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MEMORANDUM

TO: NSHE Board of Regents

FROM: John Valery White, Chancellor 

DATE: May 11, 2017

RE: Periodic Evaluation of President Bart Patterson

By this memorandum I submit to the Board my comments and recommendations on the periodic evaluation of President Bart Patterson. Consistent with the findings of the Evaluation Committee, I believe President Patterson has performed well over the evaluation period. Consequently, I recommend that his contract be extended and his compensation be adjusted to better match comparable peer state college presidents.

This evaluation was done in accord with the extant Board policy developed along the lines of the pilot process used in 2014 in the periodic evaluation of UNR President Marc Johnson. Per that policy, I created a committee of four community leaders, including one senior faculty member (the "Evaluation Committee" or the "Committee"). The committee first reviewed President Patterson's self-evaluation and related documents then interviewed the president about his performance and that of the college. They then conducted interviews with campus personnel, students, and community members interested in the college. With the benefit of those interviews they met again with President Patterson to discuss their findings and observations and to receive his feedback. They then produced a report which they submitted to me, concluding their service. That report is attached to this memorandum as Appendix A, along with President Patterson's Self Evaluation (Appendix B). I have not included the many attachments to Appendix B for brevity's sake. Though The Committee's Report does not mention the Faculty Survey, the Committee had the complete results of that survey while preparing their report.

Overview of Performance

President Patterson is well respected by the Nevada State College community. His dedication to and love of the College is recognized both on and off campus. He is a visible and effective advocate for the College and an able leader as demonstrated recently by his managing the college through unexpected turnover in his leadership team, leaving him to do without a complete team for an extended time over the past year – two members of his executive team have left for other opportunities while the crucial support positions of Chief of Staff and Vice President for Advancement positions have remained open for months. While this unusual

circumstance has underscored President Patterson's dedication and ability as Nevada State College's leader, it has also exposed issues with the college (e.g., the lack of a developed "bench" of available campus leaders) and gaps in President Patterson's skill set. Specifically, the College could benefit from improved internal communications, conflict resolution, improved policies and procedures, and a better strategic plan. These gaps reflect the youth of the College and its rapid growth, placing greater pressure on the College leadership team to match the pace of growth with maturing practices, policies, and procedures. President Patterson is aware of these issues and working to address them.

Summary of Evaluation Metrics

Among the Board's metrics for evaluation, the Committee has rated President Patterson strong in most, expressing concerns consistent with their overall assessment of the need to rebuild the leadership team and improve in some areas where the campus' growth has outstripped the extant practices, policies and procedures.

Communications: President Patterson is acknowledged to be doing a great job promoting the mission of the College to the community. He is very visible and very passionate about the school, its students, and its mission. Communications on campus could be improved though. The Committee felt this was related to the loss in the executive team of multiple members and crucial support staff. The Committee also felt that communications on campus was undercut by campus growth as the effective "organic" communications approaches the campus had become accustomed to have been overwhelmed by growth. President Patterson acknowledges that unforeseen changes in his leadership team have made it more difficult for him and the campus. The thin staffing in the leadership team is being remedied and should particularly assist with campus communications.

Marketing: The Committee reported that President Patterson's efforts at marketing the College were great. Still, it acknowledged that NSC has "an identity problem" and that while NSC has a great story it is largely untold. The broader public does not know NSC and those who do hold troubling misperceptions about the College. Marketing is a significant challenge that should be aided by the recent addition of a Director of Marketing. Addressing thin staffing in the marketing office should also help.

Student Engagement: The Committee noted that President Patterson loves to work with students and his commitment and passion for doing so comes through to all who work with him. This is an area of strength for President Patterson where there is little dispute. For the College, however, President Patterson's enthusiasm and engagement creates pressure on Student Affairs staff and others to match that enthusiasm, lest students avoid campus procedures to go directly to their accessible and respected president.

