

Date: April 22, 2017

To: Members of NSHE Board of Regents

From: Peter Guzman, President, Latin Chamber of Commerce  
Roberta Kaufman, Associate Professor, Nevada State College  
Gerri Schroder, Councilwoman, City of Henderson  
Dan Stewart, Councilman, City of Henderson and NSC Foundation  
Chairman

Subject: Committee Report to Evaluate Bart Patterson, President, Nevada State  
College (NSC)

It has been our honor and privilege to serve as committee members for NSC President Bart Patterson's Evaluation. The committee met with various faculty, staff, students and members of the southern Nevada community to obtain information to assist with writing this evaluation.

The overall view of President Patterson is that he is a very well respected member of the community. NSC is better known today because of him. Across campus, from student leaders to members of the Executive Team, President Patterson lives and breathes NSC, not only on campus, but externally as well.

Comments regarding his community and campus engagement on behalf of NSC include such observations as "he is everywhere," "he attends AND participates," or "he is always present at community events." President Patterson is visible around the community and community leaders recognize him.

We have also noted that this past year has been challenging with two members of the Executive Team leaving for other opportunities. Positions of prominence (e.g. the Chief of Staff, VP of Advancement) which would provide support for the president have gone unfilled for months.

President Patterson took it upon himself to take on some of the roles and responsibilities of those positions, and delegated various tasks to the remainder of the leadership team.

While managing this challenge, President Patterson has demonstrated stability within NSC by continuing his commitment to the mission of NSC. However, it is

clear President Patterson needs support staff to assist him with better communication, conflict resolution, policies and procedures, and a strategic plan.

There did appear to be some feeling that personnel are moved around on campus, perhaps even getting what appears to be a promotion, without any accountability or rationale. Pathways to promotion and opportunity for leadership appeared to be unclear.

Conversely, there was mention of role ambiguity and constant change or redistribution of duties in departments. Both the rate of growth and the mobility or loss of personnel has resulted in a series of restructuring units across campus.

With a new Provost coming to NSC and effectively utilizing the skills of the Marketing Director, some of the challenges may be remedied. However, the committee recommends hiring a Chief of Staff as well. As soon as the Executive Team is back in place, President Patterson will be better able to focus on his core duties as President.

**Communication:**

President Patterson does a great job externally promoting the mission of NSC; however, he recognizes communication needs improvement. We sensed that there was a consensus that there is a lack of communication on campus because there is a lack of Executive Team strength.

Originally, communication with the internal community was organic, but due to the growth of NSC, a well-defined and coordinated process of communicating information across campus, from executive leadership to faculty and staff and back again need to be defined.

Academic and administrative faculty noted the RN to BSN program as an example of President Patterson moving forward with a decision that impacted multiple faculty and departments across campus before he had engaged in communicating with all involved parties. Faculty Senate was particularly concerned about the need to have all players in the room to ensure there is voice given to the faculty.

Numerous references were made to the fact that the campus has been conducting business without the benefit of a Provost. There is a gap in communication between faculty and administration. All stakeholders should be included for their input to ensure decisions and initiatives are appropriately vetted. Priorities and timelines are not defined. The classified staff would like President Patterson to

meet with a classified liaison on a regular basis or stop by their various offices as they are hourly employees and are not able to make certain events he hosts on campus.

In addition, there was a suggestion to institute “Skip Level” meetings where leaders skip his/her direct report and meet with staff one level below. Also, monthly public updates on NSC through newsletters and the website would provide information on what has happened and what is coming up.

The committee recommends for the new Provost or a Chief of Staff to be the lead with communication, delegation and working with staff to clearly define the appropriate way to communicate with each other.

### **Marketing:**

As mentioned before, NSC is better known today because of President Patterson’s active participation in the community. However, NSC still has an identity problem.

When someone is asked about NSC, the response varies. Branding could be improved to clarify who NSC is and what NSC has to offer. Is NSC only known as a nursing school? Also, where is NSC? Many people don’t know where NSC is located. Some think NSC is part of the College of Southern Nevada. NSC has also been quoted as “the best kept secret.”

NSC has a great story and the story needs to be told. People who are current students can tell why they chose NSC and former students can tell where they are now. Programs could be better marketed to promote other degrees that are available.

