

Daniel Boothe

We are coming to you live from Frenzy, and sitting down at the table right now is the tutoring services manager, friend of the podcast, and runs the academic support department, Miss Emily Butkovich, in the hot seat. Welcome, Emily.

Emily

Thank you. I'm glad to be here.

Samantha

Hi, Emily.

Daniel Boothe

What a beautiful day this is. I mean, it's rare we get to be outside like this. and get to experience all the students and all the energy. What's your feeling about today?

Emily

Oh man, it's just so exciting to have all of our students back on campus. They're ready to learn and they have some nerves. And so I'm just excited to be here to help calm them and remind them that we are here to support and provide Lots of different resources.

Speaker 4

Yeah, awesome.

Samantha

Absolutely. And they are ready to plug in with tutoring services and all the other stuff that academic support has to offer.

Emily

Yeah, so we have different types of tutoring for students. We've got content-specific tutoring, and then we also have general support. So content-specific tutoring would be if students are coming in, say, for a Spanish class and they need help conjugating different verbs or pronunciation. We've got tutors who have taken those courses, they've demonstrated proficiency, and they can work the student specifically, but we also have general support. And so if that's just something, if students are coming in looking for study help and time management strategies, we've got tutors who are students themselves and they can just share their own experiences and tips for how to be successful.

Samantha

That's excellent. And so say I'm a student who needs help with my nursing stuff. Where can I go to find that help?

Emily

That is a great question. So we do have MCC tutors available. We are located on the third floor in room 3081. We are in the basement, which people joke that we're the hidden gem. But yes, we're located on the third floor, directly underneath the English department. Right, next to an elevator too. You can get there so easy. Yes, indeed.

Daniel Boothe

All right, we're going to pause here just for a quick station ID. We have a bee that is buzzing around the J, the J talk table. And Daniel doesn't, Daniel doesn't handle bees. Anyway, so we got some really exciting news. Not only do you offer some incredible support and tutoring services down there in the hidden gem and the catacombs that is the academic support department, but now we have sometimes even 24-hour, sometimes 24-hour live tutoring that's available through a new service called Brainfuse. What is Brainfuse and how did you get the dollars to funded to take me back to the very beginning and give us the full details.

Emily

Yeah, so BrainFuse is a new service that we purchased with College Success Grant funds. It is an online service staffed by professional tutors who are professionals with bachelor's degrees and master's degrees, and they have teaching experience. It is a resource that is available outside of our regular business hours with many subjects supported 24.

Samantha

Great, that's awesome. It sounds like we've got super qualified tutors available all the time online. That's just exactly what our students need.

Daniel Boothe

How do they log in and how do they get involved in plugging?

Emily

Yeah, so it's going to be through MyMCC. They'll enter through Blackboard. On the left-hand side, they'll find a link for tools, and when they click on that, it will take them to a page where they can click on a link for BrainFuse.

Daniel Boothe

Awesome. Now, I would imagine, we've talked about this in the past, we talked about this last year, there is sometimes a real hesitation for students to come in and get the counseling and get the support they needed because it almost feels to some like a failure on their part or they're not or they're not meeting some certain standard that some family member has put before them or they put before themselves and we know that that's just a darn lie. It's a lie, right? And so what is exciting about Brainfuse to me is that there's a little bit of Anonymity to it, correct? Yeah, sure, but what is your message to students who may be struggling that feel like coming in to get a tutor is somehow admitting defeat? That is not the truth, and what is your message to them?

Emily

Yeah, I think... Anytime asking for help, it's vulnerable, but it is so important. And we want students to come to us and to know that we care. We're here because we care and we want them to succeed. One thing, my colleague the other day, JB Muenberg, he was talking to his students and telling them about tutoring services. And I said, don't be afraid to come get help here. And he said, You know what? Be afraid, but do it anyways. And so, I just think, don't let that fear hold you back. You gotta just say, you know what? There are people here who say they care, believe it, and know that we want you to do well. And so I just think Brainfuse and our MCC tutors, we want students to take advantage to use them. There's services that are built into your experience here. There's no additional cost. So that's just another reason. Take advantage of the help that's available.

Daniel Boothe

Awesome.

