

**University of Pittsburgh Athletic Director Introduction
Monday, March 20, 2017**

Chancellor Patrick Gallagher and New Pitt Athletic Director Heather Lyke

PATRICK GALLAGHER: Good afternoon, everybody. If this was a sporting event, that just wouldn't cut it. (Laughs). But good afternoon, everybody. It is my pleasure to be here today and welcome our new athletic director, Heather Lyke. This is a very exciting day, and in just a moment I'm going to get into Heather's background and explain why I'm so excited. But I want to start first by acknowledging the hard work it took to get to today.

Let me start first and foremost with our search committee. We had 12 individuals representing an entire cross-cut of the athletics and academic community. We had staff, coaches, faculty members, administrators, and most importantly student-athletes. And I benefited from receiving this well-balanced and deep look at an outstanding group of candidates. And I have to tell you we would not be here today if it wasn't for that committee. So to all of you who are on the committee, my deepest thanks. I also want to extend a special thanks to Randy Juhl. We should have a saying here at Pitt that when in doubt, call a pharmacist (laughs). And you all know two years ago Randy Juhl was, again, in this dual-hatted role, both our acting athletic director and chair of our search committee, and we know what a great job he did at that time. But this time he had to come out of a well-earned retirement to do it again. So Randy, you have our deepest thanks. You certainly have earned our gratitude for all the hard work you've done.

And finally I want to think Glenn Sugiyama and Pat Richter and the entire team that supported our search. They worked tirelessly around the country to identify those potential candidates and ensure that our committee had access to truly outstanding pool. So Glenn, I want to thank you for everything that you did as well.

Let me start with where we're at. Following Scott Barnes' tenure it was important to me that we were look to go find somebody who could take that new sense of direction and momentum in our athletics program and now get results. I was looking for somebody that was first and foremost focused on the success of the student-athletes. That had to be the starting point. I was looking for somebody who bought into a comprehensive definition of success. That means winning championships. That means graduating with at least one Pitt degree, and that means ultimately leading successful lives.

I was looking for somebody who was going to work with our coaches and our staff. Our coaches are the ones who work most directly with the student-athletes, and our staff and their success, and I was looking for somebody who would be a great partner, who would ensure that they were supported and could do everything that they need to do. That includes the people, the tools and the facilities to support the success of our student-athletes. I was looking for a great leader, somebody who was passionate, hard working and results focused and somebody who was a great partner.

Athletics at Pitt is a team sport, and I was looking for somebody who was going to engage our alumni, our partners, organizations like the Steelers, our fans, our ticket holders, our boosters to bring the entire panther nation along to support this great endeavor. And in Heather you will see we found all of those qualities.

Now, I should point out before we go in we're also making a bit of history today, and this week -- and this is a coincidence, Heather. You don't know this yet. Our student government board had designated this women empowerment week, and issued note that in the 106 years that Pitt has had a full-time athletic director this is the first time we've had a woman run athletics here at Pitt. And so a new barrier has been broken.

Let me now define what I saw in Heather. Today we are welcoming Heather Lyke and her family, husband David Catalano and her children, Elle, Sophie and Eli, welcome to Pittsburgh, welcome to Pitt. We know you're going to love it here and you're going to see a whole city make sure that you sink some

deep roots and this feels like home for you.

Heather has her own roots from Canton, Ohio. They grew up about 100 miles from here, and both of her parents and David still live in Canton. In fact, she's joined today by her parents Jerry and Marilyn. So welcome, too, as well.

Heather was a natural athlete growing up, and I understand she has shared some of that genetic skills with her children. And she herself became a scholarship student-athlete at the University of Michigan, playing first base on the softball team, becoming a captain eventually for that team and leading that team to a Big 10 championship. She was an accomplished student, earning her bachelor of science in education from Michigan and then going on to earn her law degree from the University of Akron. She has worked in college athletics for over 22 years and in a whole host of roles, from broadcasting, marketing, compliance, sports administration and in a number of organizations, including the NCAA, the University of Cincinnati and Ohio State University, and of course, the last three-and-a-half years as director of athletics and vice president at Eastern Michigan University.