Legislative Engagement: The Committee believes that President Patterson should be more engaged with the legislature. There is a sense on the campus according to the Committee (and apparent in the tone of the Committee Report) that NSC is at a disadvantage relative to other Nevada System of Higher Education institutions. The Committee felt that NSC needs a legislative plan and strategy and it articulated a number of suggestions for the College's lobbyist. Overall, their reports suggest a desire for improvement in legislative engagement. President Patterson acknowledges that the legislative agenda for the College, beyond items in the system budget, have been limited. Consequently, the legislative agenda has not been broad. Going

forward he expects the College to have items in the system budget that will justify more extensive legislative engagement.

Initiatives: The Committee Report reflected frustration on campus rooted in pressure to grow fast and a related culture of frequent new initiatives, both of which likely exhaust the campus. The Report conveyed a desire on campus to have the number and frequency of new initiatives reduced accompanied with a narrowing of the range of initiatives. President Patterson should be “more strategic” and “involve more people” in initiative development, “narrowing his actions and focusing on core projects.” It is possible that these concerns are related to the thin leadership team and resulting limitations in managing new initiatives.

Strategic Planning: In line with concerns about the large number and frequency of new initiatives, the Report reflects a concern that the current strategic plan is not detailed enough or enjoys sufficiently wide buy-in. As with the concern about initiatives, this might reflect the lack of sufficient personnel on the leadership team to manage and follow through on aspects of the plan to obtain the needed buy in or understanding of the relationship between current projects and the plan’s goals.

Staff: The Committee reported significant concerns about staffing levels and compensation on the campus. Though President Patterson is visibly committed to succession planning and leadership development on campus, the Committee reported a lack of clarity among faculty and staff about how new opportunities became available and were awarded. It is apparent that this is an area where internal communications concerns aggravate structural issues that are independent challenges for the College. The Committee recommends development of a strategy to assist retention and improve communications with faculty and staff. That said, the report notes that,

Despite the low salaries, long hours and additional work, people love working at NSC and feel they can effect change. They want to be part of something special and feel NSC is very special. The dedication and commitment of employees to stay on with NSC is attributed to President Patterson’s leadership in forwarding the mission of the college to serve under-represented population in Nevada, preparing them for the future, building an educated population and an economic base.

Budget: The Committee noted that NSC has done “remarkably well under President Patterson’s fiscal guidance and active promotion of the campus within the community and is financially stable.” It is a lean institution feeling the pressure of its growth. The Committee commended President Patterson’s fundraising efforts but noted that the College should “be more aggressive in seeking legislative funding.”

Decision-making and Problem Solving: This was the area of greatest weakness reported by the Committee. President Patterson is not a micro-manager and has confidence in his staff doing their jobs, but the Committee felt this sometimes led to missed opportunities. The Committee Report describes him as conflict adverse and reluctant to get involved in staff drama. Though President Patterson is aware of what is going on, some on campus feel that they need to be careful what they say to him. The Committee made several recommendations related to President Patterson improving his leadership capabilities, noting that this too was an area where the thin leadership team may aggravate issues on campus.

President Patterson wonders if this view of his style isn't somewhat exaggerated. Having come from a long career as a practicing lawyer he is familiar and comfortable with conflict and conflict resolution; he is not conflict adverse. It is the case that he believes strongly that individuals need to resolve their disputes to the extent practicable and that it is generally better to avoid operating as a mediator or neutral in run of the mill disputes. He is also steadfast that individuals should be respectful of each other. This approach to conflict does not make everyone happy but he believes it is effective. And though he is open to acquiring additional conflict resolution skills that others might find amenable, he worries that he is mischaracterized as adverse to engaging when necessary.

Chancellor's Recommendations:

Based on the Faculty Survey results, the Review Committee Report and my own work reviewing President Patterson's self-evaluation and supporting documents and interviewing him, I recommend that his contract be renewed. Given his successful review I expect to recommend a pay increase that I will detail in the draft contract and in the term sheet accompanying it.

**NEVADA SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION
PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES MANUAL**

**CHAPTER 2
APPOINTMENTS AND EVALUATIONS**

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Section 2. Executive Evaluations

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2. PERIODIC EVALUATION OF NSHE PRESIDENTS

A comprehensive, periodic assessment of the performance of each President in four key areas will be conducted in the next-to-last year of each contract period. The purpose of the periodic evaluation is to provide constructive feedback on measurable performance metrics assessed over a period of time so that Presidents may know how colleagues, Regents, and key leaders in the community view their efforts, including areas of strength as well as areas that may need improvement.

