



NEVADA STATE
COLLEGE

March 3, 2020

Dear Chancellor and Regents,

It is with pride and mixed emotions that I formally acknowledge to the Chancellor and Board of Regents that I am not seeking renewal of my contract which ends June 30, 2021, and will instead be pursuing other opportunities in business, education or nonprofit leadership at the conclusion of my contract. I do intend to finish out the remaining 15 months of my contract in a positive and productive fashion, as there are many critical projects that I want to finish before stepping down. I am announcing now so that the Board has adequate time to conduct a national search for Nevada State's next president.

Serving as president of Nevada State and helping build its remarkable trajectory has been the job of a lifetime, and I am grateful for the opportunity to make such a difference in the lives of students. When I started this position, first as an interim in November 2011 and later being appointed following a national search in May 2012, I was the seventh president at Nevada State in just nine years. I promised I would stay in the position in order to provide stability and vision for this young and vibrant institution. I promised I would stay at least eight years, but no more than ten years. At the end of my contract, I will have served in the position nine years and nine months and will have worked in the Nevada System of Higher Education for over 20 years. I willingly passed up other opportunities to keep my promise to Nevada State and its deserving students, and I am so pleased and honored by what we have accomplished together.

While many community leaders and staff have urged me to stay longer, I believe Nevada State is the kind of institution that will benefit from changes in leadership and vision from time to time, and I want to remain consistent with my promise. When I started in 2011, I was viewed as an innovative and nontraditional choice. It is more typical to hire university presidents with earned doctorates arising through the ranks of the faculty, instead of my background as a juris doctorate from Duke Law School, having practiced in the private and public sectors for about 24 years before my presidency at Nevada State. Notwithstanding the non-academic background, I think it has proven to be a good fit for the institution. I have relied on outstanding academic leadership, starting with Dr. Erika Beck (now President at California State University – Channel Islands), and continuing with Dr. Vickie Shields who is equally outstanding, while I have brought skills that are business oriented, strategic and community/donor relations focused.

When I began my tenure as president in 2011, Nevada State was facing some significant challenges with the death of its then longest serving president, Dr. Fred Maryanski, followed by the departure of its interim president, while at the same time facing one of its lowest budget years notwithstanding rising enrollments. However, by 2013, Nevada was starting to come out of the recession and adopted a new funding formula. This was the first time Nevada State had new resources. We invested those resources primarily in new faculty, student support and innovative student success programs, and we are now seeing the results of those investments as retention and six year graduation rates are starting to really climb.

Coming out of the recession, the State was limited in the funds it could allocate to capital construction. When the first state projects were announced following the recession, state capital funding was allocated to other important projects including a new Hotel College at UNLV and an Engineering Building at UNR. Nevada State, working with the Treasurer's Office (then-Treasurer Kate Marshall) and with the support of then-Governor Sandoval, the Legislature and the Board of Regents, was able to self-fund, through long term payments out of existing revenues and a special building fee approved by students, construction of a Nursing Science and Education Building (now the Bob and Alison Kasner Academic Building), and a



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Student Center (now the James and Beverly Rogers Student Center) which includes critical student success components such as the library, tutoring, disability services, computer labs, career services and other student support services. This institutional investment in academic and student support buildings without significant state appropriation is unprecedented, particularly for an institution with a relatively small overall budget, but it is in Nevada State's fiber out how to help ourselves when State resources have been insufficient to keep pace with our growth. These buildings were finished in the fall of 2015 and were just in time, as Nevada State has been experiencing an incredible growth spurt, including a 72% increase in freshmen in 2017 alone. That being said, payment on these buildings of \$3.4 million annually continues to be a significant component of the Nevada State budget.

