

Personal Statement on Desirable Characteristics in the President

Dear Search Committee Members:

Please see below for my personal statement on the desirable characteristics you are seeking in the next President of Texas Southmost College:

Strategic Vision and Plan. External Partnerships. Student Access and Success.

I currently serve as Dean of Continuing Education at Austin Community College (ACC). I oversee a large division within the Austin Community College District that serves 13,000 students, comprising of over 26,000 total enrollments. I lead a team composed of three Directors, 25 Coordinators that are part of a Staff of 60, and 400 faculty members. The division offers more than 120 workforce programs, community personal enrichment programs, and an extensive corporate customized training department. Due to its many areas of study and program choices, ACC's Continuing Education division operates like a college within a college.

My vision for CE was to become the education and training provider of choice in Central Texas and to ensure that access was geographically wide and would serve students of diverse socio-economic status and race. I placed a high priority on helping students reach their goals by creating a tiered approach to academic success. Additionally, I ensured that our programs came to the students. Courses were available at places of employment, community centers, and local schools in order to minimize the barriers to educational access and success.

Over the last five years, the Continuing Education division has seen extensive growth. This has been achieved through the use of Skills Development Fund grants. Prior to the grants, our department did not have a broad range of curriculums, equipment, or facilities and we depended on third party providers to achieve our goals. Currently, we have developed curriculum in over 65 key areas and have acquired more than 1.5 Million in equipment. Additionally, we have created strong partnerships with local business and established a presence in the community. In the last few years, through increased training programs which led to increased revenues, we were able to acquire additional education material and training equipment in critical areas such as healthcare, engineering, high tech, IT/CS, trades, business, teacher certification, programming for students with intellectual and cognitive disabilities, and others.

Collaborating with our local business has enhanced the quality of training we provide. By frequently visiting with our partner companies, we have been able to get a better understanding of the marketable skills needed by our students. This has helped us dramatically improve our understanding and alignment of our workforce curriculums. We have also developed strong partnerships with multiple economic agencies and organizations such as the Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Boards, the Texas Workforce Commission, our two regional workforce boards, ISDs, Universities, and multiple community-based organizations. For example, we now offer courses at local churches in various areas of the community, high school spaces, local city housing authorities, prisons and detention centers, and at locations owned by community-based organizations. Through these partnerships, we have increased student access and success by going to them and providing training and support that they would otherwise not have access to. We also designed and developed mobile training units that would be easily transported to a church, housing authority building, or high school. By partnering with entities

such as TWC, WFSolutions, chambers of commerce, economic development boards, and multiple community-based organizations, we were able to acquire student funding and create strong student support systems that focus on student access, success, and completion.

Taking Risks, Creating Transformational Change, Inclusion, and Listening

I believe in allowing people to take calculated risks. Without risk, there is no progress. I believe in a college that is always moving forward and evolving. I believe in a college that is out in the community talking to potential students, parents, companies, chambers, and other stakeholders. A college that is always trying to improve what works but is also innovative enough to know that we must embrace change. By allowing people to explore and try new ideas, many successful programs can emerge. The culture of our organization has changed from one of waiting for students to come to us, to one us going out and meeting them where they are at; from a culture of low risk and few new programs to one of thinking creatively to build training for new emerging jobs.

As a result of such change, many new programs have recently been created. For example, a new and very successful program we created is Entrepreneurship for Women in Spanish. Another new program was designed for new and incumbent workers to support the more than 74 contact/call centers in the area. Other examples are our new mobile training programs in HVAC, Plumbing, Electrician Assistant, Construction, Welding, and our new innovative Summer Youth Camp for High School students interested in becoming medical doctors. We have also created a new multi-faceted Fashion Program for this emerging industry, Robotic and Instrumentation courses for the local semiconductor industry, and three new leadership programs for aspiring managers and supervisors with various levels of experience. We have also added multiple new IT/CS programs in front and back-end software development, Java, Python, IT security, Database Administration multiple levels, as well as many additional healthcare and business programs such as logistics and supply chain management.

We are evolving rapidly and developing many innovative ideas, initiatives, and programs. I believe that this is our job. We must take some risk, innovate, listen to what others say, and move rapidly to help people reach their goals. We need to create more career accelerators where people can achieve their educational goals faster, support incubators that connect students and industry, continue to expand competency-based education, offer creative block and weekend student-friendly schedules, take advantage of external resources such as open educational resources, and create creative contextualized developmental programs. We need to focus on providing the student an exemplary college experience that begins when contact is first made and continues through the entire educational cycle. Creating this type of support and flexibility will reduce the roadblocks that hinder students from reaching their educational goals.

Having spent half of my life on the border and having a tremendous passion for helping people of all socioeconomic and cultural upbringings, I would be honored to work together with the team at Texas Southmost College to create dramatic change for the region. My community college experience includes 12 years as a Faculty Professor and Department Chair of multiple existing and new credit programs, followed by seven years as the Dean of Continuing Education, a Division that is larger than many small colleges. Additionally, I feel my experience working for major international employers, my dedication to student access and success, and my strong advocacy for integrated business and educational partnerships will bring a unique perspective to the college. I hold a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering, a

Master of Business Administration, and a PhD from the John Roueche Community College Leadership Program at the University of Texas at Austin. I feel my extensive background will support the challenges and opportunities critical to the position of President at Southmost College.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Hector Aguilar, PhD