### **Student Engagement:**

The commitment to equity and diversity is articulated by President Patterson in many ways. This was reinforced in particular by the fact that NSC has grown to a campus of nearly 3,800 students and is now recognized as a Hispanic Serving Institution.

President Patterson loves to work with students and engages personally with them. His perspective is, “What is best for the students?” President Patterson takes the time to talk to students and students feel free to talk with him. He is accessible and is student centric. He spends a lot of time with students both on and off campus. Whether it’s hiking with them on Scorpion Mountain or running marathons,

President Patterson shows how much he cares and is personally invested in the success of the students.

Student success means NSC's success. Because students have great access to President Patterson, they will go to him and not follow the chain of command for communications and procedures. The committee recommends more student interaction between student affairs and staff to ensure students are aware of and follow procedures related to issues or concerns they may be having academically or with other facets of campus life. This would also allow students the ability to provide input to the leadership.

In addition, the committee recommends President Patterson work closely with the Dean of Students in discussions about growing the campus, including student housing.

**Legislature:**

NSC is more visible at the legislature but the newly elected legislators are not familiar with NSC or the lobbyist. Some people know the lobbyist but do not associate him with NSC. The NSC team, including President Patterson, the lobbyist, faculty, staff and students are best to express the story of NSC and need more visibility in Carson City to personally tell the NSC story.

President Patterson needs to play a more active role in Carson City. NSC needs a legislative plan and strategy. The lobbyist needs to work closely with Deans, Senate Faculty, faculty, staff and departments along with President Patterson to make sure NSC has high visibility in the legislature.

Not all stakeholders are involved with legislation and are not aware of what bills are being discussed or what impacts the legislature is having on them. The Nevada State Student Alliance (NSSA) needs better support to lobby the legislature and have requested attending a workshop on lobbying at UNLV so they could be more active in the community and the legislature.

There is a challenge with funding. NSC received the smallest increase in funding from the state. As a young college, it is difficult to compete for funding against the more established institutions. Legislators would prefer funding for classrooms but not operations. Funding for classrooms and operations should go hand in hand.

The committee recommends forming a legislative team with the stakeholders to work on a legislative plan and strategy. Also, the lobbyist should provide a weekly

report of all Bills that are being discussed at the legislature that would potentially affect NSC. The report should include the Bill number, the title of the Bill and a brief summary of the status of the Bills.

In addition, the committee recommends working with NSSA on ways NSSA could support NSC through training and funding to lobby and speak at the legislature.

**Initiatives:**

President Patterson is a forward thinker and innovative. Major initiatives and advancements to improve the campus environment would certainly include bringing all three schools and faculty together in two new buildings located on over 500 acres of land at the outskirts of Henderson.

There is pressure to grow fast. Staff feels every idea brings on a new initiative. Any initiatives need to become habit and not just a one-time idea that fades away from lack of interest.

President Patterson needs to be more strategic and thoughtful to determine which initiatives take priority. The initiatives need buy in from the affected people and thought through.

President Patterson needs to narrow his ambition and focus on core projects. Staff is tasked with new and innovative programs but don't have the resources needed to succeed. It appears people would appreciate a hold on new initiatives.

The committee recommends President Patterson prioritize initiatives, communicate and align resources to ensure funding is adequate and focus on core projects before moving on to a new initiative.

**Strategic Plan:**

Addressing core values and strategic plan alignment with specific goals and aligned budget were noted by several of those interviewed. NSC is progressing on the goals it established in the 2015-2020 Academic Strategic Plan.

However, there is confusion about the overall strategic plan. There is no clarification of specific goals, expectations and timelines. Some people follow the strategic plan while others do not.

The committee recommends President Patterson work with the new Provost and stakeholders to review and update the strategic plan as well as initiate a Policy on Policies and establish an NSC employee policy and procedures manual.

**Staff:**

President Patterson believes in a succession plan and cross training on all levels. He continues to create opportunities for people to advance. He encourages development through the Build Leadership Academy.

The lack of personnel has created a challenge for NSC. There is a lack of bench strength. Salaries are not competitive with other institutions or the private sector. Faculty is the second lowest paid in the valley. Funding is low and the workload is heavy. It's been difficult to get movement on pay equitability. The result is an impact on employee retention. Positions are not being filled which creates additional work for others to absorb which is not sustainable.

