spokesperson for our university system, we have developed solid print, broadcast and social media relationships that continually grow the earned value of our outreach. There is no better example than our weekly live Rural Health Matters cable broadcast on RFD-TV which raises the brand value for trusted information literally from coast to coast, focusing on the farming and ranching communities each and every Monday prime time evening. After more than six continuous years, we were recognized this year with an Estee Award for broadcast excellence. We should develop similar national media outlets in multiple areas of expertise, as trusted sources of information and as the destination for students and faculty who want to become a part of these efforts.

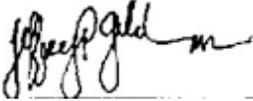
The University of Nebraska high impact of system wide creativity has resulted in scholarship and discovery that are truly foundational to the university of the future. These are also the characteristics of the campus environment experiences that today's and tomorrow's learners will demand, will be increasingly core to all accreditation and reputational metrics and even more so provide critical resources to support future creativity and will cross subsidize larger and larger aspects of the core academic mission. In addition, this has resulted in highly significant commercialization within and outside Nebraska. Having been an NIH funded PI and having chaired multiple innovation development, technology transfer and commercialization boards for more than twenty years including the NU UTDC, the UNMC UNEMED, I have had a unique experiences with the successful transfer of university developed discovery to commercialized product and process development. During these years, I have worked hard to grow a university faculty culture of excellence not only in research, but in their focus on high-impact discovery, innovation and true scholarly creativity. Over the past decade our extramural research support at UNMC alone has gone from \$89M to \$253M per year. This has occurred in the setting of strong research leadership, cluster-based faculty recruitment and the continued growth of federal, corporate and philanthropic support. In this context, I have also enjoyed working closely with state and Federal economic development departments in Nebraska, venture capital leaders across the nation and large multinational corporations to continually create more and better opportunities for our university and the communities that we serve. This continuous growth has been mirrored in our technology transfer and commercialization metrics.

Having described the experiences above as well as the myriad of a decade long lived Nebraskan experiences, I do fully realize that the Presidency of the University of Nebraska System is today and will be into the future will be different from my past experiences. I realize that growing the trust in this new role will be critical and highly time sensitive. I have worked so hard to build and sustain trust in my multiple NU system wide roles and hope that this will serve as a preliminary foundation. However, I also fully realize that it will take time, great care and a highly intentional focus to continue to build the trust of all Nebraskans in this system leadership role. This trust will be built by bringing out the best among our campus leadership teams, working hand in hand with our Regents and elected officials, and at the same time be based upon the building of an exciting and sustainable future for all Nebraskans. As has clearly articulated "there are headwinds before us". Whether it is in the classroom, research laboratory, the playing field, the corn field or the operating room, we will not only successfully deal with every current and future challenging headwind but more importantly, we will chart a clear course for the successful future leadership of public higher education and will do so with all humility, spirit and confidence. It is the Nebraska way!

I hope that this letter and the enclosed materials bring to life several areas of my background, exemplify my ongoing high energy vision across public higher education, and most importantly, my deep respect for the history, current excellence and unlimited future potential impact for the University of Nebraska. Over

many years I have thrived on the opportunities that inspire others. It is the opportunity to inspire future generations to work together to continuously create new horizons for a wide spectrum of students, faculty and staff in partnership with the communities that we serve that excites me most. I have always measured my leadership journey in a very simple way, "to have made other people's dreams come true", be it in the operating room, the classroom, the laboratory, within our local communities or on Capitol Hill. It would be a privilege for me to continue to explore this opportunity to further my leadership journey with University of Nebraska. I thank you most sincerely for your consideration.

Most respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey Gold", written over a horizontal line.