Samantha

Absolutely. And well said, Emily.

Daniel Boothe

Emily, on behalf of JTalk, thanks so much for being on the pod today, and we look forward to seeing you down in the Hidden, what'd you call it?

Samantha

The Hidden Gems.

Daniel Boothe

The Hidden Gems. That's a great band name.

Emily

Oh, yeah.

Daniel Boothe

Samantha and the Hidden Gems. Awesome. Thanks so much, Emily.

Samantha

All right, moving right along to our next guest, we have here George Maniatis, the head of the Social Sciences Department and the Director of Experiential Learning. Hi, George. Thanks for being with us.

Daniel Boothe

Welcome to the podcast. Thanks so much for being on.

George

Thank you, folks. I'm so pleased to be able to join you here today on this wonderful day on Second day of Jayhawk frenzy and the nice sunny day.

Daniel Boothe

It's beautiful out, isn't it? I mean, you can't dial up a better day for it. Remember last year we sat in the sun and baked?

George

Yes.

Daniel Boothe

Yeah.

George

Today it's just. ideal.

Daniel Boothe

It's just absolutely gorgeous.

Speaker 4

Yes.

Daniel Boothe

Well, thanks so much for being on here. So my first question out of the gates, experiential learning. Take me back to the development of that. I know that you approached the opportunity team, and this is an idea that you had. Tell us a little bit about experiential learning. Some of the, give me a couple examples of trips you've gone on maybe to Chicago, and tell us what it's all about.

George

Okay, well, this is in its 15th year that we've been doing this. So it started as a vision, and it's not my vision. It was actually a colleague of mine, Kurt Troutman, who was a fellow colleague in the social sciences. He taught history and political science. It started with a course, which was the History 211 and 212 sequence, which was the Battle of Gettysburg and the Battle of Vicksburg. And at that time, I was an administrator, actually. I was the associate vice president for student services. And I was in charge of enrollment and oversaw financial aid and all kinds of stuff. And he approached me because he knew I was a historian by training. And I had also taught part-time in the social sciences of history class. And he said, hey, listen, we're going down to Vicksburg, Mississippi. Would you like to come with us? A little did he tell me that coming meant that you would drive a van full of 15 students?

George

Yeah, Vicksburg. And that was the beginning of a long series, which has evolved to what we have today with, you know, motor coaches, trips, et cetera. But over the last 12 years, we've gone to a lot of different places. Cleveland, Mammoth Caves, Chicago numerous times. Detroit numerous times, Cantigny, which is outside of Chicago. So we've gone to many different places, different experiences, depending on our audience. We've been able to bring community with us over the years. So there's a lot of different things that we've done. With the focus on education as being a lifelong experience.

Daniel Boothe

Yeah, you took the words out of my mouth. Is there a through line? Is there a purpose to all these different trips?

George

Well, part of it is 2 things. One, we noticed that our students are not well traveled. A lot of that is economics, Let's be kind of frank. You get a little comfortable when you sit in paradise here. You know, everything. Who would want to leave Muskegon? Yeah, who would, yeah, we hear that all the time. Why would I ever want to live anywhere but here? But we do know that, what, 40% of all of our students will be somewhere else after they

graduate. And many of them will get a first job somewhere else. They will not be here. So we have to begin to prepare people. So that's what we do.

Daniel Boothe

When I graduated college, the first thing I did was move to Chicago, and then I moved to New York City. And there's a whole world out there, you know what I mean? And guess what? That's what I tell students, go out there and see the world, because Muskegon will be right here waiting for you when you get back. You know.

George

What I mean? And we tend to say we need people to work their way back. So, you know, work their way back. So that's what we do.

Samantha

Absolutely.

Daniel Boothe

Tell us about Oh God, lots of trips coming up.

George

We're going to Chicago to the Art Institute of Chicago. We will be going on October 24th. That's a Friday. That's going to have some really interesting things involved with it because it not only reaches into history and art courses, But we also are one of the 14 different university partners with the Art Institute. We are the only college in Michigan to be a university partner.

Daniel Boothe

I did not know that.