And I will tell you her resume is incredibly impressive, and it's long. So I'm not going to give you the whole thing today, but I want to touch on a few high points. In her role at Eastern Michigan University, she oversaw 21 sports and 550 student-athletes. She was a turnaround specialist, coming into a university that wanted to see success in its programs, and success followed. She saw dramatic improvement in Eastern Michigan's programs over her tenure. Football was revitalized, transitioning from a 1 and 11 record to 7 and 6 and earning their first post-season bowl game in nearly 30 years. It was the largest win-loss turnaround in Division I FBS football. And you know, that success wasn't just on the field. That football program boasted the top team GPA in the MAC for two consecutive years. Under her leadership at Eastern Michigan that university moved to the top of the MAC, a very competitive, mid-major conference, immediately, with 13 MAC team championships, 71 MAC individual champions, over 200 all-MAC student-athletes and over 300 academic all-MAC honorees and 17 MAC Coach of the Year awards. The academic achievements set new records for the university with its highest graduation success rate and earning the highest term and cumulative GPAs in program history.

She saw a 51 percent increase in fund raising performance over her tenure there, setting new records in fund raising for both the number of donors involved and the amount of cash received and included the largest gift ever given to the university. And her programs were recognized for excellence, earning the MAC Cartwright Award for overall program achievements and academics, athletics and citizenship and the MAC Jacoby Award for excellence in female athletics, and an interesting one, Texas A&M Laboratory For the Study of Intercollegiate Athletics, the EM Cup for excellence in management and the most results per dollar which is a fascinating efficiency. They were the first out of 128 FBS schools. She's a recognized leader nationally, having served on a variety of committees, including the NCAA men's lacrosse committee and many others. And so you can see from this resume Heather has a proven track record of getting things done.

But I will tell you now what the resume won't show and what we saw in that interview by the search committee and my experience. In Heather you are going to see somebody who is incredibly passionate, a dynamic leader with a vision that Pitt can dominate our conference and win championships, graduate our students at the highest level and ensure student success. That passionate commitment is followed by an unsurpassed work ethic and an ability to get things done. She is committed to working closely with our coaching staff to ensure their success, and she realizes that this is a team sport and she brings all of us from the university, university administrators, our board, our donors and other stakeholders. I think she is an outstanding fit for the University of Pittsburgh. I think she's going to take us to new levels. And so it is a great honor and a great privilege for me to welcome Heather Lyke as our newest athletic director for the University of Pittsburgh.

HEATHER LYKE: Well, good afternoon. Thank you very much. I am honored to be here today to accept the position as your director of athletics at the University of Pittsburgh. And I want to thank everyone who was involved in the search process, the members of the athletic department, our coaching staff as well as the entire search committee for the time that they spent with me. Your keen insights and thoughtful

feedback about what makes Pitt attractive and what you believe we can accomplish here helped me make my decision to come to the University of Pittsburgh.

And thank you to Glenn Sugiyama from DHR. You and your team are first class, and it has been an honor to get to know you.

You know, we don't know each other yet, and I look forward to building a relationship with you. Meanwhile, here's what you need to know about me. Throughout my career I was fortunate to work for three legendary athletic directors. They influenced me, and they continue to influence me. And here's how. Bob Goin at the University of Cincinnati, he taught me about hard work, accountability and building genuine relationships, and I bring those things to Pitt. No. 2, Andy Geiger at Ohio State, he was a visionary and influential leader. He demonstrated integrity when he said that the decisions we make impact the lives of other people's children, other people's children. This is an incredible responsibility to carry with us, and I will carry it every day at Pitt. And then there's Gene Smith, my mentor at Ohio State. And he continues to provide guidance for me in my years as an athletic director. Gene has challenged me, developed me as a leader and given me the opportunity to learn from him. He paved the way and is an outstanding mentor to so many in the business, and I am blessed to be one of them. And I bring all of these gifts to Pitt.

