



Board of Trustees Statement, Jan. 22, 2020

On Jan. 15, the faculty union requested that the board remove WVC President Jim Richardson, citing multiple reasons for their request in a prepared statement and 11-page report.

We would like to address some of the concerns presented by the faculty union and clarify our role with the college. It is our sincere hope that moving forward, meaningful conversations can be had about the state of the college and its future.

The board is responsible for hiring presidents, negotiating their contracts and setting their salaries, and removing them, if necessary. The board is also responsible for retaining good leaders. We created President's Richardson's contract, including his salary, to retain someone who has shown excellent leadership and unyielding compassion for our students.

The board is also responsible for monitoring the college's budget and holding the college accountable for its fiscal decisions. That said, we would like to put to rest the union's claims that President Richardson intentionally misled the college and the community at large. The causes of this financial crisis are a strong economy and larger than expected declines in enrollment.

The board feels that the president has been transparent, receptive to ideas, and timely in addressing questions. The college made extra efforts toward transparency by creating a budget webpage (wvc.edu/Budget) on the public website, which provides updates and answers frequently asked questions.

The board would like to commend the president for his commitment to putting students first. President Richardson has made it clear since the very beginning that he would do everything in his power to protect students from the effects of this budget crisis. As a result, classes and academic programs have been prioritized.

We feel President Richardson has been an effective leader for WVC during this crisis and throughout his presidency. We will not be removing him.

This budget crisis will continue to have far-reaching effects to the college and how it operates. The college will also continue to face the same issues community colleges around the country are facing: low enrollment, unpredictable state funding, and an ever-changing political and fiscal landscape. However, the board is assured in the knowledge that, in its 80-year history, WVC has faced these issues before and prevailed.

It is our hope that we, along with all college employees, continue to listen respectfully to each other and improve. We feel strongly about the college's ability to uphold the mission – we hope that our shared commitment to student success can unite us during these difficult times.