George

Yeah, with the Art Institute. And that means for our students and staff, that means free access to the Art Institute. So you can get in any day you want with your student ID or your employee ID. And it also means that we get special lectures and things that are associated with that. And we will be having a lecture on impressionistic art.

Daniel Boothe

Oh, wow.

George

So it'll be interesting. The Art Institute has one of the largest collections of impressionistic art in the world, second only to Paris.

Daniel Boothe

I mean, as a former Chicago resident, I mean, it's just, it takes your breath away, Smith. Have you ever been there? You go and you see, and there's Van Gogh, the screen. There it is. It's right in front of you. And you're just like, yeah, it takes your breath away.

George

I had a student ask me last year, pulled down my sleeve, he goes, Professor, is this all real or is these, are these replicas?

Daniel Boothe

That's the real thing, man.

George

And I had to tell him, yeah, that picture you're looking at is several \$1,000,000. shocking. And then we're going to the Ford, Henry Ford Museum and Ford Assembly Plant.

Daniel Boothe

Oh, nice.

George

Yeah, we'll be going in November, November 7th for that.

Samantha

That's going to be great. Now, a minute ago, you mentioned a lecture. Can you talk to us?

George

About a lecture series.

Samantha

The founding of the Dream lecture series.

George

The founding of the Dream. There is 2 lectures that we are having. in commemoration with the centennial. As you know, Muskegon Community College is 100 years old and we were one of the first 124 different junior colleges. Yes.

Samantha

Absolutely. Happy birthday, MCC.

George

Yes. We are in that vaunted league. So we will be talking on September 30th, the founding of the dream. What it took to have a college in Muskegon will be addressing the first Thirty years of our colleges. existence, how we were a vision of the Board of Education, and not all the board was in favor of it. In fact, some of the prominent industrialists in this town were very opposed to junior college. They wanted a vocational training institute instead. And they didn't think that college was appropriate, especially when most kids, if they're going to graduate 7th grade, 75% are not going to graduate college or graduate high school.

Daniel Boothe

Well, not with that attitude.

George

Well, not only just that attitude, it's just the reality that most people probably didn't finish high school.

Daniel Boothe

Yes, sir.

George

And look at where we've come now. We would find that appalling.

Samantha

One 100 years now, our students are bringing it out at MCC.

Daniel Boothe

Yes.

George

So that will be the first one.

Daniel Boothe

Tell us, when is that date?

George

That is the, I believe that's September 30th, and that's 615 in the evening.

Daniel Boothe

And it's your contention that this should be.

George

It should be obligatory. Anybody that has interest in our community, if you're a Muskegon County resident or a Western Michigan citizen, you should be involved with it. And every employee should, this should be like mandatory orientation 101. If you don't know your roots, you really don't know what you're doing. What are you selling? What are you portraying here?

Samantha

Right. And then this big. Crazy historic year for MCC. We've got to be looking back on where we came from, how we got here.

George

It's our origin story.

Daniel Boothe

100%, man.

George

And then we're going to talk in November about the dream on Quarterline and Marquette with never seen before footage, at least to this audience, on the creation of our campus here in 1966 and the vision of Alden Dow to make this beautiful campus. And we're going to have construction films. a 16-minute construction film that the architect took himself.

Samantha

Absolutely. And it's just perfect for our centennial anniversary, which is the diamond anniversary. Our campus is built in the shape of diamonds everywhere you can see.

Daniel Boothe

Yeah, and did you know that the gem to commemorate 100 years is a diamond? So that really kind of ties in nice and neat, like a nice little bow. But I'm really excited, George. I'm a huge history fan. I think what Samantha just said is a great point that you have to know where you are, where you came from to know where you are, and to understand your

experience. But on a geekier note, history is the closest thing to time travel. Yes, it is. And so it's just an opportunity.

George

We just don't do history. We're going to be doing it going local. program on entrepreneurship. What does it take to become a small business entrepreneur? And that is September 18th, 6.30 on campus here. We're bringing a panel together of local entrepreneurs who have, you know, put it together and are making their dream, their life, you know, story and their, you know, their economic income. And many of our students have, you know, said to me, you know, professor, I'd love to run my own business, but I don't even know where to begin. hear it from people that are doing it and find out the challenges they encounter, the love they find for their passions here for this stuff. So we'd like students to become immersed and staff too. these are not just closed programs where you have to be a student. Community members can walk in. Most of the things we do are free, with the exception of the trips, of course, because we have to pay admissions and buses and such. But these trips are not that onerous. We're not charging hundreds of dollars. We're charging very minimal money. For example, Art Institute is \$85. The Henry Ford is 90.