I've spent the last three-and-a-half years at Eastern Michigan University where as a team along with our staff and coaches, you know, we built champions. And just a word to the EMU folks, always believe that we have the power to change lives every day. So you see I didn't get here alone, and without the support and guidance of Bob and Andy and Gene and without the leadership experiences I've had and the colleagues and numerous friends in the business and all the coaches and student-athletes I've had the privilege to serve, I would not be here today.

And a most important thank you to Chancellor Gallagher. From the time I walked into the interview room, I felt an instant connection. I listened to a leader who I wanted to have the chance to work for. And I'll let you in on something. You know, Chancellor Gallagher shared with me athletics is in our DNA at Pitt, and we want it to be a tremendous source of pride. And more importantly, we want our student-athletes to be proud graduates and champions at Pitt. He has great expectations for the university, and I am honored to be on his team. After the interview I left Pitt with an unbelievable amount of respect for him and most importantly trust. I want to be a part of his innovative vision, and I'm confident we can work together to build a winning culture and winning teams at Pitt.

As for my journey, athletics is in my DNA, too. I was born and raised 100 miles from here in Canton, Ohio, home of the Pro Football Hall of Fame. My parents were both college athletes and my brother, too. And they're here today. My experience started at the University of Michigan playing first base for Carol Hutchins. She probably only recruited me because I was left-handed and fast, but smart enough to know that she could teach me a lot about the game of softball and more importantly about the game of life. And so I fell in love with everything about intercollegiate athletics and what it represents. It's an environment filled with, you know, discipline, organization and teamwork. And after finishing law school, I knew that it was an industry that had given me so much, and I wanted to give back.

And here's what drew me to the University of Pittsburgh. No. 1, the people. The opportunity to serve incredible people with integrity. No. 2, the tradition, 230 years of tradition, yet a place filled with an innovative spirit and vision. And I honor this tradition and yet I'm inspired to innovate and get better at it every day.

No. 3, the expectations. It's a preeminent university with academic prestige, and it's also a platform for our coaches and our 475 student-athletes to compete for ACC and national championships.

And fourth, it's the belief. It's the challenge of instilling a belief that we can compete with the best. When we wear the blue and gold, we'll wear it with pride. We'll expect to win and we'll prepare for success.

When I thought about this opportunity, I could not help but get excited to be at Pitt. I kept telling myself, if

you get to cross that bridge, it's going to be an extraordinary opportunity. Well, as you know, our city is filled with hundreds of bridges, and as I drove through the Fort Pitt Tunnel across the Fort Pitt Bridge, the view took my breath away. And I haven't even done it at night yet. Right? And as I crossed the bridge, I could not help but think about where I had been and where I get to go. And more importantly, I couldn't help think about the extraordinary people who have impacted by life and the opportunity to expand the huddle and impact more.

People matter. And a good friend and a head football coach once told me that, you know, Heather, facilities are really important, but the reality is if you don't trust the guy on the right of you and believe in the guy on the left of you, you're never going to win championships. And so I believe the same is true about our athletic department. We have to build a trust and a belief in each other that in order to build winning teams and a winning culture it has got to be there.

As your athletic director at the University of Pittsburgh we'll have three primary goals. One, to serve our student-athletes. We're going to surround them with the absolute best coaches and teachers we can. We'll be committed to them to having an opportunity to earn a meaningful degree at Pitt, or degrees at Pitt. And we'll want them to win championships and we'll develop them into the leaders who become proud alumni of the university.

Secondly, we need to make sure that our coaches have the resources necessary to be successful, and we need to look for creative ways to advance their programs for success. And third, and most importantly, we've got to create an environment of comprehensive excellence. And here's what I mean by comprehensive excellence. Everybody who touches this program impacts the lives of our student-athletes. Just think about it. Every single person in our facilities staff, the sports medicine team that treats our student-athletes, the fans who come and cheer loudly, who buy script Pitt gear and the donors who invest and believe in our vision. We cannot do this alone, and I look forward to crossing each bridge to build a championship culture together.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here. We are thrilled to call Pitt our home. And I can't wait to get started. Hail to Pitt. Thank you.

