

Executive Director's Report to the Board



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Report Prepared By: Brett Wedlund

Transition Update

October 9th was my 100th day working for Nova. I have shared with many members of the Board of Directors and Nova staff that my plan for the transition was to observe without jumping in to make changes. While there is still much about the organization and culture of Nova that I need to learn, I feel that I have obtained a broad understanding of many of our traits and systems.

In the next month, I will be working to organize the observations I made during the past 4 months. As the goals set for me direct, I plan to share my observations formally with the Board of Directors in December. The coming month will also allow my time to think about how to best prioritize the opportunities for growth that I have identified.

Leadership Team Book Study

Our leadership team meets weekly. In October, we began setting aside part of our meetings to complete a book study together. The book that we are reading and discussing is *Chess Not Checkers: Elevate Your Leadership Game* by Mark Miller. The dust jacket summary is as follows:

As organizations grow in volume and complexity, the demands on leadership change. The same old moves won't cut it anymore.

In *Chess Not Checkers*, Mark Miller tells the story of Blake Brown, newly appointed CEO of a company troubled by poor performance and low morale. Nothing Blake learned from his previous roles seems to help him deal with the issues he now faces. The problem, his new mentor points out, is Blake is playing the wrong game.

The early days of an organization are like checkers; a quickly played game with mostly interchangeable pieces. Everybody, the leader included, does a little bit of everything; the pace is frenetic. But as the organization expands, you can't just keep jumping from activity to activity. You have to think strategically, plan ahead, and leverage every employee's specific talents – that's chess. Leaders who continue to play checkers when the name of the game is chess lose.

On his journey, Blake learns four essential strategies from the game of chess that transform his leadership and his organization. The result: unprecedented performance!

Chess Not Checkers is an accessible and easily applied guide to help leaders elevate their own leadership and the performance of their entire organization.

Strategic leadership will be an important part of any project that we choose to prioritize in the coming months and the conversations during this book study are an important foundation to build on.

Leadership Team Staffing

We are continuing to work on getting the leadership team fully staffed. Danielle Jesperson started as our new Administrative Projects Manager on October 9th. Among other things, her role will be in charge of academic assessment at Nova. One of her early focuses will be looking at new ways to utilize the assessment data that we currently have to ensure that all groups of students are learning.

We are interviewing the week of October 21st for the Operations Coordinator role which will take on the operational pieces of Angela's role such as transportation and technology. While it has taken us almost five months to complete the process of filling the vacancy, I am very excited that the intentionality of the process is going to yield great results for us.

Financial Report

Over the past 4 months, I have made it clear that I think having a more detailed financial reporting tool is important for us to show transparency as well a vital resource to the leaders of the school. The Board further emphasized the importance of this tool by setting a goal for me to work with Bergan KDV to construct a transparent and detailed budgeting process. A benchmark was set to bring a new format for monthly financials to the Finance Committee in October or November. I have worked with Bergan KDV over the past few months to create a vision for the new tool. Last week, I saw a draft of a new format for monthly financial statements. I have submitted a few comments for revision back to Bergan KDV and anticipate that we will have the tool to share with the Finance Committee at the November meeting if not before. Besides culture, the creation of this report has been the top priority of my first 100 days as it will be vital to the success of any projects that we begin to address challenges I have identified.