Daniel Boothe

Yeah.

Samantha

Exactly. And all this stuff that we're doing now is so powerful because it's the type of things that we're going to be looking back on after our next 100 years.

George

Well, and the other thing is, future of accreditation is going to be showing that we're putting this into operation and experiential learning is one of the ways that we can point to our creditors that students are coming away with an understanding of how their education relates to the real world.

Samantha

Right. So for our students and the public and staff who are looking to learn more about the Founding of the Dream lecture series or about experiential learning, where can they find that information?

George

They can check it on our webpage. They can call us at 231-777-0364. We will be happy to provide them all the details and information. And you can check our Facebook page too, which is the Muskegon Community College Center for Experiential Learning.

Samantha

That's right.

Daniel Boothe

George, I could talk to you for an hour. You have to come back on the podcast and do a full interview with us.

George

I'd love to, guys. Awesome. Thank you for having me today.

Daniel Boothe

Yeah, thanks, man. Appreciate you. Well, rolling right along here on this beautiful August day, second day of the Jayhawk frenzy right here at MCC's iconic main building and sitting down in front of us. is the one and the only, the Chief Marketing and Communications Officer and our boss, Samantha, Miss Kristin Tank. Welcome to the podcast.

Samantha

Hi, Kristin.

Krisitin

Hey, thanks guys.

Daniel Boothe

You could not have dialed up a better day than this. Kristen, I know that you are like me and Samantha. You're really kind of energized. People give you energy and it's really exciting. You know, the summer's so quiet and kind of boring. What's it mean to you to see all these students back here, the energy that we feel here at Frenzy? It's got to feel good.

Krisitin

It's awesome, Daniel. I know we waited all summer to have our parking lots full again, to have Frenzy, to have so much fun here today, and just to have live people really on campus milling around and working hard. It's great to see them. It's great to encourage them, and they motivate us.

Daniel Boothe

Yeah, they sure do. And they really are. It's not a lip service. The student success is really the forefront of everything. that we do here. And so when you don't have students, you kind of wonder what you're working for. But we truly do impact lives and better futures here at Muskegon Community College. So I just echo your sentiments. And hey, look at this new beautiful parking lot. Not too shabby. Not too shabby at all.

Speaker 4

Yeah, it's looking great.

Daniel Boothe

Yeah, it's fantastic. Well, we're so thankful that you stopped by the podcast. Samantha, take it away.

Samantha

Right, so now that we've got all these students back on campus who we love to see, we are going to talk a little bit about Bring It Out, which is about our students. Can you tell us a little bit about what Bring It Out means?

Krisitin

Sure, so Bring It Out is about flipping the script. I mean, and we hear it all the time on all of the different radio stations, on billboards, colleges and universities talking about how great they are, but we flip that script. We want to talk about how awesome our students are. They are awesome. They have amazing dreams, talents, undiscovered talents in some cases, skills and things they want to do. And we just want to help them achieve and get to their dreams and actually just bring out everything that's great about them.

Daniel Boothe

And then hopefully the ultimate goal is to launch a career, doing what you love and what you're passionate about. If you do what you love, you never work a day in your life.

Krisitin

Absolutely, and our employers are eager to get Muskegon Community College graduates. They tell us they're different, they're better, they're more ready to go than some other graduates from other colleges and universities.

Samantha

Can you tell us a little bit about the success we've had so far with Bring It Out?

Krisitin

Yeah, absolutely. We have people, our students, our students are always #1, but they were #1 in this campaign. We featured real students, real student stories, we actually had launch parties on campus to celebrate these students. And that's what has made this campaign really successful. And I know in March, when we launched in those dreary days of March, we had those beautiful billboards popping up with the bright colors. And now here we are launching the second phase, which really is celebrating our older students, our students who are over 25 years old and are just starting their journey today and now. And they're making a big impact on our community. And they're actually receiving some great tuition breaks throughout the state of Michigan.

