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In Pursuit of a Common Good

GREETINGS! AS CHAIR OF THE Association of Community College Trustees, I am honored to share a few thoughts with you during what is an historic — and challenging — time in higher education.

I am extremely confident that we will meet these challenges as we play to our greatest strengths — that community colleges are community first, and that they are community centered. It is this spirit that adds meaning to our work and ensures that our greatest impact is felt by the people we are tasked to serve — the students, faculty, and staff of our community colleges.

It is important that as we do this work, we constantly remind ourselves of the meaning of what we do. As trustees, we are the people who set the highest standards of governance, collaboration, innovation, and perhaps most importantly of all, of grace, kindness, and understanding.

Let me explain. It is always in our best interest to express care and concern for one another. When we take that extra moment to listen attentively to what our colleagues have to say, when we simply say to someone during a meeting or in a hallway or in a campus's administrative offices or classrooms, "How are you? I mean, how, really, are you doing?" we are furthering the human scope of what we do. I know we can all relate to minutes like these, where we've often wondered what a next, important step might be. And then there is someone who speaks up and declares, sometimes with bravado and sometimes with humility, but always with feeling: "What can I do to

help?" When we invite others in, that shared experience makes us all infinitely stronger.

As I mentioned at the beginning, this is an extremely challenging moment for institutions of higher education across the country. As chair, I wish to place an important emphasis on the health and wellbeing, both physical and mental, of all of our people, and in particular our presidents and chancellors who give so much of themselves to meet the incredible demands of our institutions. These are our happy warriors. We are all friends and colleagues in pursuit of a common good, sharing our commitment to further the transformational impact of our community colleges. Let's all look out for one another as we do this important work.

Carol Del Carlo

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