



Dr. Alex Johnson to Become Fourth President of Cuyahoga Community College

Dr. Alex Johnson, who led Cuyahoga Community College's Metropolitan Campus from 1993 to 2003, will return to the College in July as its fourth permanent president, the Board of Trustees announced in May.

"Since leaving his position as Metropolitan Campus president a decade ago, Dr. Johnson has gained vital experience in two very diverse community college environments," said Jerry L. Kelsheimer, chairman of the Board of Trustees. "He brings a unique perspective that is both internal and external, and we are extremely pleased that Cuyahoga Community College's continued growth will be carried out under his strong leadership."

Johnson is currently president of the Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC), where he focuses on strengthening the college's core mission of providing affordable access to quality education for nearly 60,000 students annually at nine campuses and centers in greater Pittsburgh. After leaving Tri-C in 2003, he became chancellor of Delgado Community College in New Orleans, serving in that capacity during Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath.



Dr. Alex Johnson

In returning to Tri-C, Johnson will succeed Dr. Jerry Sue Thornton, who has guided unprecedented institutional development during 21 years as president. Thornton announced in January that she would retire, effective June 30.

"As Metropolitan Campus president I had the great privilege to serve under and work closely with Dr. Thornton for 10 years," said Johnson. "It is indeed both an honor and very humbling that the Board has the confidence in my ability to build upon her tremendous legacy."

"During its 50-year history, Tri-C has become noted for innovations in the use of technology for instructional design and delivery, cultural advancements like JazzFest, and other achievements including the Corporate College. I look forward to continuing to foster such achievements befitting a League for Innovation institution, but more importantly continuing to advance its 'learning-centered' philosophy to improve access, learning and attainment."

Finalists participated in College forums last week at the Metropolitan Campus. Kelsheimer said additional meetings with faculty, staff and students will be scheduled over the next four to six weeks after Johnson winds down the responsibilities of his current position.

"Thanks to Tri-C's reputation and record of success, there was tremendous interest in this opportunity," said Kelsheimer. "Ultimately, Dr. Johnson was the clear choice among a very strong group of candidates."

"In Dr. Johnson, we have found a strong leader with the ability to extend his influence beyond the College itself. He has an absolute commitment to student success and to supporting our

faculty and staff and has demonstrated his ability to manage fiscal affairs responsibly. Moreover, he will be aligned and engaged with the community's needs and interests, and willing and able to evolve our organization in response to a changing environment."

The 20-member Presidential Search Advisory Committee, chaired by Trustee David W. Whitehead and including faculty, staff and community representation, narrowed the field to three finalists after interviewing eight candidates; one of the three subsequently withdrew from consideration for family reasons.

An executive-search firm had previously identified 15 "top candidates" after reviewing more than 40 applications. In addition to Johnson the committee interviewed Dr. Terrence J. Burgess, president of San Diego City College; Dr. Stephen M. Curtis, president of Community College of Philadelphia; Dr. Craig Foltin, executive vice president/treasurer, Administration & Finance, at Tri-C; Dr. Lars A. Hafner, former president of the State College of Manatee-Sarasota (Florida); Dr. Kathryn E. Jeffery, president of Sacramento City College; Dr. Belinda S. Miles, provost and executive vice president, Academic and Student Affairs, at Tri-C; and Dr. Daniel J. Phelan, president of Jackson Community College District.

During his tenure at CCAC, Johnson is credited with strengthening the college's leadership in meeting the Pittsburgh region's workforce and economic development needs as well as expanding recognition of the college regionally and nationally, building CCAC's commitment to diversity and updating the facilities needed for innovative learning. He has also worked to strengthen the college's financial position through effective and efficient budget management processes and the expansion of revenue streams, including a groundbreaking \$41 million fundraising campaign.

CCAC annually educates 33,000 credit students through 155 degree, certificate and transfer programs and offers non-credit and workforce development courses to 30,000 students.

While chancellor at Delgado Community College, Johnson served on multiple local and regional boards and advisory committees and contributed his expertise to the recovery of New Orleans as a member of several committees of Mayor C. Ray Nagin's "Bring New Orleans Back Commission." Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Blanco appointed him to the Louisiana Recovery Authority.

Johnson currently serves on the boards of the National Labor College, the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). He is serving in numerous capacities with the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), including member of the Board and its Executive Committee, chair of the Committee on Community College Advancement, member of the Voluntary Framework on Accountability Steering Committee, member of the 21st Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges, and co-chair of the Implementation Committee for the Commission's report Reclaiming the American Dream.

He earned a doctorate from the Pennsylvania State University, a master's degree from Lehman College, a bachelor's degree from Winston-Salem State University and is the recipient of two honorary degrees.

Tri-C is the largest of 23 community colleges in Ohio. The College is second in Ohio and 61st in the nation in conferring associate degrees in all disciplines.

Fully accredited, the College has been selected as an Achieving the Dream College and is a board member college of the League for Innovation. Each year more than 55,000 credit and non-credit students take courses at our four traditional campuses, two Corporate College locations, 50+ off campus sites and via television and the Internet. Offering more than 1,000 credit courses and more than 140 career and technical programs and liberal arts curricula, Cuyahoga Community College is a highly respected academic institution focused on student success.