



TO: ALL STAFF

From: Fred Williams, Interim Chancellor

Date: September 29, 2015

Last month my wife and I attended the Hal Sherbeck Celebration of Life and Sculpture Dedication at Fullerton College. It was a truly astounding tribute to a legendary football coach who touched countless lives with his wisdom, tenacity, and spirit. For me, the big takeaway from the day was how important the leadership of one person can be. As I listened to the stories about Coach Hal, I thought to myself: This is the transformation that can happen when vision, compassion, and dedication combine in a leader. This is the special kind of person that our District needs to lead it as Chancellor!

I never did any soul searching about what type of leader I was before I became Interim Chancellor. In finance and facilities, you don't get the call for too many inspirational pep talks, and my main concern was usually reconciling the numbers. Since taking the position, I have definitely challenged myself in terms of meeting with new people, learning specifics about our programs, and thinking about what's best for the District in a more holistic manner. I've stepped outside of my comfort zone and feel that I'm a better administrator because of it. I do not feel, however, that I'm ready to become Chancellor. While so many of you have been supportive and have urged me to apply for the job, I don't think that I am currently the right type of leader to take our District to the next level. I think we need an expert in the field of higher education, someone who understands the evolving landscape in its entirety and who can position NOCCCD as an emerging powerhouse.

In terms of selecting the next Chancellor, I have high hopes that this time around we're going to find someone phenomenal because we're doing a couple of key things differently. The first is reassuring potential candidates that the Interim Chancellor will not be applying for the job. Great people will not waste their time applying for a position if they think someone is already on the inside track. That's why I wanted to write this letter and make it clear that I'm not interested at this time. We were also told after our first round of recruiting that several highly-qualified candidates did not apply because the salary was much lower than surrounding districts. This time, in order to attract the right caliber of candidate, the Board of Trustees has agreed to an increase in the Chancellor's base salary. Vice Chancellor of Human Resources Irma Ramos and I are recommending to the Board that they consider raising the rate to the \$300,000+ a year range. Currently, NOCCCD ranks last out of the four Orange County districts in Chancellor compensation packages, and seventh out of ten local districts according to the recent *Total Compensation Study*. If we stay at our current rate, I think our chances of finding the right type of leader for NOCCCD is pretty slim. And while I know that our salaries are low across employee groups—which we are working on rectifying—this is the single most important position in any community college district, and the compensation should reflect the quality of work we expect from our chief executive officer.

If everything goes according to plan, the next Chancellor will begin in July 2016, and I'd like to use the intervening time to establish a solid foundation for that person to build on. Every year, the Board of Trustees establishes a new set of Chancellor's Goals. Like our District Strategic Directions, these are long-term goals that will need several years to accomplish, usually with the help of other members of Chancellor's Staff and employees at the campuses. For 2015-16, the Board has directed me to focus on six main areas: Increased Student Success; Accreditation Compliance and Conduct Midterm Update of the *Comprehensive Master Plan*; Continued Financial Planning and Stability; Improved Communication; Promote Employee Diversity; and Ensure Effective District Operations. The good news is that we've already accomplished a lot over the last few months in each of these areas, and there are several action items that I plan on executing before I step down. All in all, I think our new leader will be well positioned for success.

When I do resume the role of Vice Chancellor of Finance and Facilities, I'm looking forward to managing our \$574 million Measure J bond program. Out of all the work that I do, I find the creation and improvement of educational facilities most satisfying. There is something immensely gratifying about seeing how new buildings can transform not only how our campuses look, but how our students actually learn. Unlike the last bond measure, I have been there from the beginning with Measure J —helping to craft the District's *Master Plan*, discussing the possibility of placing the bond on the ballot with senior staff, undertaking the polling and information gathering, coordinating the campaign and its aftermath, the complex planning we're currently undertaking, and, soon, the issuing of the bonds and the commencing construction. I'm deeply passionate and excited about realizing all of the possibilities Measure J will afford us. I know I'm the right person for that job.

Cypress College Minds. Motivated.
School of Continuing Education Change. Cultivated.
Fullerton College Excellence. Elevated.
NOCCCD Greatness. Achieved.