

To ACCT Awards Committee

I am writing to express my full support for [REDACTED], a remarkable leader and individual. As chair of the [REDACTED] College board of trustees, I have had the pleasure of witnessing his extraordinary contributions to our institution and the communities we serve.

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] counties have long struggled with economic challenges, with unemployment rates remaining high even as the rest of the state recovers. As you are well aware, community colleges in our state have also faced significant challenges recently, such as with enrollment declines. Despite these obstacles, [REDACTED] has led the college with remarkable success, earning recognition both locally and nationally.

Under [REDACTED]'s leadership, the college continues to overcome historic challenges and has earned significant local and national acclaim. With his guidance and support, [REDACTED] launched multiple Bachelor of Applied Science degrees, and the college's prison education program grew to the second-largest in the state.

Under [REDACTED]'s leadership, [REDACTED] College has launched multiple Bachelor of Applied Science degrees and developed one of the state's largest prison education programs. However, [REDACTED]'s contributions extend beyond his official role as president. When [REDACTED], [REDACTED]'s successor, announced his retirement due to health concerns, the board was unprepared to begin another search for a new president. In our moment of crisis, [REDACTED] stepped up, putting his hard-earned retirement on hold to help the college and our community. He reported to work the very next business day.

[REDACTED]'s return as president brought a sense of calm and stability to the college and the community. During the pandemic, he extended his interim presidency another year, ensuring that the college remained resilient and successful during a difficult time. We are grateful for [REDACTED]'s unwavering dedication, leadership, and selflessness. He has made a significant impact on our institution and our district, and we cannot thank him enough.

This decision to put the well-deserved joys of retirement on hold to help the college and the community we serve speaks volumes to [REDACTED]'s leadership style and character. This year, [REDACTED] has been instrumental in the College's search for his replacement. Just last month, [REDACTED]'s board of trustees voted unanimously to offer the position of President to [REDACTED]. As we prepare to welcome [REDACTED], [REDACTED] has helped greatly in the onboarding process by inviting [REDACTED] to meetings, introducing her to decisionmakers in the community, and graciously giving her insights into to the job. I truly do not know where [REDACTED] College and our district would be without [REDACTED].

[REDACTED] College serves as a leading example of how to survive-and even grow stronger--during challenging times, because of [REDACTED]'s leadership. As a board, we wholeheartedly endorse [REDACTED] for the ACCT CEO Award. He is an exceptional leader and a deserving recipient of this prestigious recognition. Thank you for considering this letter of support.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Chief Executive Officer Award

Nominating Criteria for [REDACTED]

What has the CEO initiated or helped to develop in the area of innovative programs used in two-year postsecondary institutions?

[REDACTED] has faced the toughest financial situations in [REDACTED] College's history during his time as president. Despite the ongoing economic challenges and ever-changing difficulties presented by the Covid-19 pandemic, [REDACTED] continues to serve the college and community with tireless dedication and unwavering optimism. In times of great need, [REDACTED] inspires us all to work harder and make a positive impact.

[REDACTED]'s impressive creativity in protecting jobs for faculty and staff, while also maintaining educational programs that will eventually mean family-wage jobs for our students, has impressed all those who understand the challenges [REDACTED] faces. [REDACTED] encourages others to seek innovative solutions that are beyond what the college has ever done before. By fostering a culture of innovation, [REDACTED] pushes the college to grow in new directions that will better serve our community.

[REDACTED] was instrumental in bringing [REDACTED] Bachelor of Applied Science degrees to fruition. These degrees allow students to earn their associate degrees from [REDACTED], enter the workforce, and continue their education for an additional two years. This means that BAS students can contribute to the local workforce while also advancing their education and skills. [REDACTED] has ensured that the BAS in Organizational Management is based on the skills and knowledge that our local employers are currently seeking. We all understand that a better-educated workforce leads to a stronger community, and [REDACTED]'s actions, not just words, have ignited this positive change at [REDACTED] and throughout the communities we serve.

What has the CEO initiated or helped to develop in the area of diversity, equity and inclusion to improve student success?

[REDACTED]'s Diversity Equity Center (DEC) was established to promote awareness, understanding, and fair treatment for all people, ideas, and cultures by providing a dedicated space on campus. Despite its established presence on campus, [REDACTED]'s support and leadership led to the DEC being relocated to a more prominent location during his tenure. Relocating the DEC presented challenges as it required moving decades of memorabilia and [REDACTED] history, which caused resistance from the larger community. Despite this, [REDACTED] recognized the importance of centering the hub of student life around diversity and equity, and with his excellent mediation skills and support, the DEC was successfully relocated.

Today, a new Student Services & Instructional Building is being constructed on [REDACTED]'s campus, creating a welcoming gateway to the entire campus. In [REDACTED]'s last year as president, he has worked tirelessly to ensure the DEC has a prominent space in the new building, coordinating with necessary stakeholders including community sponsors, student government, [REDACTED]'s executive team, and the board of trustees to ensure the new space meets the needs and expectations of our whole community.

