



## *Inaugural Charge to Bradley J. Cook President, Snow College*

November 7, 2019

By Nina Barnes, Vice-Chair

Utah Board of Regents

It is now my responsibility and privilege to deliver to you a formal charge on behalf of the Utah Board of Regents.

President Cook, I draw your attention to four areas of focus as you define your agenda, set priorities, and meet the challenges ahead.

### ***First, chart the path for Snow College's ongoing success.***

Snow College has a rich history of forging paths through changing times and unforeseen trials. Now, new challenges arise, impacting all of higher education. The industries that drive our economy are swiftly evolving. From all corners, voices of skepticism question whether higher education can effectively adapt. For many, cost remains a barrier to access, and debt stunts the growth of students' dreams. Disruption is coming. Do not wait for Snow College to be acted upon. You must guide Snow College to reimagine what higher education can and will become. Your graduates must be endowed with remarkable imaginations, practical skills, and an unrelenting quest to innovate. They must be creative thinkers, they must be exacting craftsmen, and they must be life-long learners. Your charge is to find new paths and bold practices to help Snow College's graduates meet their career ambitions, contribute to their communities, and lead in their industries—all in a changed economy. Find novel ways to educate students within the Snow College community and beyond. As Snow College is a destination for your students today, ensure Snow College remains a destination for their children and their grandchildren to come.

**Second, keep an inexorable focus on student access and completion.** The success of Snow College's students begins with access. A community college's clarion call is to be an accessible, affordable gateway into higher education—to provide comprehensive care to students from all backgrounds and circumstances. Snow College, however, is obligated to do more. Utah's rural residents face barriers to higher education unseen in more traditional community college settings. They must have access to high-quality education, with options for working learners, support for underserved populations, and opportunities students that are otherwise limited by time and distance. Equally essential is ensuring that the students who enter Snow College, leave Snow College as graduates. Help them persevere. As you have throughout your career, develop innovative completion programs; enlist mentors, advisors, and peers; guide, encourage, and cheer your students—drag them by their orange and blue scarves if you have to—but make sure they finish their journey as Badger alumni.

**Third, make Snow College a force for economic development.** Snow College is unique among all our public institutions. Here sits a comprehensive community college in the beating heart of rural Utah. But Snow College not only educates its students, it is the unifying identity of the community, the center for cultural encounters, and—this cannot be overstated—the economic gravity for central Utah. Look for openings to enhance that role. Partner with local leaders, businesses, and K-12 to cultivate new economic growth. Continue to strengthen and broaden offerings at the Richfield campus, particularly career and technical training. Identify skills gaps and workforce needs in your region and create academic and technical programs that will fill those needs. Always remember the responsibility you bear to the community's economic potential.

**Fourth, contribute to the Utah System of Higher Education's success.** Snow College belongs to a united system of colleges and universities. What makes the system strong is the sum of its leaders. The cumulative force of their collective experience and wisdom is unmatched. For the system to reach its potential, you must contribute your talents, your mind, and your perspective. Find ways to expand students' prospects through partnerships with your fellow institutions. Seek out the viewpoints and advice of your peers and freely offer yours. Support their endeavors. But also be willing to challenge established practices, traditions, and views to ensure all ideas will withstand the forging pressure of discourse. Seek out ways to build unity and strength among the institutions for the good of the students and for the good of Utah.

President Cook, the Regents selected you because of your unique experiences as a student at Snow College, a renowned scholar, an educational innovator, and a compassionate leader. You are right president at the the right time.