Q. Heather, I was wondering, the interview process is obviously very complicated and very intense. I was wondering what specific things you liked about the university during -- or that you got to know during the process and what things you thought, hey, maybe I can change that if I do get this job?

HEATHER LYKE: I think the things that I liked about the university which I needed to find out on the interview, the importance of who you work for matters to me. And so the quality of the chancellor, the chance to build a relationship with him and get to know him was very important. A line of leadership at a university, we can't do it alone. The faculty, the staff, the campus environment has all got to be a part of the solution to building a successful winning culture here. So that was important. The leadership is primary and incredibly important to me. As for what you have a chance to build upon, it's an incredible brand, and you have a chance to be on a platform to compete for ACC and national championships. And the only question is people say how are you going to do that? Well, why not? How aren't we going to do it? And so I think it's an incredible opportunity to compete at that level with our student-athletes.

Q. There are a lot of positives with this job, as you just mentioned. What do you do as the biggest changes that will offset those positives such as the brand? What are the challenges that you'll face?

HEATHER LYKE: I think the challenges that you face is believing, you know, instilling a belief at a place -- you know, I think that there's been strong tradition and there's a history and there's a lot of pride. It might be a little bit hidden, but you have a chance to instill that level of belief, to analyze, there's nothing that can prevent you from going out and having the level of confidence that you need to win at this level. So to me it's about analyzing, taking the time to find out what our coaches need to have success and building a team that is committed to do that and helping them.

Q. How important is it to build the football program as part of the athletic department. At Eastern

Michigan that was the big key for you and kind of the vision of what you were trying to do with the department.

HEATHER LYKE: Yeah, the football program is -- it undoubtedly gets a huge amount of attention, and it's an economic engine at times for an athletic department. I do believe in the importance of comprehensive excellence, and we have 19 teams here, and if we're going to wear blue and gold, we want to expect to win. And so we're going to prepare to have that level of success across the board.

Football, you know, winning is contagious. Confidence is contagious. And so I think that it will breed upon within the athletic department the more teams that you have competing at a higher level and it will continue to grow.

Q. You'll be the third AD here in I guess the past three years. What kind of stability do you feel like you can bring here, and I guess long-term, how do you view your role here and know what you can do here?

HEATHER LYKE: You know, absolutely. I think it's one of the things that attracted me to the position. I've been very strategic and selective about opportunities that have come and fortunate in this particular case that it's a perfect fit for me professionally and personally. And you know, to have the opportunity to work at the quality of institution of this nature, the quality of leader of this particular university and the opportunity to be on a stage and on a platform where coaches compete at the highest level is very attractive to me. And then personally, it's a place where we want to call home. We have three kids and it's a chance to put roots down and create memories here and be a part of the culture in the community and the city.

Q. In your years at Eastern Michigan, what are some of the things that you learned and experienced that you can only experience as an athletic director, and how do you feel the experience of being an athletic director contributed to you being a desirable fit for the University of Pittsburgh. And Chancellor Gallagher, if you could comment on having actual athletic director experience as a part of the selection process as well.

HEATHER LYKE: I would say that, you know, a lot of times when you're coming up into the business and you have the opportunity to learn, and again, I mentioned the leaders that I've learned from and arguably I think they're the best of the best. But ultimately you've got to sit in the chair and make the decisions. And I believe that the last three and a half years have proven my ability to be a transformative and visionary leader. We set out a vision to build that football program and to turn it into something that would instill pride in a university that was dying for it without a vision, without a plan. And so I think the evidence of the success speaks to that, and it really gave me the opportunity to build a team that believed and headed in that direction and followed us along the way as far as the vision of where we wanted to take that program. And the chance to build your own team and make an impact is really I think what the experience is all about.

PATRICK GALLAGHER: Yeah, you know, it was not a requirement. We certainly looked at candidates with a wide variety of backgrounds. But I would say it would be an uphill climb to not have that experience. There's a difference between supporting decision makers and being one. The kind of learning and things you deal with when it's your decision in the end that matters and it's your staff that you've put together that matters is quite different from when you're part of somebody else's leadership team. I think in the end all of us draw from all of those experiences, but I think there's elements that are simply unique with that sort of hard learning curve that you get when you're in that leadership position.

