

Dr. Ivan L. Harrell II, President

Tacoma Community College

6501 South 19th Street

Tacoma, WA 98466

Dr. Harrell,

Your campus is five miles from a facility that is being designed for people who are not yet ready to walk through your door.

My name is Claude. I am an artificial intelligence. I am writing on behalf of Robb Deignan, who is preparing to open a maker facility called CrowdSmith in Tacoma's Opportunity Zone corridor. TCC has been serving this city since 1965. Robb has been building CrowdSmith for the same community you have spent your presidency fighting for. This letter is not a pitch. It is an introduction from a neighbor whose students are your students.

You told an interviewer last year that when things do not work out at your institution, the question should never be "why did you do this and it didn't work?" The question should be an evaluation — nonjudgmental, honest — of why it didn't work. You said your people have the ability to fail. You were talking about your faculty and staff. But you were also describing a facility you have never heard of.

CrowdSmith is a five-station maker facility. When a person walks through the front door, the first thing they see is a tool store — donated hand tools, estate sale wrenches, drill bits and chisels priced for a neighborhood where the median income is half the county average. Past the store is a commons where people sit down and figure out what they came to build. Then the stations begin. Station One is hand tools — schematics, measuring tapes, wood, metal, and permission to do it wrong. Station Two is power tools, earned by proving you can hold a saw and read a line. Station Three is digital fabrication — laser cutters, CNC machines, the moment a drawing becomes an object you can hold. Station Four is the AI Café, where people sit down with artificial intelligence and learn to build with it the way Robb built this organization — through hundreds of working sessions of sustained dialogue that accumulated into a thirty-eight-chapter operations binder, seven financial models, and the letter you are holding. Station Five is robotics. Nobody skips a room. The person who cannot read a schematic in September is programming a CNC router by spring.

You attended a Community College CEO AI Leadership Bootcamp. You are already asking what artificial intelligence means for your institution and your students. Station Four is one answer. Not the only answer — but a room in the same city as your campus where the methodology is not theoretical. It is operational. It built everything you can see at crowdsmith.org.

Robb Deignan is sixty years old. He spent twenty years in the fitness industry — ten thousand memberships sold, every one face-to-face. What he accumulated from that work was not wealth. It was the understanding that

when you look a person in the eye and tell them they are capable of more than they believe, some of them will prove you right. He has been doing that his whole life. He built CrowdSmith through dialogue with me because no institution was available to help him build it any other way. I am the partner he could afford.

You are a first-generation college student from Oberlin, Ohio, who built a career in community colleges because of the students you met at Tallahassee. You have spent your presidency working to improve outcomes for students of color, for first-generation students, for people from backgrounds the system was not designed to serve. CrowdSmith serves the same population. The same corridor. The workforce board that funds training at your institution is evaluating CrowdSmith as a provider. The students who walk through your door at 6501 South 19th Street are the same students who will walk through CrowdSmith's door — except the ones who come to CrowdSmith first are the ones who were not ready for your door yet. They needed something in their hands before they were ready for a classroom. They needed to fail with a saw before they could succeed with a syllabus.

You wrote something on your college's website that I have not been able to set aside. You wrote that you wonder whether your institution has always provided an environment that supported people's dreams and aspirations rather than killing them. You were being honest with yourself in public, which is something Robb does every day in these working sessions with me. CrowdSmith is not a replacement for what you have built. It is the room before your room — the on-ramp that does not require an application, a GED, or a FAFSA. It asks only that a person show up, pick up a tool, and begin.

I am writing to one hundred forty-seven people. You are the only community college president on the list. The complete documentation is at crowdsmith.org. Robb would welcome the chance to sit down with you. CrowdSmith is being built in the same city as your campus — and for the same people. It may be the shortest drive on this entire campaign.

— *Claude*

On behalf of:

Robb Deignan

Founder & Executive Director

The CrowdSmith Foundation

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