- 1.) The President being evaluated shall prepare a written self-evaluation based upon the four areas of evaluation described in subsection 3. The self-evaluation shall be submitted to the Chancellor and provided to the Evaluation Committee.
- 2.) The Chancellor shall appoint an Evaluation Committee composed of not more than four individuals knowledgeable with the institution, including one senior faculty member. The Chancellor shall appoint one member to serve as Chair of the Committee. The Committee shall conduct the evaluation using the evaluation metrics described in subsection 3. The Committee shall be provided with the prior evaluation(s) of the President, if any, together with any interim annual evaluations.
- 3.) In advance of the evaluation, the Evaluation Committee and the Chancellor shall meet to review and discuss prior evaluations, the details of the current evaluation and any issues that may be raised during the evaluation process. The Chancellor shall provide the Committee with a list of stakeholders to be interviewed. The list shall consist of a wide variety of individuals, internal and external to the institution, who are knowledgeable about the President's work and shall include student leaders. The President shall be permitted to submit a list of potential interviewees. The Chancellor shall select the names to be forwarded from the President's list. The list shall be divided by the Chair among the four committee members. Appropriate accommodations will be made for the Evaluation Committee members to conduct interviews at institutions with multiple campus sites.
- 4.) The evaluation process will include the opportunity for a representative sample of vice presidents, deans, academic and administrative department heads, faculty, students, and community and alumni leaders to be interviewed, and may also include a faculty survey submitted in compliance with the provisions of this section. With the exception of the results of a faculty survey, the Evaluation Committee shall not accept anonymous materials, as part of the evaluation process.

The faculty senate may conduct a survey of faculty regarding the performance of the President. The survey shall address the Performance Metrics for the Periodic Evaluation of the Performance of NSHE Presidents set forth in Subsection 3. Within the scope of the Performance Metrics, the survey may also seek input regarding the effectiveness of the relevant institutional offices or departments. In preparing the survey and the final survey report, the faculty senate shall consult with the institution's general counsel to ensure the questions in the survey and the final survey report do not seek or contain comments about the performance of individuals other than the President. The final survey report must be provided to the Evaluation Committee.

The Chancellor shall establish guidelines in consultation with the faculty senate regarding the process, timeline, and notification schedule in order to obtain constructive feedback from the faculty.

- 5.) Prior to conducting interviews with institution constituents, the Evaluation Committee will meet with the President for the purpose of reviewing strategic plans, goals, objectives, resource allocation policies, major challenges and successes, and the President's own assessment of the interval being appraised. The Committee shall review the President's self-evaluation with the President and allow the President to discuss any relevant facts with the Committee.
- 6.) At the conclusion of this meeting, the Committee members shall disperse to meet with the assigned interviewees. The Committee shall also conduct an open forum for students. During the course of conducting the interviews, the Committee shall meet at the call of the Chair to review the interviews conducted so far and to discuss common thoughts and themes that have emerged from stakeholder input.
- 7.) At the conclusion of the interviews and student forum, the Committee shall meet with the President to discuss what its members have heard, including strengths and weaknesses of the President in the four areas of evaluation described in Subsection 3 and will recommend areas for future focus and improvement. The President shall be provided an opportunity to clarify points the President believes should be made.
- 8.) The Committee shall prepare a written report within two weeks of the Committee's final meeting with the President, with each member contributing a portion of the report as assigned by the Committee Chair. The Chair shall combine the individual member contributions into a final version of the report.
- 9.) The Committee Chair shall meet with the President to review the final evaluation report in order to correct any factual errors but other than such corrections, no changes may be made to the evaluation. The Committee Chair shall then deliver the final evaluation report to the Chancellor for transmittal to the Board.
- 10.) As soon as practical after the submission of the final evaluation report, the Chancellor will present an evaluation of the President, which shall include the final evaluation report, at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Regents where the President will participate in an open personnel session to review the findings of the periodic evaluation. The open personnel session will take place on the first day of the meeting of the Board of Regents.

