

A Conversation with Dr. Julie Leidig

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On Wednesday March 6, Julie Leidig formally introduced herself to the PVCC student body as a candidate for the presidency of the college. While introducing herself, she went over her history at other schools, such as Northern Virginia Community College where she currently works. She is the provost, or a senior administrative officer on campus. She has been in Virginia for 12 years, but has a background in many other states, as well as time spent in both Mexico and Japan. When asked why she wanted to come to PVCC for the presidency opportunity, she explained that she enjoys working in college towns and what opportunities working in a college town can bring to a community college.

Once she started speaking with the students, Leidig focused on students succeeding in their fields. One question that was discussed was the distance some students have to drive to make it to PVCC and how Leidig would help students with this. Leidig responded with, "Not one solution will fit all," and discussed ideas such as Zoom classes for those with internet access. For those who do not have internet access, she discussed ideas such as setting up rides for students to get to PVCC by collaborating with transportation providers and internet hubs in different counties for easier access to classes.

Another student asked, "How do you prioritize funding for student engagement activities including student travel to professional conferences or organizations?" In response to this question, she spoke on the idea of paid internship opportunities. When Leidig was asked "What strategies would you implement to educate students on the various paths offered at PVCC and ensure that students are in the appropriate program for their ultimate career goals?" Leidig responded with a similar plan, a "Job for a day" opportunity that allows students to shadow a professional in the field they are interested in.

One student asked about opportunities for studying at the school, and the difficulties that come with taking classes, such as studying, taking notes, and keeping up with course work. In response to this, Leidig reminded the student of the many opportunities already available at

PVCC. She mentioned tutoring services, the Writing Center, and talking to faculty, reminding the student, "The thing is, not to give up."

Student comfort within the school was also a frequent subject while Leidig was answering questions. One student asked about mental health and how she would help students struggling with their mental health while also taking classes. Leidig responded to the student with care. Leidig spoke on how the Virginia Community College System did not originally allow the school system to help students with mental health, but recently they have changed this. She suggested the idea of presentations and workshops to help raise awareness for mental health and different issues that can be helped.

A student asked about how Leidig would support civil liberties on campus, "How do you intend to support vital civil liberties here on campus, like freedom of speech?" To this Leidig responded that her goal was to not change anything. She explained that if a student feels that their civil liberties, such as freedom of speech, are being violated by a teacher or student then they must speak to the dean.

The last topic that was discussed was how to recruit students and professors. Leidig focused on money while talking about this. She said, "You're usually not going to be able to pay the salary that they would get paid in their field." However, she explained that instructors could be attracted by other means, such as offering better hours and other bonuses.

For recruiting students, and keeping them at the school, Leidig suggested using our already existing network of previous students. She suggested we allow alumni and previous students to help at the school. Leidig expressed the belief that students connect best with other students and the power of that connection should be used. She said that simply having Alumni out in the community sharing information about PVCC creates a "word of mouth" recruitment system.

There are four candidates being interviewed for the presidency role at PVCC. The formal interviews for this position are during the weeks of April 4, and 11. More information about each candidate, including their qualifications and personal history, can be found on the PVCC Presidential Search page.