



## Peralta Community College District

Yvonne Thompson

Student Trustee

25<sup>th</sup> May 2010

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Over the past several weeks, I have been going back and forth, regarding what I wanted my last official statement as a student trustee for the Peralta Community College District to look like. These past two years have encompassed many travelled roads, growth, loss, and some of the most significant moments in my life. As a member of the student leadership in this district, I have come to realize these “titles” that we are appointed to or run for are more than just place cards or resume entries. They represent a voice, a life, a goal, a dream and a future for those that we represent.

It also denotes sacrifice, in some instances; standing alone for what you believe in. I have learned what relentless means, what tenacity means, what it means to be ethical no matter what the price. I have learned what it is to be deliberate in my actions and my speech, making sure that I recognize the impact of what I may say or do has on someone else. I have learned to be patient, and not to consider what something looks like, to delve deeper to gain better insight. I have learned the price of sensationalism, misplaced rhetoric and what “F.E.A.R.” really means.

I have learned the definition of friends and associates, what it means to be a confidante, a constituent, a comrade, and a colleague. I have been blessed to develop relationships with people who have become valued members of my life. Confidantes and friends who have been there through the good and the not so good. When I needed a hand they reached out to me, when I needed direction and correction they came in love, and when I needed encouragement whether financial, or emotional they stepped in and in a collective effort helped me to stand again. I have seen the “fair weather” folks, the constituents, those that have been with me when I was fighting or advocating for something that they have an interest in. When the fight was over and their issue was satisfied they moved on. Then the comrades who came in and were against what I was against and they like the constituents left without even a trace they were there.

### **To the incoming student trustees...**

As a student trustee, first remember the very important word contained in this title, “trust”. Trust is a five letter word, when treasured brings life, builds bridges and strong relationships, however

when violated can bring death and destruction. Valued trust makes the difference in the life of your family, your community, your city, the state, and your country. Your face is the face of student leadership in this district. I encourage you to respond to this call for leadership with integrity, accept the challenge, to face it head on with character and commitment.

Remain true to yourself, and other people will see that truth in you. Be careful, not all that glitters is gold, not all those who smile at you are your friends. There is no such thing as a “free lunch”, there is a price, and sometimes it may be higher than you think. Another important point to remember is you cannot do this by yourself. In this seat, it is important to first learn, sit back, be quiet, and learn. Although I will caution you do not assume that you can do a better job than the last person. No two people have the same skill set and talents, we are all unique. Take time to get familiar with your surroundings, once you do, find your niche. Find your own unique, special niche, remain humble and sincere and you will go far.

Dr. Myles Monroe once wrote:

“Leadership is the capacity to influence others through inspiration motivated by passion, generated by vision, produced by a conviction, ignited by a purpose.”

As a student leader, I have always strived to create benchmarks, to set the bar higher. Believing that if I do one thing well and set an example it will create an avenue for the next person. I realized a very long time ago that leadership is about effectively influencing people. It is not about power and coercion. My passion for the students of this district has and will always be contagious and relentless. A leader is most effective when they are passionate about the team, organization, and the work. The effectiveness of a leader is also weighed by the ability to communicate clearly and being decisive. Passion is a characteristic that cannot be faked. It has to be genuine, and with me it has always been, “what you see is what you get”.

Leadership is action, and it takes vision to create and communicate that action.

I leave you with this...

Habakkuk 2:2 says, “*Write the vision, And make it plain on tablets, That he may run who reads it.*”

In conclusion...

I served these last two years from the hospital, first in 2008 after a little over a month in office I was stricken with a life threatening disease. The hospital stay was 3 days under two months, and the recuperation was supposed to be a four to six month process, I came back early. During that time, I found out what level of love exists in the Peralta Community College District. Then, in 2009, when my husband of more than twenty years, diagnosed with multiple cancers (prostrate, bone, and brain) passed away after a valiant fight. It was during these times that I knew that love surrounded me and has continued all the while; when I thought, I could not take one more step

there was always someone there to pull me up, throw me a rope, or hold the ladder. To you I say thank you.

Thank you Chancellor Harris, Thank you Trustees, Thank you Chancellors' office staff, Thank you Peralta Foundation and staff, Thank you General Counsel and staff, Thank you incoming Chancellor Allen and the District Educational Services staff, Thank you AVC Bracey and the Student Services staff, Thank you Human Resources staff, Thank you Employee Relations staff, Thank you Inspector General Waiters, Thank you College Presidents, Thank you district staff, you all have made this, "*a road worth travelling and I wouldn't take nothing for this journey*".

Thank you to all of my instructors and professors who worked with me and assisted me when I had to miss class, was late for class, and needed extended me time to complete my assignments because of a meeting or a conference I was attending. You are the backbone, the shoulders, and the essence of our growth as we strive to be all that we can be.

Most importantly thank you Students of the Peralta Community College District for the distinct honor to serve you.

In Love,

Yvonne Thompson

Student Trustee, 2008-2010

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