

INTRODUCTION OF STEVEN P. O'DAY
16th President of Austin College
August 17, 2017, 4:00pm
Wynne Chapel, Sherman Texas

Response by Steven O'Day

- Thank you, David, for that gracious welcome and for all that you've done to welcome us to Texas.
- Thank you to the wonderful Austin College Board of Trustees.
- Thank you to the entire search committee for your remarkable commitment of time and energy to this process. It speaks volumes of your love for this very special college.
- Thank you to Lisa Marks, of Wheless Partners, for facilitating the search and her help throughout it.
- My wife, Cece, and I would also like to give a special thank you to Scott Austin, the chair of the search committee, and his wife Denise for greeting and welcoming us to Texas.
- I also need to thank a few others who have made it possible for me to be with you today. My son, Ryan, who I think is watching this from work in Boston, thank you, Ry, for supporting your dad.
- The remarkable colleagues, mentors, and friends, with whom I have worked over the years and from whom I have learned so much— too many to name now but you know who you are.
- Thank you all.
- But most importantly, to the love of my life, Cecelia—how truly blessed I am that you not only share this calling but also that you've given me a lifetime of support to pursue this idea of becoming a college president. Thank you.

I am both humbled and honored to be selected to serve as the 16th President of Austin College.

People often say that the search for a college president boils down to fit. Does the committee see a fit, does the Board see a fit, and does the candidate see a fit? The experience I have had must have been what they had in mind. From the day I learned of the search for a president, it has been obvious to me that Austin College's mission is my mission. Austin College's way is my way.

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The mission to “educate students in the liberal arts and sciences in order to prepare them for rewarding careers and full, engaged, and meaningful lives” matches with my own deeply held belief that we are called upon to educate the whole student—mind, body, and spirit—both in and beyond the classroom.

A liberal arts education is an unmatched preparation for a life of learning, leadership, significance, service, and integrity in the 21st century global community. It prepares students as creative problem solvers, critical thinkers, collaborators, servant leaders, effective communicators, and people who approach the world inclusively.

New issues, challenges, and complexities arise every day and never has it been more important that our students be prepared to adapt, work together, analyze, and solve. A liberal arts education does that.

Austin College combines this liberal arts foundation with the skills and experiences that will propel students into the future with strength. This combination is only possible through the extraordinary relationships that students form with faculty and other mentors across the campus.

As Cece and I have gotten to know the Austin College community, we have seen and met people who are truly committed to preparing students for rewarding careers and for full, engaged, and meaningful lives.

We share this commitment. We share this calling.

So as we begin this new chapter in Austin College’s rich history, I ask a few things from ALL of you (faculty, students, administrators, the Board, alumni, and friends of Austin College) and I pledge something to you in return.

I ask for your wisdom and vision, patience and support. I ask for your energy and your sense of innovation and fearlessness. I ask for your good humor and willingness to work hard. We will need all of those things for Austin College’s continued success. In return, my pledge to you is a simple one—I pledge my wisdom and vision, patience and support. I pledge my energy and sense of innovation and fearlessness. I pledge my good humor and willingness to work hard. In short, I pledge to you the very best I have to give.

We—all of ’Roo Nation—are in this together! And together, I know we will succeed in our mission and ensure Austin College’s place among the nation’s treasured liberal arts institutions for generations to come.

For the welcome to the Austin College community that has been beyond anything we could have imagined, THANK YOU.

We cannot wait to begin our work together.