



December 7, 2020

AACC Committee on Directors and Membership Services,  
c/o Dr. Angel M. Royal  
1 Dupont Circle NW, Suite 700  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
[amroyal@aacc.nche.edu](mailto:amroyal@aacc.nche.edu)

**Re: Letter in Support of Dr. Federico Zaragoza to the 2021 AACC Board of Directors**

Dear AACC Committee on Directors and Membership Services:

My name is Dr. Annette Parker, President of South Central College (SCC). Since I joined South Central College in 2013, I collaborated with Minnesota State University to develop a transfer pathways for students. South Central College was awarded a Minnesota State Center of Excellence in Agriculture that has developed a national curriculum and assessments for the National Pork Board. I also accepted a position on President Obama's Advanced Manufacturing Partnership to make recommendations that sustain and grow American manufacturing competitiveness. In this role, I successfully developed a Minnesota collaboration that secured a \$15 million grant to implement the national strategies within Minnesota. Since my arrival in Minnesota, South Central College has been awarded over \$20 million dollars in grants and nearly doubled our foundations capital campaign.

I am writing in support of the candidacy of Dr. Federico Zaragoza, President of the College of Southern Nevada (CSN), to the AACC Board of Directors. I had the pleasure of working with Dr. Zaragoza during his 20-year career at Alamo Colleges District in Texas.

I have worked with Dr. Zaragoza over the last 17 years in providing leadership to award winning workforce development programs at the Alamo Community College District, as a member of the Automotive Manufacturing Technical Education Collaborative (AMTEC), and countless presentations to AACC and other national organizations. Dr. Zaragoza is the right leader at the right time as the nation focuses on recovery to be at the table in the important conversations regarding workforce education.

Since he joined CSN in 2018, Dr. Zaragoza has continued to lead in workforce development efforts. For example, he has worked to transform the CSN-Department of Economic and Workforce Development (DWED). During the early phase of his administration at CSN, he commissioned LERN, one of the top consulting groups in the nation that specializes in community college workforce and continuing education consulting, to conduct an assessment of

[www.southcentral.edu](http://www.southcentral.edu)

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the CSN Department of Workforce and Economic Development (DWED). The LERN report noted that while there are over 14,000 students enrolled in CSN non-Credit programs, the college has serious limitations in addressing the workforce needs of existing companies who need “short term” training for incumbent workers. Approximately 80% of local companies are small employers of 100 or fewer employees and CSN can be a major skills training resource for these companies.

As a result of this study, CSN is in the process of reorganizing DWED to implement five LERN recommendations. Develop instructional programs with high impact potential: (1) certificate programs, online, and boot-camp professional development certifications; (2) deliver company specific customized training programs; (3) guarantee “Just in Time” delivery; (4) add corporate outreach component; and (5) pursue new international markets to generate revenues. The Director of DWED, Dr. Ricardo Villalobos has already completed the first phase of the reorganization by adding necessary staff, including a business account executive and is planning an \$8 million refurbishing of the CSN Sahara Training Center.

Equally important, LERN has recommended a new sustainable model that includes ROI pricing, marketing, and a training delivery structure that will facilitate area businesses’ engagement with CSN to help address their workforce needs. The success of the CSN-DWED initiative is contingent on entrepreneurial solutions and partnership. This is the first infusion of major institutional resources into the CSN workforce development department in the past decade. According to LERN, a successful DWED operation will provide area businesses with quality yet affordable workforce professional development and skills training services. CSN will operate at a 30% profit margin. Under Dr. Zaragoza’s leadership, DWED will transform into an Entrepreneurial Center of Excellence.

Simply stated, Dr. Zaragoza is a national and international leader in workforce development. He is respected by all who have had the pleasure to work with him. I am proud to support his candidacy to the AACC Board of Directors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Annette Parker". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Dr. Annette Parker  
President, South Central College

December 8, 2020

AACC Committee on Directors and Membership Services  
c/o Dr. Angel M. Royal  
1 Dupont Circle NW  
Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20036  
amroyal@aacc.nche.edu

Dear AACC Committee,

It is my pleasure to write this letter on behalf of Dr. Federico Zaragoza, President of the College of Southern Nevada, and on behalf of his candidacy for the AACC Board. CSN serves the largest metropolitan urban area in the state, Las Vegas and the surrounding communities in southern Nevada.

I've had the opportunity to work with Dr. Zaragoza in his role as president of one of four community colleges in Nevada. Dr. Zaragoza is a positive collaborator who often seeks solutions to improving access and success for all the residents in our state. CSN is a leader in Nevada when it comes to the pursuit of workforce training grants that benefit the entire state, and CSN is a helpful partner as we work together to identify emerging industry sectors that will provide the necessary economic diversification of Nevada.

