



January 7, 2022

Dear Denver Institute community,

I write today to share the news that after much conversation, reflection, and prayer with my family and trusted advisors, I have asked the board of directors to begin the search for the next CEO of Denver Institute for Faith & Work (DIFW). It has been a privilege and honor founding and then building Denver Institute over the last 10 years. I will stay in my role as CEO until a new CEO is appointed later in 2022, and I will continue to serve DIFW for the next 9-12 months with the supportive help of our stable and talented staff leadership.

As I reflect on my own professional journey, there are three reasons why now is the right time to transition to a new leader. The first reason is God's call. Starting and growing an organization has been a gift; it has also come with challenges. Months ago, I began to sense God's call to "release" DIFW. Like many founders, I've found that my identity has often been too wrapped up into my work and professional success. I believe God is calling me to love the Caller more than the calling and open-handedly let go of the CEO role. Now is the time to rest, seek renewal, and recenter my heart on Christ himself, my final and deepest gift. I'm also looking forward to giving more attention to my growing children and supporting my wife's career.

The second reason is institutional renewal. For years I've observed the careers of leaders in American Christianity whom I deeply respect. Several of them made the decision to step down after 10 years of very successful leadership. They realized that institutions need seasons of renewal, like people, and that fresh vision, perspective, and leadership is often key to long-term institutional strength. The Christian church needs leaders who can take up the mantle of responsibility; it also needs those who can just as easily lay it down. Leadership is stewardship, not a personal possession. Ultimately the Resurrected Christ is the leader of DIFW, and He will be faithful to continue His good work through a new leader.

The third reason is about long-term organizational health. I believe effective transitions of power are critical to healthy institutions that have staying power – and they're all too rare. A healthy process of giving power to a new leader is key to seeing DIFW grow and thrive for the next generation. Moreover, DIFW is in a healthy position. We have a strong leadership team, a budget of more than \$1M, a group of 250+ committed donors, and highly effective programs such as the 5280 Fellowship, CityGate, public events, the Faith & Work Classroom, the Faith & Work Podcast, and our national events: Women,

Work & Calling and Business for the Common Good. The organization is strong and well-positioned for a new leader.

Our Board will begin a process of searching for my successor. Board Chair Bob Larkin will be in touch with our constituents over the coming months to answer any questions. I'm deeply grateful to our board of directors for their work in this process. It's a joy to work alongside such a capable group of leaders. Long term, I intend to stay connected to DIFW not just as the founder, but as a fellow donor, learner, and friend.

Paul once wrote to the church in Thessalonica, "We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" (Thessalonians 1:3). Truly, for so many of you, DIFW has been a labor of love, prompted by faith, and ultimately inspired by the call of Jesus himself.

As my wife and my four daughters await God's call in this next season of our life, we want to express to you our *deep gratitude* for all you've given and continue to give. In the last 10 years, what we have built *together* is a vibrant institution centered on the life, death, resurrection, and Second Coming of Jesus Christ and its far-reaching effects for our work and our world.

This is a new opportunity for DIFW and I am thankful for your continued commitment to our mission. I am confident that He who began a good work in us will be faithful to continue it into this next season of growth (Philippians 1:6).

Thank you for the honor of leading for ten wonderful years. You have my sincere gratitude.

Grateful,



Jeff Haanen
Founder & CEO
Denver Institute for Faith and Work