

SOUTHERN VIRGINIA HIGHER EDUCATION CENTER



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June 24, 2024

Southern Virginia Higher Education Center Board of Trustees
Executive Director Search Committee Members
820 Bruce Street
South Boston, VA 24592

Dear Chairman Jeffress and Members of the SVHEC Executive Director Search Committee:

As you move forward in the search process for the next Executive Director to lead the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center, the members of the SVHEC Leadership Team wish to convey a message of importance to us. As a point of clarification, we are ten directors and managers who meet monthly with Dr. Adams and the three SVHEC “Chiefs” (Finance, Workforce Advancement, and Strategy Officer) to listen, provide information, and offer input on strategic and operational issues the SVHEC faces. Our message to you is about the SVHEC’s stated values, identified and adopted through a process Dr. Adams began two years ago.

The road to adopting these values started when Dr. Adams brought in consultants to help address communication and collaboration challenges among SVHEC staff. Among their recommendations was a call to “identify the values and associated behaviors for mission achievement and strategically align them with performance evaluations as measurable performance goals.” In response, Dr. Adams asked all SVHEC staff to identify the values we wanted to see in our work culture. Six prevailed: collaboration, integrity, respect, innovation, customer focus, and stewardship. These values are now part of the agency’s strategic plan and are being embedded in agency culture.

SVHEC executive leadership is investing in making these values core to SVHEC culture. As you heard in the June 5th Board of Trustees meeting, Dr. Adams recently brought in faculty from the VCU Grace E. Harris Leadership Institute to provide communication and conflict resolution training for all full-time SVHEC employees, including executive leadership. Two groups of

employees each spent two full days in training. Feedback provided in the next Leadership Team meeting was generally positive and reflected a commitment to SVHEC values.

At this juncture, we ask that you, the members of the committee who will guide the selection of the SVHEC Executive Director, look for commitment to these values among the candidates. It is our hope that the new Executive Director will carry forward the work Dr. Adams started, and in which the agency has invested, so that the SVHEC becomes a workplace that truly reflects the six values. There are already discussions underway on how to take this effort to the next level. We hope that the new Executive Director will support the commitment to embedding the values in SVHEC culture and continue the work that has been done.

Thank you for considering our viewpoint on this important issue and thank you for your work on behalf of the SVHEC in selecting the next Executive Director.

Sincerely,

Amy Cole, Director of Student & Partner Advancement _____

Aaron Chandler, Director of Operations & IT _____

Rosa Dunn, Director of the Career Tech Academy _____

Hope Harris-Gayles, Director of Communications
& Employee Relations _____

Bradley Overby, Director of ProductWorks _____

Cassandra "Sandi" Satterfield, Director of Workforce _____

Kelly Shotwell, Director of the IT Academy _____

Catherine Stevens, Institutional Effectiveness
& Grants Administrator _____

Nelson Stevens, Director of Operations & IT _____

Kimberly Throckmorton, Manager of the
Healthcare Training Hub _____