Dr. Zaragoza has utilized knowledge gained in Texas at the Alamo Colleges; and Wisconsin at the Milwaukee Area Technical College and St. Philip's College, to build a workforce development culture at CSN that will benefit Nevada's southern region and thus the entire state.

Moreover, three of the four 2-year colleges in Nevada have worked with legislators to improve prison education and employment programs. Truckee Meadows Community College, Western Nevada College, and the College of Southern Nevada, secured legislative support for inmates, and we coordinate our programs leveraging the various strengths of each institution. As a result of the collaboration, the three colleges received \$380,000 for a project that allows the reintegration of inmates into education pathways and community support.

Dr. Zaragoza has been highly effective in his work with The Southern Nevada Workforce Investment Board, known as Workforce Connections. Workforce Connections will establish "One-Stop Centers" at each of the three CSN Campuses. This initiative will increase opportunities for CSN students to access well-paid career opportunities. The goal will be to assist a minimum of 1,000 CSN students to engage in career planning, attain part-time employment, internships, or apprenticeship opportunities. Dr. Zaragoza has quickly proven his workforce development expertise in Nevada, to the betterment of the Las Vegas region.

In closing, Dr. Zaragoza's experience, dedication to community college learners, and positive, uplifting style will be a great benefit to the AACC Board of Directors. I highly recommend him for this role without reservation.

Best Regards,



Dr. Karin Hilgersom



# Laredo College

## Fort McIntosh Campus

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## South Campus

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AACC Committee on Directors and Membership Services  
c/o Dr. Angel M. Royal,  
1 Dupont Circle NW, Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20036  
[amroyal@aacc.nche.edu](mailto:amroyal@aacc.nche.edu)

*Re: Letter in Support of Dr. Federico Zaragoza to the 2021 AACC Board of Directors*

Dear AACC Committee on Directors and Membership Services:

My name is Dr. Ricardo J. Solis. I am the President of Laredo College, a leading college recently ranked as the top Community College in Texas.

I am writing in support of the candidacy of my friend and former colleague, Dr. Federico Zaragoza, President of the College of Southern Nevada, to the Board of Directors of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC).

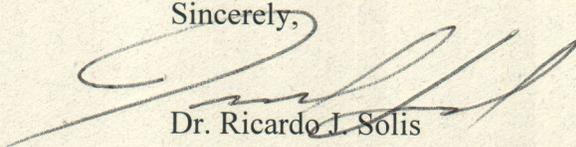
I had the pleasure of working with Dr. Zaragoza during his twenty-year career at Alamo Colleges District in Texas. As Vice Chancellor at Alamo College, he demonstrated an incredible initiative and strong dedication toward developing successful career and technical education programs for the manufacturing industry in the entire San Antonio region. He achieved these outreach efforts by initiating the effective partnerships with all key workforce and education organizations. Furthermore, I worked under his leadership in the establishment of productive training initiatives in the oil and gas industry in South Texas and especially in Mexico. Most significantly, I learned under him of the crucial role that he led to demonstrate the value brought to the final determination and decision by Toyota Motors to locate to Texas.

Dr. Zaragoza has continued to build relationships with the international community. While at CSN, Dr. Zaragoza successfully executed their first customized Cybersecurity "Train the Trainer" Professional Development Training Program for Mexican instructors from the state of Tamaulipas. As a result, CSN is now in dialogue with the ANUT from Mexico (Asociacion Nacional de Universidades Tecnologicas) to develop more professional development programs for Mexican Technical Instructors. ANUT is the Mexican equivalent to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), so this venture would make CSN as a major provider of international training for the Mexican Technical Higher Education system.

ANUT sent a delegation in December 2019 to CSN to assess their instructional capabilities. They toured their three campuses and programs and entered into a ceremonial memorandum of understanding with CSN pledging to pursue future collaborative training opportunities. If successful, CSN could generate in excess of \$100,000 in profit annually from these contracts.

I support Dr. Zaragoza to serve on the AACC Board of Directors. As a workforce expert, he will be able to support community colleges across the country as they prepare to respond to the workforce needs resulting from the COVID-19 global health pandemic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ricardo J. Solis", written in a cursive style.

Dr. Ricardo J. Solis



ALAMO COLLEGES DISTRICT  
San Antonio College

December 8, 2020

American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)  
Committee on Directors and Membership Services  
c/o Dr. Angel M. Royal  
1 Dupont Circle NW, Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20036

***Re: Letter in Support of Dr. Federico Zaragoza to the 2021 AACC Board of Directors***

Dear AACC Committee on Directors and Membership Services:

My name is Dr. Robert J. Vela, Jr., the 12th President of San Antonio College (SAC) in San Antonio, Texas. SAC is one of the largest single-campus community colleges in Texas and one of the biggest in the nation. It is the flagship institution in the Alamo Colleges District, which is made up of five distinct colleges. I assumed this role in August 2014, after serving as the Dean of Student Affairs, Vice President of Student Affairs, and Vice President for Student and Academic Success for nearly six years.

