June 29, 2021

Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiative

Brief Overview

• The Community Foundation for Muskegon County asked Muskegon Community College (MCC) to employ individuals to lead diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in the Muskegon County region.
• Many local businesses and organizations are eager to invest in these efforts to create a welcoming community and attract a diverse workforce that will improve our local economy in significant ways.
• A County Commissioner is spreading untruths about these efforts via email.
• Regardless of his efforts, the Muskegon County community embraces the work that will create a culture of inclusion. MCC will lead this work.

Facts Regarding DEI Efforts in the Muskegon County Region

On June 29, 2021, Dr. Nesbary, Muskegon Community College President and Todd Jacobs, President and CEO of the Community Foundation for Muskegon County were scheduled to present a funding request to the Muskegon County Commission. In the past few days, an email filled with untruths about this request has been circulating. The Muskegon County Commissioners have postponed the presentation to allow time to address the behavior of the County Commissioner who authored the email.

Here are the facts:

• Muskegon Community College, the Community Foundation for Muskegon County, Talent 2025, and many businesses and communities across our county, state, and nation recognize that we are failing to generate and maintain a diverse and vibrant workforce. This hurts our families, our students, our communities, our businesses, our education institutions, and it weakens our economy.
• With MCC’s vision of an educated, inclusive community and our dedication to equity and excellence, we are a natural leader in this important work.
• An MCC Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Taskforce, led by Dr. Pamela Smith, was formed in 2020 to develop strategies and processes that will establish MCC as the leading educational institution for organizations who seek out assistance when developing the overall components of their DEI Strategy.
• In May of 2021, the Community Foundation for Muskegon County asked Muskegon Community College to take the lead in employing high quality diversity, equity, and inclusion staff members to serve as catalysts to promote a culture of inclusion in businesses and organizations around the region.
• The Foundation and College have been meeting with local employers and organizations who are eager to invest in an initiative that will improve our community. Use of
collaborative funding promotes buy-in and spurs real action within companies and organizations.

- Regardless of the actions of a Muskegon County Commissioner, a countywide and collaboratively funded DEI initiative will be a reality here in the Muskegon County region.
- When diverse individuals can positively engage in living, learning, and working in a welcoming community, the community thrives.

These definitions make it clear what DEI stands for at Muskegon Community College:

- **Diversity**: Diversity encompasses complex differences and similarities in perspectives, identities, and points of view among members of an institution as well as among individuals who make up the wider community. Diversity includes important and interrelated dimensions of human identity such as race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, socio-economic status, nationality, citizenship, religion, sexual orientation, ability, and age. Source: [https://www.luther.edu/ed-accreditation/assets/Standard_4_IR__3_10_13.pdf](https://www.luther.edu/ed-accreditation/assets/Standard_4_IR__3_10_13.pdf)
- **Equity**: Fairness or justice in the way people are treated. (Merriam-Webster)
- **Inclusion**: “The achievement of an environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully, have equal access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute fully to the organization’s success”. (Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) – [http://www.talentintelligence.com/blog/bid/377611/inclusion-and-the-benefits-of-diversity-in-the-workplace](http://www.talentintelligence.com/blog/bid/377611/inclusion-and-the-benefits-of-diversity-in-the-workplace)