

Ric Shrubbs, Statement of Educational and Leadership Philosophy
Collin College Presidential Application

We can do far better things together than any one of us can ever achieve individually, and as I write this statement of philosophy, overwhelmingly that one concept will permeate all that I do and say, not only as a president, but also as a civic entrepreneur and a human being. It's possible for a president to be a formal authority and a real person simultaneously, and I like that you have the institutional depth of personality to include this statement of educational and leadership philosophy as part of your search materials.

I am inherently devoted to the transparency, collegiality, and consensus-building communication upon which I built a very successful presidency, most notably my recent decision to complete my last contract and publically announce my departure prior to openly applying for new opportunities in a way that would not blindside my local constituents or my colleagues statewide.

In addition to the curricular and financial successes I've detailed on my vitae and in my letter of application, I ask that you perceive imbedded within my history an inherent tone of consultation, collectivity, and approachability. In the spirit of creativity and inclusion, I'm known for respecting my faculty, staff, and students. These characteristics are natural to my outlook and my interaction, and not only are they the components that make public higher education competitive and sustainable, but also these are the things that make our jobs fun.

You're going to hear from my references repeatedly that my success as president is that I consult with and genuinely hear people in ways that compensate for my individual shortcomings. I believe we need to work with the people we have and preserve relationships when it's possible. Successful colleges focus together to plan for upcoming trends: access for employees and students; equity for employees, students, and neighbors; graduation rates, student debt, and expansion into fresh and creative markets. As you'll hear from my references and read within my application materials, diversity and inclusion are imbedded throughout my work, and I have entire sections of my resume dedicated to accomplishments for outreach and awareness regarding race and ethnicity, age, lifestyle choices, physical condition, gender equity, employees and alumni, and general style of thinking. As an example of how I translate this ideology into practice based upon recommendations from others is that I recently altered our Athletic Director position when our AD retired. We changed the position, which had traditionally been one full-time administrative position occupied by a man, into two faculty positions: one filled by a woman for women's athletics, and another filled by a man for men's athletics. This was a recommendation from our academic division, and I would not have seen the possibility on my own.

Several specific credentials I've earned relating to my statement of philosophy are that I'm a Qualified Neutral under the Minnesota General Rules of Practice for both Position-Based Mediation and Relationship-Based Mediation, and I'm registered as a MnSCU 1B1 Decisionmaker, trained and certified to decide the applicability of discrimination relating to gender, race, age, disability, color, creed, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, gender identity, gender expression, or membership in a local commission.

A few samples of my recent local-community achievements for connectivity are that, in 2012 in one of our communities we expanded the size of our healthcare-training center from 6,168 to 15,501 square feet using partnership funding, and in another community, we purchased an old city firehall to provide industrial maintenance training in partnership with a major food-processing corporation. These types of activities are not only good for innovation and partnerships, but they also allow us to provide cost-effective face-to-face and distance-delivery services without building additional structures, and they recycle buildings and generate rental and restorative income for the communities that own them. It's creative, fast, and it makes our cities look better.

Regarding curriculum, I'm proud to mention that Minnesota West has the rare distinction of being designated simultaneously in two areas of study in 2013 by Minnesota State Colleges and Universities as a Center of Excellence for state-of-the-art instruction: one for Sustainable Energy, and one for Agriculture. Another project that reflects my philosophy of both creative local collaboration as well as support of the environment is that, on one of our campuses we collectively built a two-acre, runoff-filtration pond that not only cleans the water entering a lake, but it also provides a nature sanctuary, a natural learning center, and a community trail. We partnered financially with alumni to gather \$360,000 in donations from environmental groups, government agencies, and a local school system for the project. Lastly, we received the donation of two experimental floating islands that clean the water in the pond and, because of their experimental design, advance the study of water-purification technology.

I'm also an advocate for student transfer and concurrent enrollment. After serving in the military and attending college, my career has been mostly in higher education at both the university and community college levels, with my very early career experience in a public K-12 system. My familiarity with all three educational levels gives me a fluid understanding of the practices that link us, and I have a tremendous appreciation for partnerships and two-way exchange of employees and students across all educational sectors, locally and internationally.

Please notice in the presidential achievements section of my resume that I organized co-located arrangements with a YMCA, state agencies, local public school systems, and the state athletic association. I believe in articulating not only simultaneous student credit, but also the exchange of equipment, the sharing of facilities, and the symbiotic alignment of opportunities for employees and our families for personal/familial enrichment. If we create a Venn diagram of the items I've just listed, I'm convinced that at the center are our students receiving our best services when our employees' families benefit from the alignment and cooperation of our collective community achievements. This is one of the reasons why my administration is purposefully holistic.

Other examples of my philosophy of instruction and reflecting my practice of student-centered collegiality are two administrative changes I made during my presidency. The first is that, upon the retirement of our Provost, I combined the Academic Vice President and the Provost positions, cutting administrative cost and bureaucracy, and giving academic divisions more clout and authority. A second administrative change is that I replaced the technology-focused Chief Information Officer with an instructionally focused Dean of Technology and Distance Learning, then we moved an English faculty member into the job. This is quite an achievement for her because the widespread geography of Minnesota West requires us to be innovative leaders in distance education. We have five campuses and four centers separated

by well over a hundred miles between some facilities, and our faculty are talented trend-setters for blending face-to-face, on-line, and ITV instruction. Under my presidency, our Full Year Equivalent for on-line enrollment grew from 31% to 47%, and our ITV FYE percentages hover at around 10%.

I've genuinely enjoyed reflecting upon this statement of instructional and leadership philosophy. It's been pleasant to remember the teams of excellent people who did wonderful things during my presidency. I'm sure I'll think of additional examples and practices I should have added, so I sincerely hope we have a chance to further discuss these specifics, and more, during a face-to-face interview with the employees and constituents of Collin College.

Best!

Ric Shrubbs