Samantha

We've got a brand new commercial as our second leg of the Bring It Out campaign that's come out now, and it's about why MCC is a great choice for returning students and adult learners. So why don't you tell us a little bit about why adult learners might want to come here?

Krisitin

Sure. Well, we selected a really great song for this campaign for this commercial. The song is called Take It All, and that's what we want our students to do. We want them to come here. We want them to take advantage of every opportunity that we offer. I mean, so many student clubs, so many organizations, so many ways that they can connect and engage with other students. I can hear the bus roaring by right now. It's dropping off another group of students.

Daniel Boothe

I think like live radio.

Samantha

Yeah, it's great. Oh, yeah.

Krisitin

So Take It All is our song that we're using.

Samantha

Exactly, which is by the band Pop Evil, who is from the Muskegon area.

Daniel Boothe

I'm fooling you, folks. Pop Evil, it's not necessarily an evil band. You know what I mean? I think they're making a joke about they find pop music evil because they're a rock'n'roll. I mean, they're kind of a hard rock'n'roll band.

Krisitin

But yeah, they were a great partner for us. They were willing to do this for us. And we were just so thankful to them.

Daniel Boothe

Yeah. And their lead singer was born and raised right here in Muskegon.

Krisitin

Yeah, North Muskegon graduate.

Daniel Boothe

Yeah, there you go.

Krisitin

So I think what you'll like about the commercial is it shows real students. doing really fun things. We've got somebody rocking it out on the air guitar. And Samantha, you were part of that shoot. I know there are other things that were really cool.

Samantha

Absolutely. Shout out to our model, Tom, who was hitting the air guitar at our shoot in his lab coat. We had all real students at that shoot and it was just so much fun to take their pictures that are now up around the Muskegon area on the billboards, on our website, in our new commercial. We're just putting our students everywhere for the community to see to show how they're bringing it out at MCC.

Daniel Boothe

Christian, I'm going to put you a little bit on the spot here before we let you get off the hook. Let's be honest, full disclosure, you were the communications director for the Muskegon ISD for several years, a highly coveted, well-paying job that's highly respected in the communications field here in West Michigan. And you left that for the opportunity to come to Muskegon Community College. You said that this was always a dream destination for you. Let's be honest, you're extremely talented, you're extremely brilliant, and you could work anywhere. Why do you choose to work at MCC? What made you leave the ISD for these greener pastures, as it were?

Krisitin

Well, Daniel, you are very flattering. And yeah, I appreciate that. So Muskegon Area Intermediate School District just had a wonderful experience there. 21 years there working with the public schools in Muskegon County. Loved the people I worked with, loved the job I did there. But there was always something tugging on my heart and pulling me over to Muskegon Community College. I remember years ago standing in a colleague's office, looking out at the beautiful campus window overlooking the brook that we see every day and just thinking, yeah, I could see myself here one day and just really blessed and honored that I was chosen for this position. So super glad to be. I've been here four years and just looking to have many more, just loving what I'm doing here, have an amazing team. and some reverse kudos back to you, Daniel.

Daniel Boothe

No, thank you. Well, I have to echo your comments. You really have assembled an amazing team.

Krisitin

If we don't say so ourselves.

Daniel Boothe

If I don't say so myself.

Speaker 4

I wouldn't say so. Yeah, Kristen, final thoughts?

Krisitin

Final thoughts, just if you are not a part of Muskegon Community College, I know I took a class here long ago. I know my son graduated from here. Muskegon Community College is a part of the fabric of our community, 100 years old this year. We just want everyone to take the opportunity to get to know more about MCC. Come, just look at our beautiful campus, if nothing else, and get to our events. We're having tons of centennial events coming up. We want to see everyone at those, and do check out our website for more.

Samantha

Absolutely, and our website is [www.muskegoncc.edu](http://www.muskegoncc.edu). Thank you for talking with us today, Kristen, and I'm sure we will be hearing and seeing more from the marketing department as the year goes on.

Daniel Boothe

Thanks, Kristen.