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CHANCELLOR'S SPRING 2021 MESSAGE TO THE WCCCD FAMILY *CHARTING THE COURSE TO THE POST-COVID-19 ERA*

When the danger ended, the people joined together once again. They grieved their losses, made new choices, dreamed new images, and created new ways to live. Kitty O'Meara

The purpose of this Chancellor's Message is to share my thoughts about making the transition to the post-COVID-19 era and embarking on Pathways to the Future IV, our next phase of institutional transformation. As well, I will share ideas about the process of incrementally reentering and repopulating our campuses and offices as health and safety guidelines permit.

The next decade will be a period of deep and fundamental institutional change as we apply the lessons learned from the massive disruptions of the pandemic. Our *New Day, New Way* theme captures the idea that this is a moment in WCCCD's history to radically rethink how we deliver programs and services and how we operate. Pushed by the strong tail wind of the lessons we are learning during COVID-19, we are entering a "new day" during which we must discover "new ways" to meet the changing educational needs of the students, businesses, and communities that we serve. We will become more innovative and entrepreneurial as we address multiple societal challenges such as economic and racial justice, rapid technological change, and ever-changing workforce talent requirements.

In undertaking the transformational changes before us, we will be guided by the strategic plan. Within this strategic planning framework, I invite our internal and external stakeholders to engage in dialogue, study, and redesign projects based on the Chancellor's "*New Day, New Way*" strategic imperatives. These are areas of institutional development that I regard as essential and compelling. Our work related to the strategic imperatives will focus on the large-scale, enterprise-level, and cross-functional (cross-divisional and cross-campus) redesign as we envision WCCCD's development during the next decade. I regard equity as an overarching imperative. These strategic imperatives also include student success and completion, serving unique student populations, teaching and learning support, curricular transformation, community engagement and talent leadership, creating a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, technology as a force for institutional transformation, expanding uses of big data and analytics, building faculty and staff capacity, developing transformational leaders, and crisis management.

There has never been a moment in our history when our open-door philosophy and our community-based mission has been more aligned with the challenges we face. We will build upon the foundation of strong community support; a dedicated Board of Trustees; a committed, talented, and resilient faculty and staff; and a history of transformational change in response to emerging challenges.

This is also a moment to reflect on what we have been through together this past year. We have grieved the loss of loved ones and dear friends. Many of you have experienced personal hardships. Despite the challenges we faced, we quickly created health and safety protocols, made an abrupt transition to virtual and remote teaching and learning, and provided for the continuity of programs and services. Through it all, our students, faculty, and staff persevered and met great challenges with resilience, grit, and creativity. I applaud the WCCCD family. I am proud of you.

When will we be going back to our classrooms and offices? We will use an incremental, step-by-step approach to reentering and repopulating our campuses and offices. This will require thoughtful dialogue, decisions, and actions among internal and external stakeholders, including our students, faculty, and staff. This incremental approach will be guided by public health and safety guidelines, progress of COVID-19 vaccinations for students and employees, and the readiness of our programs, services, and systems. As we consider the reentry of employees and students to our buildings, we must consider factors such as the preferred balance of on-site and remote work; the control of entrances and hallways with expanded on-site learning and work; and the capacity of offices, meeting rooms, and other spaces. As we consider the incremental approach to in-person teaching and learning and the repopulation of classrooms and labs for the summer and fall semesters, several factors must be considered including the balance of in-person and virtual instructional modalities, the degree to which section sizes will be limited to accommodate health and safety restrictions, and the capacity of our classrooms and labs given health and safety restrictions at that time.

As we move forward together in this next stage of transformation, I am confident that we will shape a bright future for WCCCD. Karen Stout, the CEO of Achieving the Dream, expressed the challenges that community colleges face in this way: *To be able to navigate a sharply different environment, community colleges will need to intensify efforts to strengthen the systems needed for student-centered institutional change. That requires visionary leadership, robust use of data and technology, a commitment to equity, and a deep and continuing focus on teaching and learning.* This is the pathway on which WCCCD has embarked.