Dear XXXX:

For the past seven years, Debbie and I have given our all to UNLV. We never thought this would be our last stop, but we never once considered other opportunities that presented themselves.

However, in the past few months an opportunity arose that I was encouraged to explore. Today I am being named the sole finalist for the presidency of the University of North Texas, pending approval by the UNT Board of Regents.

Both of our children and our grandchild are in Texas, and with our son’s growing family and our daughter’s upcoming marriage, Texas has been pulling on our heartstrings. UNT is a great university, in many ways similar to UNLV – its student population is growing in size and quality, its research endeavors are expanding and it’s vitally important to the economic strength of the Dallas-Fort Worth Region. Serving as UNT’s president will allow me to combine an opportunity, the skills I have developed, and our family life all in one place.

While I am excited to work with another institution that is rising on the national stage, this is a bittersweet moment for both Debbie and me. We will miss the faculty, staff, students, and community—we could not ask for better colleagues and friends. Thank you all for your talent, vision and perseverance. UNLV and Las Vegas are stronger, more vibrant and more united than ever before, with many exciting pieces of our vision coming together.

I am confident in you, the future of this university and this region—UNLV is a rising star. Thank you for your support and know that UNLV will always be in my heart.

Sincerely,

Neal J. Smatresk   
UNLV President

**UNLV President Neal Smatresk named sole finalist**

**for UNT presidency**

DENTON, TEXAS — Today, Nov. 20, the University of North Texas System Board of Regents approved a recommendation from Chancellor Lee Jackson to name Dr. Neal Smatresk as the sole finalist for the UNT presidency. Smatresk is currently the president at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Today’s board action begins a minimum 21-day period required by Texas law before UNT System regents can vote to appoint Smatresk as president of UNT — the system’s flagship university in Denton.

If confirmed by the regents in December, Dr. Smatresk (pronounced SMAH-TRESK), 62, will become UNT’s 16th president.

The naming of Smatresk as the sole finalist completes a nationwide search that began when President V. Lane Rawlins announced in March his plans to retire by the end of this year.

UNT System Board of Regents chairman G. Brint Ryan, who led the national search for a new president, said, “Dr. Smatresk has an impressive and distinguished record as president of UNLV and we are pleased that he is ready to lead UNT at a time when it is expanding in both excellence and size.”

Smatresk became UNLV president in 2009 after serving two years as executive vice president and provost. He has led UNLV to become one of the nation’s most popular universities among students and an essential resource in one of the country’s fastest-growing cities.

At UNLV, Smatresk emphasizes the importance of student access and success as well as research and innovation. Under his direction, UNLV completed a $537 million fundraising campaign that included creating UNLV’s largest active scholarship program, established an Academic Success Center to help students graduate on time, and opened Brookings Mountain West in partnership with the prestigious Brookings Institution.

Chancellor Lee Jackson said Smatresk’s record of successful leadership combined with his understanding of the North Texas region will be a powerful combination for UNT.

“It is exciting to have Dr. Smatresk return to Texas as the sole finalist for the UNT presidency. When confirmed, he will bring a wealth of important higher education experience from a university that is in many ways similar to UNT. I believe his leadership will capitalize on the momentum at our flagship university,” Jackson said.

Being asked to join UNT at this time in its history is an honor, Smatresk said. “Being part of UNT as it grows in reputation to one of our nation’s top universities in research, scholarship and the arts is an incredible opportunity. I thank the search advisory committee and Chancellor Lee Jackson for their confidence in me. I look forward to being part of the university family and working with everyone to make UNT the best it can be.”

As the nation’s 24th largest public university, UNT is growing as a nationally recognized university that is committed to offering the best educational experience in Texas to its 36,000 students. UNT graduated 8,400 students last year from its 12 colleges and schools and offers 97 bachelor’s, 81 master’s and 35 doctoral degree programs, many nationally and internationally recognized. As a catalyst for discovery, UNT inspires students through knowledge and opportunity and is transforming the North Texas region through research and education.

A native of Arlington, Texas, Smatresk began his career as a faculty member at the University of Texas at Arlington. During his 22 years at UTA, he served as chair of biology and dean of science. He also served as the chief academic officer for the University of Hawaii at Manoa before joining UNLV.

A biologist, Smatresk holds a bachelor’s degree from Gettysburg College, a master’s degree from State University of New York at Buffalo and a Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin. He conducted post-doctoral work at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. He has published more than 50 papers and book chapters about his research in cardiorespiratory physiology and has earned many highly competitive grant awards from the National Science Foundation and National Institutes of Health.

\*\*UNTS\*\*

*The University of North Texas System comprises three institutions — the University of North Texas, UNT Dallas and the University of North Texas Health Science Center — with a total enrollment of 40,000 students. The System’s flagship campus, UNT, is the nation's 24th largest public university and the most comprehensive in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. A student-focused public research university with an emphasis on sustainability, UNT has 12 colleges and schools offering 97 bachelor's, 81 master's and 35 doctoral degree programs. UNT Dallas is the first public university in the city limits of Dallas. The UNT Dallas College of Law will open in fall 2014. The UNT Health Science Center in Fort Worth trains physicians and other professionals through its five colleges and schools. The UNT System College of Pharmacy admitted its first class in fall 2013.*