During his tenure, [REDACTED] has also worked hard to facilitate relationships between the college and the tribal nations in our district. He was deeply involved in the creation of the college's newly adopted Land Acknowledgement statement and worked to ensure the Statement was respectful to all tribal nations in

our district. This spring, under [REDACTED]'s leadership, [REDACTED] will host a "Government to Government Summit" with six regional colleges and seven regional tribes.

Although he will be retiring at the end of this year, [REDACTED] is doing everything he can to establish and maintain positive working relationships with regional tribes. He has also championed ongoing Diversity Equity Inclusion and Belonging trainings for [REDACTED] staff and faculty.

How has the CEO served on technical or special committees serving two-year postsecondary education, and what impact did this effort have in the community, state, or nation?

During his two-year tenure as committee chair for [REDACTED] Community College Presidents, [REDACTED] was tasked with the challenging goal of creating a fair funding formula that would distribute funds equally among all colleges, regardless of enrollment, geography, and programming. With his exceptional mediation skills, sense of fairness, and loyalty to smaller colleges, [REDACTED] successfully negotiated a funding formula that was widely accepted and adopted by all. His ability to bring all sides to a consensus was highly praised by presidents throughout the state.

As the only post-secondary institution in our rural, two-county district, [REDACTED]'s impact within the community is significant, and his input is highly valued by all stakeholders. In 2011, when our county's chamber of commerce merged with our economic development council, [REDACTED] played a crucial role in integrating staff, boards, and community supporters into a merged organization. This was yet another instance where [REDACTED]'s leadership, mentorship, and ability to get people on board with new ideas and ways of doing things were essential to the success of the project. Under his guidance, the newly merged [REDACTED] has become stronger and better equipped to serve our community businesses.

[REDACTED]'s involvement with [REDACTED] has also enabled him to develop strong relationships with state legislators, and he regularly speaks with them and testifies before critical legislative hearings on matters that greatly impact two-year post-secondary funding. His ability to deliver clear, well-worded messages on behalf of [REDACTED] has been highly beneficial for [REDACTED], as well as for the entire community college system in our state.

How has the CEO demonstrated a "caring attitude" toward the board of trustees, administrators, faculty, and students?

[REDACTED]'s caring attitude is perhaps his most impressive quality, despite his many other accolades and skills. He possesses excellent listening skills and has a talent for identifying the root of an issue, and then working towards solutions. He is a skilled facilitator among trustees and exempt staff, and his caring nature is evident to everyone associated with [REDACTED]. He even came out of retirement to help the college during a time of need—and during his last year before his second retirement, [REDACTED] has focused on uplifting future leaders of the college by providing mentorship and professional development opportunities for all employees.

In addition to his caring demeanor, [REDACTED] has an exceptional memory for names, and his inclusive nature prompts others to become loyal supporters of the college, its programs, and its students. This has led to the growth of the [REDACTED] College Foundation, which [REDACTED] regularly attends and supports as both a member and donor.

■'s leadership style is often described as passionate and caring, and it brings out the best in his staff, students, and colleagues. Those who work with him are inspired to do their best work, and he has become known as a leader throughout our community. ■'s dedication to excellence is evident in everything he does, and he inspires others to strive for the same level of commitment and innovation.

How has the CEO been active in developing, organizing, or supporting state and/or national two-year postsecondary education associations?

■'s dedication to community college education extends beyond his own institution. He has been deeply involved with the state community college presidents' association, even serving as its president. In 2013-2014, ■ chaired a committee responsible for reviewing and making recommendations on how to allocate funds to the 34 colleges in the state. This task had not been done in a decade, and ■'s leadership in creating a more equitable funding method earned him widespread praise from his colleagues.

As a strong communicator with an ability to communicate clearly and directly with his peers and lawmakers on complex issues, ■ has earned considerable respect as an advocate for the entire system, despite leading the smallest college in the state. He has advocated passionately and effectively on critical issues facing community colleges, including corrections education, adult basic education, and Guided Pathways for students.

■ has also been active in leadership roles within the ■ State Association for Community College Administrators, having served as both president and past-president. He continues to play a key role in the ■ Educational Leadership Academy, where he mentors employees to become strong and effective leaders.

What has the CEO published in the area of two-year postsecondary educational concepts?

■'s expertise in correctional facility education, as evidenced by his doctoral dissertation examining the correlation between educational programs and recidivism, is highly relevant to his role at ■. The college's adult education program at ■ Correctional Center, one of the state's largest, benefits greatly from ■'s leadership and experience in correctional site work. His knowledge of the prison's operations has been instrumental in budget discussions at the state level and has had a significant impact on the college and the community at large.

