



REMARKS ON THE INSTALLATION OF JEREMY HAEFNER AS CHANCELLOR

Mia Sundstrom

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I'll never forget the first time I learned from Chancellor Haefner. He was speaking at the founders gala using an anecdote about abundant numbers in celebration of 156 years since the University of Denver's founding. 156, as Chancellor Haefner explained, is an abundant number, or a number where the sum of all the divisors is greater than the number itself. A number of fulfillment, gratitude, and prosperity. He then challenged the audience with: does anyone know the smallest abundant number? I can't tell you a single thing about the rest of that speech because I was busy figuring out the smallest abundant number. My first interaction with chancellor Haefner was after that speech to confirm my answer. And before I lose all of you too, it's 12.

Ironically, less than a week later we all packed our bags and converted to Zoom university. So, the real reason I tell this story is that through the uncertainty, isolation, and tragedy of the pandemic, his message of abundance persisted. Chancellor Haefner exemplified it in his leadership and his life. For instance, when his Ironman race got cancelled, he still trained and raced against himself. He chose to focus on what he did have, not what he didn't have. Let's pause on this Ironman thing for a minute. As a reminder, we're talking about completing a 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike, and a marathon. It's the pinnacle of physical ability, and I can only imagine an even bigger test of mental toughness, where resilience, fortitude, discipline, and optimism are required to the highest degree.

Chancellor Haefner's leadership sets the standard for every student to embark on their own DU Ironman. Preparation, work ethic, and the support of a community are required to reach the DU start line. Then, the courage to dive headfirst into uncharted waters of self-discovery, civil discourse, and epistemic humility; learning to transition with grace through new experiences; navigating both good and bad weather with the willingness to find joy and purpose in being challenged to the max, only to discover limits are just illusions. Where the aid stations of vibrant communities, health and wellness resources, and ongoing commitment to equal opportunity serve as hope and rejuvenation. The DU Ironman builds resilience, belonging, character, and courage. Cultivated by the motivation of those who came before and serving as inspiration for those yet to come, it's a race no one can complete for you, but many can complete beside you. And when a student crosses the finish line of their DU Ironman, it ignites pride, fulfillment, confidence, community, and purpose that lasts an entire lifetime. This has been my experience at the University of Denver, and my aspiration is for everyone who walks this campus to fully embrace their DU Ironman. That is a level of abundance that 12, 156, or any other number could never reach.

Congratulations, Chancellor Haefner!