Q. I guess just can you take us sort of through the process of when you found out that you were the choice and sort of who you've met thus far and basically just what the last, I don't know, 12 to 24 hours have been like for you getting started?

HEATHER LYKE: Sure. I'll say that anytime you get a call on St. Patrick's Day from a gentleman named Patrick Gallagher might be a good sign. (Laughs). And so anyway, late Friday night on St. Patrick's Day I got a call from the chancellor offering me the opportunity to be the next athletic director. And I accepted. And since then it has just been a whirlwind of excitement and anxiousness to get here. You know, I can't belabor the world of Eastern Michigan because those people mean a whole lot to me, and they know that, and they're in great hands and in a great position. But I feel the draw to come here and have -- and I'm

just honored to have the opportunity to make an impact. And so it's been nothing short of exciting and I'm just thrilled to be here today. I couldn't get -- I don't know how much I've slept in the last two days. It's not been a lot. And it's not because I've had -- it's just your mind and you're so excited. So it's been -- I'm really excited to be here.

Q. With your marketing background, given some of the good wins that your football team got this year and some of the positive momentum they have moving forward, how do you feel it's best able to be capitalized on in terms of attendance at Heinz Field? Did you ask a lot of questions about that in that regard during the interview process, and chancellor, if I could for you as well, how much did you try to glean from Heather what she had in plan during that process of the interview and her thoughts moving forward to help that?

HEATHER LYKE: It's a good question. You know, the challenge of being in Pittsburgh in a professional market and trying to develop a strong identity is incredibly important. I think it's also important to develop a strong partnership with those professional organizations, and I look forward to that. And the reason being is you get a chance to -- I mean I see them as partners and an opportunity to connect and build relationships and find out and be innovative with them. You know, find out what they're doing and what is working and study that and build upon it. We'll have to analyze it and how does it fit for the University of Pittsburgh and our football program. But there's a whole lot of good ideas. They do some tremendous things, and I think we can learn and work together on some creative ways to do things and innovative ways to do things different. The experience of coming to Heinz Field for a University of Pittsburgh football game should be unique and remarkable. And so we've got to work hand in hand and recognize what they're doing and how do they build from that and then we've gotta develop our own identity as well.

PATRICK GALLAGHER: Yeah, you know, it's a vital issue for our success, right, both from the business side and also from the success of our sports programs. Every coach will tell you -- I've heard it from Coach Narduzzi. I've heard it from Kevin and Susie, when those stands are full our teams play better and our program does better. And so it was a big part of the interview process. I wanted to know how candidates thought about this issue. We have unique aspects in the Pittsburgh market that -- with a community that expects to win and is used to seeing winning teams on the field. And also changes nationally in how people are consuming sports, looking at sports and we see those trends in attendance. What impressed me about Heather wasn't that she had the answer. I think this is going to be an experimental science. We're going to try things and she's a real innovator and was really excited about taking a look at the things we can do to create that unique and special fan experience that you couldn't get anywhere else unless you came to the game. And we'll just keep working that till we get it right. Like I said, it's vital to our success.

Q. To kind of piggyback off the football attendance, the idea of an on-campus stadium has been kicked around the last few years, and with your commitment at Eastern Michigan to build new facilities is that something you'd look at down the road if the opportunity presented itself?

HEATHER LYKE: You know, I think I'd have to get into the job and understand where we are from a facilities standpoint. You know, I came from just from one place to another. I really haven't even been very much on campus. But the reality is we've got to assess where the priorities are, and it'll take a little time to find out exactly where the planning is. And we've gotta work in collaboration with the rest of the university as well to find out where we fit within the university's vision and strategic plan and facilities master plan and then what are our greatest needs in priority from a facilities standpoint of the athletic department to continue to elevate across the board.

PATRICK GALLAGHER: I'll just say between Heather's job and my job the big difference is it took me one week before I got that question. (Laughs).

Q. We heard and we can see the various positions you've had within college athletics and athletics in general. How did the different positions that you've held those various experiences kind of combine to prepare you to take on a job like this?