In addition to his exceptional communication skills, both written and verbal, ■ is not afraid to tackle tough topics and is quick to respond to current events. ■ publishes almost every day, as he communicates via succinctly written and carefully constructed memos and notes to individuals, offices, departments and the entire campus. His writing skills, like his verbal abilities, are exceptional. ■ is very sensitive and skilled in knowing the impression that the written and spoken word can make, yet he is direct and decisive in specifying directions for our college.

His writing is direct, decisive, and thoughtful, and he frequently communicates throughout campus and our community through memos, opinion pieces, and radio appearances. During the college's transition to ctcLink, he provided regular messages of support and guidance, which helped maintain positive morale amongst employees. Overall, ■'s contributions to ■ extend far beyond his impressive academic and professional accomplishments.

What awards or honors has the CEO received in recognition of leadership in the college, community, or nation?

■ has been honored with the ■ Award, a system-wide recognition in ■ State bestowed upon an individual who has made significant contributions to the ■ Association of Administrators. This award acknowledges his unwavering dedication to the success of the college system and his commitment to developing potential leaders among employees.

Under ■'s leadership, ■ College has earned several accolades, including being named the top-rated community college in the state and 15th in the country by ■ Monthly Magazine. These rankings are based on factors such as academic rigor, student effort, and retention rates. ■ has also been recognized as one of the top 20% of colleges, universities, and trade schools for supporting the success of military service members, veterans, and their families.

Furthermore, accreditation teams have repeatedly acknowledged the positive impact of ■'s leadership on the college. He leads with confidence and competence, particularly when facing scrutiny.

Despite the challenges that come with our college's remote location and size, ■ has received informal recognition and praise from peers, colleagues, and members of our community. To recognize his exceptional leadership and interpersonal skills, the board of trustees has unanimously agreed to nominate ■ for the coveted CEO Award. We believe that he is an exceptionally deserving candidate for this esteemed award, and we cannot imagine a more deserving CEO.

What outstanding characteristics of the CEO motivated your nomination?

■ is an exceptional leader who truly embodies the qualities and values of the award he has been nominated for. ■ assumed the presidency of the ■ College in 2004. For the next 12 years, ■ has demonstrated a deep commitment to serving the needs of our students, staff, and the broader community. ■ lived this vision daily, presenting a consistently professional yet caring attitude toward all, until he retired at the end of the 2015-2016 school year. Four years later, ■'s successor, ■, retired from his role as president due to health concerns. The college board of trustees offered ■ a one-year contract as interim president. ■ accepted the offer and reported to work the following Monday.

In the midst of the pandemic and unable to vet candidates in person, the board moved to extend ■'s contract through June, 2023. ■'s decision to come out of retirement and then to extend his tenure during the unprecedented challenge of a global pandemic is just one example of his leadership style and willingness to put the needs of our college and community before his own.

Now in his last year as president, ■ has been actively involved in the search for his successor and has played a pivotal role throughout the search and interviews, and he is now proving instrumental in the onboarding process. He has invited the incoming president to meetings, introduced her to key community stakeholders, and provided valuable insights into the job. Additionally, ■ has done everything he can to leave ■ in the best place possible for the new president to take the lead. This has included a focus on employee morale, as ■ has championed a number of employee-focused initiatives this year.

■ is not only a dedicated leader on campus but also a respected member of the broader community. He serves on the board of ■ Inc., an economic development council and is a key

member of the JOBS Team, a local civic group dedicated to creating employment opportunities in our region. Through his leadership, [REDACTED] has spearheaded numerous initiatives, including retraining programs for those without jobs, counseling services for returning students, and an emergency food program for students in need. His work in the community has helped to build positive energy for our college and led to increased scholarship funding for our students.

Those who have had the privilege of working with [REDACTED] attest to his high standards, sense of humor, and his unwavering commitment to doing what is right. His leadership style is inclusive, and he has championed numerous initiatives to boost employee morale and engagement. We are incredibly fortunate to have had [REDACTED] as our president, and his contributions to our college and community are immeasurable.

We strongly endorse [REDACTED] for this award, and we urge you to give careful consideration to his nomination.



During [REDACTED]'s tenure, [REDACTED] College was recognized by [REDACTED] Monthly Magazine as the top-rated community college in the state and 15th in the country. These rankings list schools based on academic challenge, student effort, retention rates, and other categories. [REDACTED] was also recognized among the top 20% of colleges, universities, and trade schools that do the most to ensure the success of military service members, Veterans, and families. Under [REDACTED]'s leadership, the college continues to overcome historic challenges and has earned significant local and national acclaim. With his guidance and support, [REDACTED] launched multiple Bachelor of Applied Science degrees, and the college's prison education program grew to the second-largest in the state.

The college community has continually been impressed by [REDACTED]'s creativity in protecting jobs among faculty and staff, while at the same time maintaining viable educational programs that will eventually mean family-wage jobs for our graduates.