I am writing in support of the candidacy of Dr. Federico Zaragoza, President of the College of Southern Nevada (CSN) to the AACC Board of Directors. I had the great honor of working with Dr. Zaragoza during his twenty-year career at Alamo Colleges District in Texas.

During Dr. Zaragoza's tenure, we established Education & Training Centers in the east side and west side of San Antonio to provide workforce training opportunity for some of the most economically disadvantaged neighborhoods in San Antonio. We introduced "Just-in-time" training to ensure that students had a marketable credential in hand to immediately obtain employment. In addition, we developed and expanded the Alamo Academies to provide high school student technical credentials. This partnership included a paid internship with industry partners.

Dr. Zaragoza is a true servant leader. He leads by example and has a work ethic that does not waiver. He is highly committed to the most marginalized and minoritized segments of the population. He is an innovative leader with an educator heart for his community.

Under Dr. Zaragoza's leadership, his colleges have won numerous national recognitions including the prestigious 2015 and 2016 Bellwether Awards for Workforce Innovation Projects; the 2013 LERN National Instructional Innovation Award for "Just in Time Training" programs, and the 2005 American Association of Community College Trustees' National Workforce Excellence Award, for customizing exemplary job training programs for Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Boeing and Lockheed Martin.

Dr. Zaragoza has been leading CSN since 2018, which is located in Clark County, Nevada. Recently, Clark County received the elite national designation as a "Work Ready Community" from the ACT testing company. This designation means that Clark County is considered to have robust workforce development initiatives. CSN's own Division of Workforce and Economic Development (DWED) has and will continue to play an important role in those initiatives.

More than 2,000 students and jobseekers have earned the ACT WorkKeys Nationals Career Readiness Certificate through DWED. This is an industry-recognized credential that helps jobseekers prove their skills to potential employers.

As we combat the COVID-19 global health pandemic, CSN and Nevada could not be in greater hands. Under the leadership of Dr. Zaragoza, CSN will be key in rebooting the economy by training and educating students for jobs in occupational demand fields. Dr. Zaragoza is leading an enrollment campaign focused on accelerated retraining to re-skill displaced workers to attain employment in high demand growth industries such as IT, healthcare, manufacturing and the middle-skill trades. This will be done through a combination of credit and non-credit programs, and many will be short-term skill certificates or accelerated programs to accommodate a rapid return to work.

As a current member of the AACC Board of Directors, I am proud to support Dr. Zaragoza. I welcome his voice and vision now more than ever.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert J. Vela". The signature is stylized with a large initial "R" and a prominent flourish at the end.

Robert J. Vela, Ed.D  
President, San Antonio College



December 14, 2020

American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)  
Committee on Directors and Membership Services  
c/o Dr. Angel M. Royal  
1 Dupont Circle NW, Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20036  
[aroyal@aacc.nche.edu](mailto:aroyal@aacc.nche.edu)

**Re: Letter in Support of Dr. Federico Zaragoza to the 2021 AACC Board of Directors**

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Dear AACC Committee on Directors and Membership Services:

Please accept this letter in support of the candidacy of Dr. Federico Zaragoza, President of the College of Southern Nevada, to the Board of Directors of AACC.

I have known and worked with Dr. Zaragoza for over fifteen years during his career at Alamo Colleges District in Texas and in his current role at College of Southern Nevada (CSN). I consider him to be one of the community college leaders in workforce, international initiatives and the challenges of a multi-campus organization.

Under Dr. Zaragoza's leadership, his colleges have won numerous national recognitions including the prestigious 2015 and 2016 Bellwether Awards for Workforce Innovation Projects; the 2013 LERN National Instructional Innovation Award for "Just in Time Training" programs, and the 2005 American Association of Community College Trustees' National Workforce Excellence Award, for customizing exemplary job training programs for Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Boeing and Lockheed Martin.

Dr. Zaragoza has continued to build relationships in his current position, and CSN is at the center of efforts to produce over 10,000 skilled workers in collaboration with the school district, state and local workforce offices, labor unions and area employers.

Additionally, Dr. Zaragoza has lectured throughout the United States, Brazil, Mexico, Guatemala, Columbia, Germany, India, Peru, Nicaragua, and Spain. He co-authored the Texas Workforce Commission Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Handbook for Workforce Professionals and the National Science Foundation.

On a personal note, I know that Federico is a strong advocate for excellence, innovation and diversity. He is always professional, personable and collaborative. He is knowledgeable and articulate about the challenges and solutions that we face as community colleges. I am confident that he would be a strong asset to the AACC Board of Directors.

Sincerely,

Stephen C. Head