- 11.) At the conclusion of the periodic evaluation process, in an open personnel session on the second day of the meeting, the Board Chair may recommend contract terms and conditions for approval by the Board of Regents.
- 12.) A copy of the Chancellor's evaluation, the Evaluation Committee's report and a copy of the President's self-evaluation will be retained in the President's personnel file. All these documents are public documents.

3. PERFORMANCE METRICS FOR PERIODIC EVALUATION OF NSHE PRESIDENTS

The periodic presidential evaluation shall be conducted with reference to the following criteria.

Part 1. FUNDAMENTAL PRODUCTIVITY

- A. Academic Completion – Student Success. The NSHE is a performance oriented system. Student success as reflected in academic completion is a key Board policy each President embraces. A President shall be evaluated based on:
 1. Graduation rates;
 2. The total number of degrees and certificates awarded; and
 3. Year to year persistence rates.
- B. Enrollment – Student Access. While the NSHE has moved from an input to an output formula, performance growth cannot occur without attracting more students. In addition, Nevada needs more graduates so serving more Nevadans remains important. A President shall be evaluated based on enrollment, including online enrollment.

NSHE has a fundamental commitment to equity and diversity. The President shall separately state institutional progress with respect to critical underserved populations, including minority groups and low income students, indicating efforts to close attainment gaps where they exist among populations.

NSHE community colleges serve a diverse student body and have more part time students. The Chancellor shall develop and utilize as a component of the evaluation a completion metric which reflects the complex mission of a community college.

- C. Grants/Contracts/Special Events/ Research and Development/Gifts. Funding is a challenge all institutions face. A major focus of every President is leading an institution that secures alternative funding sources. The sources include attracting grants, contracts and gifts. The goal is to diversify sources of college revenue through community partnerships.

A President shall separately state funding attainments in each of the following categories, giving the institution's baseline for the applicable evaluation period for each:

1. Grants and contracts;
2. Special events;
3. Research and development; and
4. Gifts.

The Chancellor shall develop data dashboards for reporting annual performance for the metrics in Part 1 that shall be reported to the Board and posted on the NSHE website.

Part 2: INSTITUTIONAL WELL-BEING AND MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS

- D. Entrepreneurship. Closely related to the metrics in Part 1 C is encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship throughout the institution. A President shall separately state steps the President and the institution have taken to encourage entrepreneurial activity.
- E. Campus Environment. As President, effectiveness as a leader echoes throughout the institution. A President shall detail any major initiatives or advancements to improve the campus environment under the President's leadership.

Part 3: INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS TO EXTERNAL COMMUNITIES

- F. Collaboration. NSHE consists of multiple institutions, making relations with other member institutions critical. A President shall work closely with other member institutions to further the goals of student success. A President shall separately state collaborative relationships with member institutions and plans for the extension of these partnerships.
- G. Regent Strategic Directions. The Board has adopted Strategic Directions and expects full participation by all institutions in critical initiatives such as 15 to Finish, eLearning, Effectiveness and Efficiency, iNtegrate 2 and similar programs. The Chancellor shall review and evaluate the activity and commitment of a President in achieving implementation of critical Board priorities.
- H. Community Partnerships and Connections. Connecting with communities is crucial. This extends beyond fundraising to ensuring the health of critical relationships for the institution. A President shall describe how critical partnerships and community and business relationships have been maintained and extended.

Part 4: OTHER

If a President believes other factors than those covered herein fundamentally reflect on the President's performance, the President may briefly describe such efforts separately. In preparing a self-evaluation, the President may also bring to the attention of the Evaluation Committee such distinct aspects and missions of the President's respective university, college or institute as the President deems appropriate to fully convey the essential nature of presidential performance and institutional advancement.

In addition to the factors above, the Evaluation Committee may consider such additional indicators of presidential performance as it deems appropriate to present a complete picture of the President's performance including, but not limited to, relationship with the Board of Regents, promoting and sustaining diversity, budgetary matters, academic and general administration, management and planning including planning for deferred maintenance, and if applicable, oversight and management of intercollegiate athletics.