

RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION

WHEREAS, Dr. Ruth V. Watkins has served as the 16th president of the University of Utah since 2018; and

WHEREAS, during her presidency, the university saw impressive advancements in key initiatives, including degree completion, innovative student funding models, strong partnerships with community stakeholders, uniting the campus as One U to drive innovation in research, education, and operational efficiency, and addressing grand societal challenges such as mental health and interpersonal violence; and

WHEREAS, she was the first woman appointed to lead the U as its president in its 168-year history (Jerilyn S. McIntyre served as interim president of the U twice during the 1990s); and

WHEREAS, under President Watkins' leadership, the University of Utah significantly increased student success by creating new avenues for students to access a U education, increasing graduation rates, and matching students to degrees that meet the state's workforce needs; and

WHEREAS, during her tenure, the U was invited to join the prestigious Association of American Universities, which for more than 100 years has recognized the most outstanding academic institutions in North America for excellence in education, research, and innovation; and

WHEREAS, since the outset of Watkins' presidency, financial support, including donor contributions and research funding, for the university has reached new heights—with a record of nearly \$603 million in sponsored research funding in 2020 and the achievement of a capital campaign goal of \$2 billion in December 2020; and

WHEREAS, she oversaw the completion of Kahlert Village and the establishment of the Carolyn and Kem Gardner Commons, Cleone Peterson Eccles Alumni House, the Robert H. and Katherine B. Garff Executive Education Building, McCluskey Center for Violence Prevention, Craig H. Neilsen Rehabilitation Hospital, Spence Eccles Ski Team Building, David S. Layton Golf Academy, and an addition to the Ken Garff Performance Zone at Rice-Eccles Stadium, which is currently underway; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Watkins has served on the boards of the Craig H. Neilsen Foundation and the Tanner Lectures on Human Values; and as co-chair of the Research Intensive Committee of the Association of Public & Land-Grant Universities, as well as a member of the AAU-APLU Presidents' Working Group on Research Security, and as a member of the APLU's Council of Academic Affairs Executive Committee; and

WHEREAS, President Watkins serves on the Taskforce on Higher Education and Opportunity, sponsored by McKinsey & Company, a worldwide management consulting firm, that is working to address challenges faced by college graduates due to the pandemic, income inequality, and the changing nature of work; and

WHEREAS, Watkins first launched her academic career at the University of Texas at Dallas, and prior to her time at the U, spent 20 years in leadership and faculty roles at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign; and

WHEREAS, Watkins first joined the U in 2013, where she served as senior vice president for academic affairs; and

WHEREAS, Watkins has dedicated more than three decades to public higher education, and will continue to drive national research, philanthropy, policy, and thought leadership to improve students'

access to college, degree completion, and career connections through her future work as president of Strada Impact; and

WHEREAS, she holds a bachelor's degree in speech-language pathology from the University of Northern Iowa, as well as a master's degree and a doctorate in child language from the University of Kansas, where she was a National Institutes of Health pre-doctoral fellow; in 2003, she was also named a fellow of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association; and from 1989-2019 she held a certificate of clinical competence in speech-language pathology from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association; and

WHEREAS, during her time at the U, Dr. Watkins guided the university to unprecedented heights—increasing the local, national, and international prominence of the university by fostering vital partnerships and through cultivating the U's research mission; and

WHEREAS, the Utah Board of Higher Education recognizes Dr. Watkins for her dedication to and exemplary service at the University of Utah and within the Utah System of Higher Education with the title of President Emerita of the University of Utah;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Utah Board of Higher Education, joined by the Commissioner of Higher Education and his staff, and institution presidents, faculty, staff, and students who have worked with Ruth V. Watkins, hereby extend sincere expressions of appreciation and respect and wish her and her husband Bob and their family the best in their future endeavors.

Dated this 21st day of May 2021.



Harris H. Simmons, Chair
Utah Board of Higher Education



Dave R. Woolstenhulme
Commissioner of Higher Education