**Title:** #HFNT 4: Gettin’ Real with Neal

**Episode description:**

With President Smatresk announcing his plans to resign from the presidency this summer, we’re sending him off with a very special episode to celebrate all UNT has accomplished under his leadership over the last 10 years.

**In this episode:**

* The hosts talk about the results of UNT’s second annual Day of Giving and wish all our graduating students a happy commencement weekend.
* President Smatresk discusses his favorite UNT memories, his hopes and plans for the future, and who is the best Batman. (1:40-52:48)
* Q&A: The hosts dole out career advice for our latest batch of grads. Share your advice by emailing us at podcast@unt.edu or calling 443-684-2779. (52:50-55:25)

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Happy Friday, North Texas!

Episode 4

May 10, 2024

SB: Happy Friday, North Texas! I’m Scott.

AZ: And I’m Alicia.

SB: And today is Friday, May 10th, and we are bringing you a very special episode!

AZ: That’s right! We’ve got an extended interview with Dr. Neal Smatresk as he wraps up his final semester as UNT’s president before officially stepping down this summer, and he’s bringing out some fun stories that y’all don’t want to miss!

SB: …And?

AZ: And what?

SB: Well, we normally have three segments…

AZ: Well, that’s what makes this one a very. Special. Episode.

It’s all Neal from beginning to end!

SB: Wow, that is special. But before we get to that extended interview, would you like to catch up, Alicia?

AZ: You know what? We should catch up!

SB: Yeah, we should!

*Transition drum*

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AZ: Scott, UNT’s second annual Day of Giving was last week, and they’re still counting up all the donations, but we already know we beat last year’s number.

Scott, did you know that UNT raised $X during our second annual UNT Day of Giving?

We unlocked challenges, leaderboard winners, etc. (ADD DETAILS WHEN AVAILABLE).

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SB: That’s so awesome, way to go, Mean Green Nation! All those donations are going to make a huge difference for our students’ success. And speaking of successful students, today happens to be the first day of Spring 2024 commencement ceremonies.

AZ: That’s right! We wanna give a big shout out to all our grads celebrating this weekend.

We’re so proud of you guys and can’t wait to see everything y’all accomplish now that you’ve got that UNT degree under your belt!

SB: That’s right, and next episode is going to be a special Great Grads edition of the pod where we’ll feature a few of our newest alumni talking about the adversities they’ve overcome and their time at UNT, so we’re really excited share those stories with y’all next time around. In the meantime, we’ve got a guest joining us in the studio to set up today’s special episode.

AZ: Indeed we do! Back in February, UNT’s President announced that he would be resigning from the presidency this summer after leading the university for 10 years.

So, our very own Christiana Flores sat down with the man himself to talk about everything he and UNT have accomplished over the last decade and his plans and hopes for the future.

Christiana, introduce yourself to the people!

CF: Hi guys, my name is Christiana Flores and I’ve worked at UNT for about a year and a half now as the senior communications strategist for presidential communications. Obviously, I’ve worked pretty closely with President Smatresk in that role, so even though I was really bummed when he announced he would be resigning as president, I was really excited to get this chance to talk to him one-on-one about everything from his favorite UNT memories to his favorite food to who his favorite Batman is.

SB: So I see you brought out the hard-hitting questions for this interview! *casual laugh*

CF: That’s right. I’m not afraid to ask the tough questions!

AZ: That’s awesome. I can’t wait to hear his thoughts on which Batman did it best.

Christiana, the President has always been a big presence on campus and we get to see what he’s like at events and stuff, but what’s it been like working with him behind-the-scenes?

CF: It’s been great. With Dr. Smatresk, what you see is truly what you get. He’s genuine, and he honestly cares about the students, faculty and staff. I remember when I had my interview with him for this position, I honestly felt like I was at home having a conversation with a family member. We joked and laughed and any anxiety I had about the position and working with him disappeared, and it’s been a great relationship ever since. I’ll definitely miss him, but I am so blessed to have had the opportunity to work for him. I’m really glad I got to do this interview with him, and I hope you all enjoy it!

*Transition drum*

**A Segment:** Smatresk interview

*Transition drum*

SB: Keaton, huh? I’m a Bale guy myself, but I guess reasonable people can disagree on these things.

CF: That’s ok, Scott, you’re allowed to be wrong.

AZ: Yeah, Keaton for life!

CF: That’s right!

SB: Alright, well I’m clearly outnumbered, so I’m gonna slowly back away from the Batman debate and just say thank you for bringing us that interview, Christiana.

CF: Of course! Like I said, I really was so excited to get to do this for the podcast. It was so fun!

AZ: Yes, we always try to have some fun on the pod!

And now it’s time for our super fun Q&A.

We were gonna drop in one of our pre-recorded segments, but with Christiana joining us today, we thought we’d invite you to get in on the fun.

CF: Absolutely, let’s get into it!

SB: Alright, well in honor of all of our students who are graduating this weekend and will soon be embarking on new career paths, our question today is, what advice would you have for someone who’s about to enter the workforce?

**D Segment:** Q&A — Career advice? (Take turns answering/discussing)

I would say keep your LinkedIn up to date ALWAYS to be consistently connecting with fellow peers in your field.

AZ: Alright, well I think that was good advice all around, but listeners, if you have any career advice you’d like to share with our new grads, email us at podcast@unt.edu or call us at 940-565-4341.

SB: Yeah, let us know your best tips and maybe we’ll share them on the next episode with our Great Grad stories! That’s gonna do it for this episode, so until next time, Christiana, you wanna do the honors?

CF: We hope you have a Happy Friday, North Texas!

AZ: And Go Mean Green!

SB: Happy Friday, North Texas! is a production of the University of North Texas. Today’s show was produced and edited by Scott Brown with original reporting by Christiana Flores. For more information, visit unt.edu/podcast.