

The Maverick Minute: Michelle Trawick, Ph.D.

Description:

In this Maverick Minute, Chancellor Jeffrey P. Gold, M.D., chats with Michelle Trawick, Ph.D., who assumed the role of Dean of the College of Business Administration earlier this year.

Transcript:

Hello. I'm Jeff Gold and thank you so much for joining us on this very special Maverick Minute. My guest today is Michelle Trawick and as many of our campus knows, Michelle is our almost newest minted member of the UNO family and the dean of our College of Business [Administration].

Michelle, thanks so much for joining us today.

Thanks for having me.

You know, there are so many things we can talk about, but you joined the UNO family almost at the beginning of the pandemic, and so you had a really unique view of the UNO family and community and, of course, the greater community of Omaha and Nebraska. So, what were some of your initial impressions when you joined us?

It's clear to me that the administration at UNO was very much on top of what was going on around the world with the virus. In talking with friends at other institutions, the information we had seemed to be better and in advance of what they were receiving, and as a result, I was very comfortable with the steps we were taking to prepare our campus for whatever might happen next. So, I think we were prepared, and I felt good about that.

So, it's been what – just over seven or eight months since you've been here now, and the enrollment in the College of Business [Administration], the continued construction of the Mammel Hall extension, all just seems to be exploding just right in front of our very eyes. And I know you've been involved in a lot of the leadership decisions that have spurred that. But, do you have any thoughts as to why us, why now, why the college, and why this is just a unique moment in time?

Well, I would be remised if I didn't point out a lot of really hardworking folks who have been working toward these goals for years. So, the prior dean, Lou Pol –

Yep, Lou is a rock star.

He is. Our team of faculty and staff – they've been working toward this and I am just very blessed to have come in at this time. It is a unique time, and none of us – in March and April when we were predicting the fall – we couldn't predict where we'd be today when we look at enrollment numbers. But I will tell you that we have worked very hard to make our campus, our College of Business [Administration], feel as welcoming, as safe, and attractive for students as

possible. So, we did everything we could to build upon the momentum that was already there, and ensure that students wanted to take classes with our incredible faculty.

You know, there are many themes that have been important during this critical period of time due to the pandemic, due to all the structural racism, and the challenges and opportunities that has created, all the economic uncertainty. What I've learned is that students and their families, our faculty and our staff want to feel safe, they want to feel that there's a commitment to the success of their academic journey. You know, and as we love to say and I certainly love to say, is we don't welcome an entering class, we welcome a graduating class. And so, it's about getting them through this in a solid and safe and secure way.

So let me just ask you one other thing in our short time together on this video. As you see the long-term future for the college, do you have a vision that you'd like to share?

Well, I think any business school dean would say that increasing the number of folks in our communities with business skills is an admirable goal. It helps with the economic advancement of the city, the state, the region. And so, ultimately, I'd say that's a pretty important goal. But I want us to do that keeping mind to access, making sure that all students have an equal opportunity to pursue those goals, and then I want to see those folks graduate and out in the business community. And I want to see –

And, by the way, this business community.

This business community, absolutely.

Yes, exactly.

I want to see the diversity of our community reflected in our classrooms, and I want to see those folks go out and improve the diversity of the businesses in our community, starting their own businesses. I want to see more entrepreneurs that reflect who we are as a community.

Well, there is no question in my mind, and in the rest of the UNO family's mind, that you're the right person at the right time.

Thank you.

Thanks so much for being with us today.

I appreciate it.

And thank you for being with us today on this Maverick Minute.