

21 Questions for Dr. Ken Atwater

1. Top Priorities

- a. Build upon Dr. Stephenson's legacy of a highly collaborative, collegial environment that encourages innovation and a respect for each member of the College community;
- b. Ensure that HCC is a key partner in addressing economic recovery of the region through the delivery of programs and services that are responsive to the needs of the business and industry community; and
- c. Increase institutional capacity to serve the community through a myriad of community and business partnerships---leveraging our resources for the greatest impact.

2. Short and Long Term Goals

- a. Listen and Learn: HCC is a dynamic organization. I want to learn as much as I can by listening to faculty, staff, students, administration and community leaders----to ensure that the decisions we make going forward are reflective of the needs of our multiple constituencies.
- b. Immerse myself in the community through active interaction with the local chamber of commerce(s); non-profit agencies, including United Way; various educational constituents, k-12 and high educational institutions; and representatives from business and industry.
- c. Long term goals are reflected in the top priorities listed above.

3. Proudest Achievement

- a. To assess the legacy of a college president, you must ask: is the college in a better place, and are the citizens that we serve in a better position, than before I came? As far as South Mountain and Phoenix go, I believe I can honestly say yes. I don't know if you can single out just one thing---we created award-winning bilingual nursing and bioscience programs, built a new performing arts center and library, and increased full-time enrollment by over 30 per cent. But most importantly, I think we are more accessible and more open than we've ever been to the community that we are serving and have positioned the College as a central force in the economic revitalization of South Phoenix.

4. What attracted me to HCC

- a. Hillsborough Community College is a nationally recognized college with a strong faculty, staff and administrative team. The pride of the people who work here is palpable---it is truly a collaborative and innovative institution. I am proud to be the new President.

5. What excites me most about HCC?

- a. What excites me most is the opportunity to lead in such a high performing institution. A solid foundation has been built under Dr. Stephenson's leadership---and I look forward to building upon past successes in continuing HCC's legacy as a great place to learn and a great place to work.

6. Mission, Vision and Values

- a. I've always believed the role of a community college is to think globally and act locally. We will continue to develop innovative approaches to the delivery of educational programs and services that are responsive to the local needs of the community---while positioning our students to compete in a global economy.

7. Future of HCC in 10 years
 - a. Realize the vision of the master plan—so that we can continue to increase our capacity to serve----while achieving national recognition for the programs and services that result in successful student outcomes.
8. Key Issue that is Central to the Future Success of HCC
 - a. Leveraging our education and training resources to promote economic recovery of the region---we must partner with business and industry to align our offerings in areas where we project new job growth.
9. Supporting Faculty, Staff Students in Current Economic Climate
 - a. We need to find ways to reward and recognize faculty and staff as they design and implement solutions that address challenges we face in this current economic climate.
 - b. Conversely, we need to identify the programs and services that result in successful student outcomes---- and have rigorous ways of measuring our performance so that we continue to invest our resources in the areas that have the greatest impact.
10. President-Student Relationship
 - a. I started my career in community colleges in the Student Development arena—so I have a particular passion for doing the “right things” on behalf of students. If we always ask ourselves—how will this benefit students---and contribute to their future success---we will be in a better position to make the right decision on how we allocate our resources. Students First---is a mantra that has shaped my leadership style.
11. Personal advice/mentor that positively impacted career path
 - a. As an undergraduate student at Murray State---a faculty member gave me the best personal advice that changed the course of my career path . . . he told me if I wanted to be part of changing people’s lives for the better –pursue a career in community colleges.
And I am grateful for that advice.
12. Interests in Tampa Bay Community
 - a. I am interested in being an active participant in the community through my involvement with the local chamber of commerce(s); non-profit agencies, including United Way; various educational constituents, k-12 and high educational institutions; representatives from business and industry and other entities that are focused on economic development of the region.
13. What adjectives describe you
 - a. High energy, collaborative, transparent, humorous
14. Hobbies or interests
 - a. I am very civic-minded---so much of my time is spent in the development of community partnerships----I am also an avid golfer.

15. If you could have lunch with anyone past or present who and why?
- a. The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. I admire his commitment to racial equality, respect for all persons, and peace. In a span of only 13 years, Dr. King was able to point out unspeakable injustices. He set all of America on the path to peacefully correcting these injustices so that every person may fully participate in all that America has to offer. He did this with great eloquence and style. He is a role model for all time.
16. What is something you aspire to be?
- a. A collaborative team member of the Hillsborough Community College family and the Tampa community.
17. What is your favorite food?
- a. I enjoy all types of food . . . red snapper, grouper and pasta are some of my favorites.
18. What is your vacation spot?
- a. I don't have one favorite vacation spot. I love to travel and explore new locations. Anywhere that I can relax with family and friends is the perfect vacation spot for me.
19. Who are your favorite football and baseball teams?
- a. Well, I guess now they are the Bucs and the Rays. Up to this point---I followed the Dallas Cowboys and the Yankees---I hope you don't hold that against me (smile).
20. What is your favorite book?
- a. Jim Collins' book from *Good to Great* provides some great lessons on leadership---and what it takes to move high performing organizations to the next level.
21. What is your favorite movie?
- a. I am a movie buff---love all types of film---historical, westerns, comedy. But one of my recent favorites is *Invictus* . . . *the story of how Nelson Mandela leveraged the country's soccer team in his efforts to bring a divided country together through shared vision.*