President Patterson recognizes the need to invest in faculty. Recruitment efforts need improvement. There is no room for advancement for classified workers. It's a challenge to retain support staff because of the low salaries. There is a concern that classified positions will be filled with administrative faculty which would eliminate classified positions.

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 populations in Nevada, preparing them for the future, building an educated population and an economic base.

The committee recommends a strategy to invest time and opportunities for faculty, staff and classified workers to promote retention by holding professional development workshops for leadership training and promotions. Also, it was suggested President Patterson have monthly meet and greet luncheons with new employees.

**Budget:**

The college has done remarkably well under President Patterson's fiscal guidance and active promotion of the campus within the community and is financially stable. NSC is extremely lean and resource allocation is a problem. All departments and

units across campus are feeling the pressure of doing more with less or initiatives that require moving resources around.

Funding is a challenge for all institutions. President Patterson has been successful with looking at other avenues to assist with alternative funding sources. He has been successful with obtaining federal funding and grants to help diversify sources of college revenue through community partnerships. NSC's Comprehensive Campaign exceeded its initial \$15 million fundraising goal by raising over \$17 million in gifts and pledges. These funds are being utilized for programs, scholarships and some capital needs.

The committee recommends NSC be more aggressive in seeking legislative funding to ensure ongoing operations are sustainable.

### **Decision-Making and Problem Solving:**

Interviews provided mixed messages related to President Patterson's decision making and problem solving.

On some issues, such as declaring the campus as having "sanctuary" status, there was strong push-back with articulated legal reasoning from the president. Almost 100 percent of the individuals on campus who were interviewed noted that the President didn't like conflict. This theme is critical to address as strong leadership may require working through conflict.

President Patterson admits he does not like conflict and does not like to hear negative feedback. However, he is more open to listening and is trying to improve. As a result, people will edit themselves and will decide not to speak up in order to avoid push back on issues they feel are important and that the President should be made aware of. They feel they will be penalized for speaking up and are told to stop if the issues are not positive.

President Patterson does not like to get involved with staff drama, but he needs to be aware of what is happening. Problem solving and constructive feedback are necessary.

President Patterson is not a micro-manager and has confidence in his staff to do their job, but there are consequences and missed opportunities for him to be proactive. Staff feels it is difficult to move forward due to President Patterson not wanting to deal with negative issues. He especially has difficulties with personnel issues and discipline and holding staff accountable.

Conflict is a form of problem solving. The committee recommends conflict resolution training for President Patterson to improve his leadership capabilities which will help him learn how to cope and respond to conflicts. It is also recommended that the Executive Team assist President Patterson with a chain of command policy to ensure any conflicts are being discussed with the appropriate faculty and staff.

**Successes:**

Over the years, NSC has seen many successes. Under President Patterson, two new buildings were built. This helps to create a better student experience as students and faculty are now located in one place. NSC has been solidified in higher education. Students continue to choose NSC as their first choice.

Enrollment continues to increase and is more diverse. There is a significant increase in the number of graduates. NSC received full accreditation as a college, became a Hispanic Serving Institution and Asian-American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution.

NSC has received numerous awards including the Urban Chamber of Commerce Expansion Project of the Year Award 2016, the Henderson Chamber of Commerce Expansion Project of the Year Award 2016 and the NAIOP Government/Public Use Award. In addition, the Latin Chamber of Commerce recognized President Patterson with the Senor of Distinction in 2015 and the Latin Chamber Chairman's Award of Excellence for Community Leadership in Higher Education in 2012.

President Patterson also worked collaboratively with the City of Henderson and the Governor's Office of Economic Development to build the first unmanned aerial systems urban test site and established the first official club sport rowing team at Lake Las Vegas. There are many more successes to name.

These successes are a result of President Patterson's leadership and we congratulate him.

**Final Observations:**

There is no doubt President Patterson loves NSC. He has shown dedication and commitment to the students, faculty and staff. His enthusiasm to grow the school and ensure its success is well known throughout the community.



The feedback from this evaluation is designed to assist President Patterson with the ability to move NSC into the future.

After interviewing and receiving feedback from various people within Nevada State College and externally in the community, it appears the issues brought up are the same that President Patterson wrote in his self-evaluation.

It is the committee's recommendation that President Patterson embrace this information and use it to create a strategic plan, establish policies and continue leading NSC into the future.