Selection Committee

Sages over 70

Business Record/dsm

The Depot at 4th

Des Moines, IA 50309

Dear Members of the Selection Committee:

It is my distinct privilege to support the nomination of Rob Denson as a *Sage over 70.* The most difficult part about writing this letter is to be respectful of the Selection Committee’s time because I could write many pages extolling the accomplishments of this remarkable leader.

When Rob arrived to assume the presidency of DMACC in 2003, the institution’s brand/reputation had hit an all time low due to certain very unfortunate deeds committed by his predecessor. Faculty and staff morale was pathetic, at best. It was clear that Rob had his work cut out for him.

I am convinced that there are more than several Rob Densons in our community. He is the most visible **and** effective leader in Central Iowa.

He is very engaging and has a remarkable memory for names. Rob has a way of making everyone feel special. In less than a year after he came to DMACC, the faculty and staff were not only proud of working there but they were enthusiastic about the future.

During his tenure, enrollment at DMACC has increased by almost 70% and the number of course/program offerings has increased significantly. The students know that the training/education they receive will assure them steady employment. The placement rate is almost 100%. Many of the students go on to the regents’ institutions to receive their undergraduate degrees.

I am aware of at least 15 organizations which have benefited from his counsel and wisdom. For example, he has served as a leader on the Executive Committee of the Greater Des Moines Partnership, Opportunity Nation, STEM Higher Education Council and many others. In every case, he has made a difference.

Rob believes that DMACC cannot thrive unless the community thrives. That is why he cares so deeply about his students, his faculty and his staff. He restored their faith in DMACC in less than a year after he commenced employment at DMACC. Not only did he foster an open environment but more importantly he always communicated with integrity. He genuinely cares about DMACC.

He is a prolific fundraiser. The infrastructure of DMACC has improved significantly. The campus locations are all safe, functional and appealing. The students take pride in DMACC. Additionally, Rob has been able to strike collaborations with Goldman Sachs and Microsoft, as an example.

DMACC has the highest bond rating of any community college in Iowa. It is fiscally sound and its cost of funds is unusually low for a higher education institution. This did not happen by accident. It was Rob’s leadership and direction which played a major role in steering DMACC to such a solid financial position.

As a mentor to students, Rob is the most approachable leader I have ever observed. He enjoys tremendous rapport with the student body. He has a knack for making everyone feel comfortable talking to him.

This year, I had the privilege of being the commencement speaker at DMACC’s convocation. I could not believe how well Rob interacted with so many students - a true validation of Rob’s genuine warmth.

In conclusion, I can unequivocally state that Rob is a Level 5 leader as defined in Jim Collins’ “Good to Great.” I urge you to recognize my dear friend, Rob Denson, as a **Sage over 70**.

Respectfully submitted,

Suku Radia