From 2015, Nevada State has continued to evolve, maintaining its hold as the second-fastest growing College in the country over the last 10 years, and growing out critical need programs. I am particularly proud of the following: our Nursing Program, which we quadrupled in size to now graduate 288 BSN nurses every year; our School of Education, which we have also tasked with quadrupling in size through multiple strategies to address the teacher shortage including teachers academies now in nine high schools and growing; starting our first Masters Program in the critical need area of Speech Language Pathology; a statewide mission that includes growing programs in partnership with Western Nevada College in Carson City, Truckee Meadows Community College in Reno and CSN here in the Las Vegas Valley; an RN to BSN on-line program that quickly has enrolled over 350 students; a biology and physical sciences program that is placing students in some of the top graduate programs around the country; becoming an Hispanic Serving Institution and receiving the first grant in state history to address diversity in the teacher pipeline; our Marydean Martin Library that just received an award for the top College library in the country, which is only the second time a public college has received the award and the first time a Hispanic Serving Institution has received the award; and our first student housing project that will be ready this fall - just to name a few of the many fine accomplishments of Nevada State, its fine and dedicated faculty and staff, and its deserving students.

I can't say enough about the outstanding community support I have received. Business and community leaders across multiple sectors have stepped up to support Nevada State's mission, serve on advisory councils, provide internships and support for our students, and build the critical work of the Foundation. Key donors have stepped in at essential times to provide the funding to move projects forward. The student and faculty leadership at Nevada State has been outstanding, and a pleasure to work with as a team.

2019 was a record year for Nevada State. We raised the most private funding in our history, and we received state funding to start construction of the Glenn and Ande Christenson School of Education Building to expand our education programs, and we share in the building of the Engelstad Health Sciences Building at CSN Henderson. Nevada State also received funding to help pay for our record enrollment growth (measured by a 70% increase in unweighted student credit hours taught in just five years) and budget enhancements to start critical need programs in Speech Language Pathology, Early Childhood Education, and Data Sciences/Informatics to name a few.

Notwithstanding this incredible success, significant challenges are looming, particularly on capital facilities. Only about 40% of campus facilities have been funded substantially by state direct appropriations. The new Education Building will be the first building constructed primarily with state direct appropriations or bonding in 13 years since the Liberal Arts and Sciences Building finished construction in 2008. Both the new Education Building and the Health Sciences Building will be full almost immediately upon occupancy. Coupled with a student growth rate that could easily double the size of the student population in just eight years, continued significant state investment will be required, along with increased philanthropy and other creative ways to build projects at a lower cost. This will have to be a team effort of the College, the State and the community. The College also continues to experience



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challenges competitively with its' branding as we are frequently misperceived as having a two year college mission, when in fact Nevada State's mission is akin to a university (with a teaching instead of research focus) as we only offer only four year degree programs and niche masters degrees, starting with the masters in Speech Language Pathology.

The Higher Education System in Nevada has been constantly improving. All NSHE institutions have been improving their student success. In the latest ranking by U.S. News and World Report, Nevada ranks 18th nationally for higher education based on key factors of graduation rates, cost of tuition and fees, and debt at graduation. The discussion of changes in the governance of higher education is disruptive. While I am confident Nevada State will be successful under any governance structure, I can only hope that a very deliberative discussion ensues about the purpose of the change and potential consequences prior to the November election.

I love Nevada State and its students. Our freshmen classes are coming to us about 90% diverse, with many being first generation to attend college and low income. These are among the best students to work with because they are not just changing their own lives, they are changing whole family trees. It will be hard to leave this deserving student population, but now is the right time. Nevada State just received the renewal of its seven year accreditation, I have an outstanding leadership team in place (the strongest in my tenure) and all success metrics are pointed upward. Nevada State will attract an incredibly talented pool of internal and external candidates for this position. I will step down from this role as the longest serving president in Nevada State College history.

I have many important projects to accomplish in my last 15 months. I am prioritizing those projects to those most critical for the continued success of the institution. It is my intent to stay through the next legislative session, introduce the new president to legislative and executive leadership, and help mentor the new president if requested. At that point, I will feel good about looking for other opportunities.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve in this fulfilling position which has been more than I could have ever expected or imagined.

My best,

Bart Patterson
President, Nevada State College