HEATHER LYKE: You know, I think that people matter. Relationships matter. And I grew up in a world of compliance, and you know, people -- that's not very traditional necessarily to get to the athletic director chair. But in the world of compliance I think the greatest skill set you learn is the ability to get along and

problem solve for your coaching staff and the whole administrative staff. And it's also to build a relationship with everybody within the athletic department and those outside of the athletic department. So you have to connect with donors and alumni and educate them about that and you've got to connect with the facilities staff and your equipment staff. So you build this unbelievable skill to get along -- to build relationships with people in a very genuine and meaningful way. And so I think that foundation allowed me to continue to grow within the athletic department and take on different challenges and responsibilities.

Q. Heather, how important is it to build on the fund raising platform that's kind of been emphasized the last couple of years here since Scott was here. And Chancellor Gallagher, her experience at Eastern Michigan with the fund raising, how important was that when it came down to making the decision for the hire?

HEATHER LYKE: Yeah, I would say that fund raising is an essential responsibility of the athletic department, the athletic director. And it's something I -- you know, we love to do. It's about, again, building relationships, sharing your vision and people who care about the University of Pittsburgh and the Pitt athletic program, how they can help you continue to build upon that vision. Outside financial resources are essential and, you know, we want them to -- we want to conduct donors back in a meaningful way and give them experiences that they might not otherwise have. And I would say that everybody in the athletic department and everybody at our university we're all fund raisers. We're all talking about the extraordinary things that are happening on campus, both academically and athletically. And in order to do those extraordinary things and compete at a certain level, you need additional resources. And you know, I love to build those relationships, talk about what we're doing. It's really a result of what the coaches and student-athletes are doing on a -- and sharing that knowledge.

PATRICK GALLAGHER: Well, you know, it's not a surprise that fund raising is a major part of life in the university. It's the way we broaden the base of support and let ourselves do more to support our students and our programs without it being on the backs of either state funding or tuition.

I would say that the business side of the athletic director's job is probably one of the most complex in the university, and some of that has to do with the complexity of the business model for athletics. You've got, in addition to fund raising and institutional support, you've got ticketing and merchandise and TV revenue and all of that has to work together. But the fund raising piece is important to us. It's an area where I've felt consistently that we can do much better than we've done. We have the fanbase that supports these programs. They want to contribute and make a difference, and I think if we can provide those opportunities, we can do that. And in doing so I think we can give our coaches and student-athletes the tools they need to be successful and to go get after those championships that Heather is talking about.

Q. One of the first things Scott did when he got here was to create the fan experience committee, and I was wondering if under your leadership that will continue, and if so, why do you think it's important to keep fans engaged with your program?

HEATHER LYKE: Well, I'm not familiar with the committee, but I'll certainly learn about it and recognize that it's vital to understand the fan experience. And for us not to listen and learn from those who are coming to our events would be remiss. And so we've done similar things at my previous school where you have to get feedback from alumni, from season ticket holders, from people who have been coming for a long time, from former student-athletes who were a part of the program and now coming back. You know, their perspective is different than ours, and so the beauty of that is having a diversity of understanding of what that experience has been like and how do you continue to make it better.

Q. With you becoming now I believe just the fifth woman athletic director at a power five program, you've obviously already been an athletic director at Eastern Michigan, but can you speak on the feeling of pride you take on now or has it kind of already worn off?

HEATHER LYKE: I don't know that it wore off. No, you know, of course there's a tremendous amount of pride to aspire, you know, to encourage people to aspire to the highest levels of leadership that you can, in any industry. And you know, I thank and appreciate all of those many, many women who have come before me and the support that they continue to provide. And you know, I'll just say that I think both men and women allow for those opportunities to happen, and you know, I worked for three men who I wouldn't

be here today if they hadn't challenged me and pushed me and seen the level of leader that they saw in me. So I think all of us working together have to continue to enhance diversity across the board, men, women and in a racial sense as well, you know, an opportunity to give people chances to grow and develop at the highest levels that they aspire to do.

FastScripts Transcript by ASAP Sports