

October 11, 2006

Dear Fellow Trustees

I ask that Trustee Nardolillo read this letter to public and the board of trustees.

I wish I were with you today, I take great pride in having the best in person attendance record, as today will make only the second meeting I have missed in ten years. I notified Trustee Nardolillo of a family event conflict that cannot be rescheduled several months ago.

Concerning today's agenda item on Board Reorganization. This item deserves full board discussion and I ask that you delay action on this item until at least until the earliest scheduled board meeting that both I can join you in person, and that all the potential due process and investigation of issues have been dealt with. If that is not agreeable to the board then I request that Board not make changes at this time and under these conditions. Whereas one could say that the board reorganization is an administrative function to do so today under the recently released resolutions, letters and news articles and emotional pleas would be clearly seen as an attempt to ignore the issues and submitting to special interest groups. It is vital for the long term interest of the college that the board maintains the independent role of being the voice and advocate of our citizens, taxpayers and students. It is vital that the board set the standard of conduct of not ducking issues and of being legal, fair, and thorough. It is vital that the board not act under threats and emotional hysteria.

I do want to formally apologize to my fellow trustees for the time they have had to listen and devote to this subject. We have an open board agenda process and do allow groups and individuals to bring items to our attention. The employee groups on their own initiative and insistence added this and related subjects to the agenda. I am concerned about the use of district time and resources spent on this matter and a full accounting should be made. I can assure you I didn't want at this time any time or money spent on this subject. Now that these items have been added and various allegations asserted it is the boards' duty to investigate.

It has been a pleasure and honor to serve as board chair and I have accomplished or made progress on most of the goals I set out to do as described in my address at the beginning of this term.

I would like to review some of the highlights and progress of the year. As the term began as the prior Vice President of the Board I had just compiled the Board Self Evaluation and proposed several action items for improvement.

Immediately I made several Board meeting reforms which were widely praised from changing the method of voting which allowed for quicker tally and less chance for serial voting, to making the board meetings more organized, open and substantive.

The board held two sessions on Shared Governance and their has been more involvement and input from the extended board than in other time in the 10 years I have been on the board.

I pledged my ongoing support for open and thorough governing. In my last term as Board Chair I lead the way to having our board meetings video recorded for the public to view. This year I am happy to report that our meetings are now provided live over the internet for anyone in the world that would like to view. My hope is in the future that we can allow for viewer interaction to provide questions and comment during our meeting. This is especially helpful to the handicapped or for those who cannot attend the physical location of our meeting.

In making the board meetings more substantive and relevant a regular feature of legislative review and bond review was added. One of the most important features of our board meeting agenda that has been added and is the most important and must continue is that of the section of Agenda Items for Future Discussion. It is essential that the Board Meeting be the public's meeting and issues that are discussed that are of interest and importance to the public, staff or individual board members. This agenda item is an example of the ease to add and the compelling to discuss that must be continued.

As a persistent advocate for the taxpayers and citizens of our district, my high priority is to ensure that we are being good stewards of the college of our community, and I proposed and supported several budgetary reforms. The administration has done a good job of clearly demonstrating out that our facilities need much in repair, renovation and supply. Now that these needs are clearly known it would be irresponsible not to address this growing need. I am pleased to see that our next budget will include extra monies for our facilities. With this the students and employees will benefit. I will continue to address the needs that make sure that we keep enough in our budget to provide for the students, facilities and supplies, and support staff. I thank the accounting staff of Ohlone College for the supporting documentation that allows for sound decision making.

This past year has seen progress on the investment of our bond funds. I fully support the energy conservation methods that are going to be implemented at our new Ohlone Center for Technology and Medical Services. There has been at times heated debate on the use and recording of the bond funds but the public and the taxpayers have been served by the diligent and persistent questioning from me and some of my colleagues.

This past year has shown a higher amount of board colleague respect and input. In all cases trustee and the extended board input was welcomed and respected.

Much of the recent communication has revolved around the relationship between me and Dr. Treadway. I was part of the interview and selection process and supported the hiring of Dr. Treadway to become the President Superintendent of Ohlone College. It was expected and I am pleased that one of the outcomes of this selection was the positive reaction of our employees. Also it was expected and I am pleased that another outcome would be a greater emphasis on promoting innovations in education learning practices. Another expectation that I am pleased that has been achieved is a greater attention to developing outside funding sources from such areas such as the Foundation, Grants, and Strategic Partnerships. There are some issues and expectations that we differ on and on those I promise to communicate with Dr. Treadway and I am confident that we can come to mutually satisfactory solutions.

We are both highly passionate advocates and promoters of developing the best long term outcome for Ohlone College. I look forward to working with Dr. Treadway over the next few years working together to build the best Ohlone College possible.

As Board Chair, Doug and I regularly meet to review the agenda and over the past several weeks have met and discussed ways to improve our communication. I am pleased to announce to the board that great improvement has been made. It is my hope that the board will allow us to work together for a few more meetings to continue in our improvement. It is in the best interest of the college that strong and positive working relationship exists between all the board members and the college president. My promise to you my fellow trustees that I am committed to ensuring this positive relationship exists with Dr. Treadway.

There has also been much communication concerning the relationship with the outstanding faculty and support staff of Ohlone College. One of the most common comments I hear from present and former students about Ohlone College is the outstanding learning experience they received from our faculty and the respect and guidance from our support staff. As a former student I can attest and as parent of a full time student at Ohlone College I can re-confirm that our faculty love to teach and perform with high success. I also can attest that the support staff at all levels from counseling; security, tutoring etc. have been excellent as well. I am disappointed to hear that somehow the message of support and appreciation was, under reported, distorted or misunderstood. My pledge is to do my best to greatly improve our relationship.

If the board feels compelled to make changes today it is my hope the Board will appoint Trustee Nardolillo as Board Chair and Trustee McMillin as Board Vice President.

During Trustee Nardolillo last term he had the pleasure of signing the largest check in the history of Ohlone College in the purchase of the property in Newark which will house the new center. Coming very soon will be a lease agreement that will allow for the greatest amount of outside income generation for the college. He has been a long time advocate for this project and I would like him to have the honor of signing the agreement.

Trustee McMillin has been the prototype of what a Board Member should be. He is always prepared and is willing to take the time to learn how to be a better Trustee with his attendance at conferences. He is always at public events and presents a positive image for the college. If we can make him Vice President at this current meeting he can be better situated to achieve one of his goals which is become a representative with the California College League of Trustees. They hold their meeting in the middle of November and by making the change now Bill can attend as a Board Officer.

I also request that a committee be formed to review the policies, and rules concerning board officer's selection, responsibilities, and areas of concern such as ethics, conflicts of interest and how to handle complaints and concerns. I volunteer to be on the committee. This committee should be prepared to have a report to the board at the December meeting and prior to the December re-organization.

I look forward to working with all of you, my colleagues, Dr. Treadway, administration and staff as together using the diverse resources that our groups represent in helping to build the best Ohlone College possible.

Sincerely

Bob Brunton