

Dr. Michael H. Gavin

President, Delta College

November 1, 2023

[5:00 pm] Dr. Pam Luster (@DrPamLuster)

Welcome back to [#EquityChat](#) sponsored by [@CollegeFutures](#) w/your hosts [@lamkeithcurry](#) [@DrTammeil](#) & [@DrPamLuster](#). We're excited to have [@MichaelHGavin](#), President [@DeltaCollege](#) and leader of [@Ed4AllAboutAll](#), a coalition we've joined to resist anti-DEI legislation. Welcome!

[5:05 pm] Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson (@DrTammeil)

Q1 [@MichaelHGavin](#) As you engage in equity-focused work, what is your walk-up song or anthem? [@DrPamLuster](#) [@lamkeithcurry](#) [@CollegeFutures](#) [#EquityChat](#) [#EquityAvengers](#)

[Michael H. Gavin @MichaelHGavin](#)

1/1 So I am a nerd about music. If it's in the morning, and I need to get ready for the day, it's all about Tribe Called Quest—"We got the Jazz" is my jam. But there are times I am thinking about connecting with folks, and "Black Rock" by O.A.R.—old school song

[Michael H. Gavin @MichaelHGavin · 2m](#)

2/2 of theirs and it's all about the human condition [#equitychat](#)

[5:11 pm] Dr. Keith Curry (@lamkeithcurry)

Q2 [@MichaelHGavin](#). We're proud to be part of [@Ed4AllAboutAll](#). Talk to us about this coalition & your work resisting anti-DEI legislation. Was there a defining moment or experience that catalyzed your journey? [@DrPamLuster](#) [@DrTammeil](#) [@CollegeFutures](#) [#EquityChat](#) [#EquityAvengers](#)

[Michael H. Gavin @MichaelHGavin · 9m](#)

1/1 I am so grateful for Equity Avengers' leadership in this group, too. You Pam, and Tammeil are some of my favorite people I've met in higher ed. The focus of [@ed4allaboutall](#) is to create a space for presidents and national educational leaders to talk through how to

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2/2 resist anti-DEI legislation. Our goal is to collaborate across state lines, recognize we are all in different seats and contexts, and build concrete action to stand up to this problematic, anti-democratic, anti-human movement. The moment for me was growing up in Evanston, IL,

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3/3 from grade school to high school, I was in very racially integrated athletic teams and classrooms. At high school, though, while the athletic teams remained integrated, our honors and AP classes tracked racially, and by class established by housing. Our structures and systems

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4) were designed to oppress. I could see that at 13 years old. When politicians attack African American literature, CRT, LGBTQIA+, Jewish, Muslim and other people, what they are doing is protecting that system of power. That is not what our country is about, it is not what it

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5/5 promises, it is not aligned with my values. That is the experience that informs all of my work in higher ed.
[#equitychat](#)

[5:18 pm] Dr. Luster (@DrPamLuster)

Q3 @MichaelHGavin. As President @DeltaCollege, how have you implemented policy and/or programmatic changes to impact racial equity on campus? What's a specific example you're particularly proud of? @DrTammeil @lamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers

[Michael H. Gavin @MichaelHGavin](#)

1. We have had a few: Most importantly, we center racial equity at the center of every single thing we do. One thing we have done is establish the Saginaw Academy of Excellence, a dual enrollment initiative to remedy the fact that exactly zero dual enrollment students from our

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2. heavily black and Hispanic zip codes were enrolled at Delta. We established this program for those zip codes and we have now eradicated equity gaps in access in dual enrollment and enrollment in general (as a result of word of mouth) institutionally.

[Michael H. Gavin @MichaelHGavin·1m](#)

We have also increased black student completion rate by 9% in 2 years as a result of data use, decision making and budget reallocations [#equitychat](#)

[Dr Pamela Luster #EquityAvengers #RealCollegePrez @DrPamLuster·2m](#)

Intentional, unapologetic, data informed, equity minded action

[5:25 pm] Dr. Gilkerson (@DrTammeil)

Q4 @MichaelHGavin. You were recently appointed Chairperson of the Michigan Community College Association Student Success Committee. What are your top 3 priorities for improving equitable student outcomes? @DrPamLuster @lamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers

[Michael H. Gavin @MichaelHGavin](#)

1. Good question. First, we in Michigan do not have a transfer policy of the sort CA, TX, FL and other states do. We want to create a policy so that completion of an associates degree leads to junior or senior status at state schools across the state. Second, we want to develop

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2. metrics for student success that are focused on completion & equity. Finally, we are working to develop financial aid based on the full cost of college. I am thankful for the leadership of [@MCCABrandy](#) our association president [#equitychat](#)

[5:32 pm] Dr. Curry (@lamkeithcurry)

Q5 @MichaelHGavin Amidst the current national climate, what can we do to support diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility on our campuses and within our states? @DrPamLuster @DrTammeil @CollegeFutures #EquityChat

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1. I think we need to focus on rigorous love. Focus on love as a construct that breathes through our every interaction, and remain committed to the notion that our colleges were all built in a context where marginalization status quo. The current national climate regarding

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2. higher ed is a backlash against the decades' long success of increasing access to minoritized identities. The national legislation and rhetoric is focused on ensuring the power of an elite few. We need to continue our commitment to DEI, and consider that there are actors out

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3. there who have been coordinated for over 40 years on the effort we are seeing metastasize across the country in terms of anti-DEI legislation. We need to work together, lean on each other, and, for those of us in leadership positions, we need to lead. We cannot be on the

[Michael H. Gavin @MichaelHGavin·15s](#)

4. sidelines hoping this moment will go away because it will not. We need to focus on rigorously helping each other, our students, & our country through a moment that is testing us. And we have to hold up our colleagues who are in vulnerable seats across the country [#equitychat](#)

[5:39 pm] Dr. Luster (@DrPamLuster)

Q6 @MichaelHGavin. To do this work, we must continue learning and partnering with others. How do you educate yourself and who is informing your practice? @DrTammeil @lamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers

[Michael H. Gavin @MichaelHGavin·14s](#)

I love this question. So, I have past and contemporary thinkers I lean into. First, James Baldwin is my hero. I read "Sonny's Blues" once a year. I also read James Weldon Johnson and Patricia Hill Collins' Black Feminist Thought about once a year.

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2. But then there you three; [@drkastout](#), [@AchieveTheDream](#), [@Campus_Compact](#), [@LCCPresident](#), [@TRINITYPREZ](#), among the many leaders I learn from through reading and connecting. And finally, I gotta say that [@BreneBrown](#) has changed the way I think about leadership [#equitychat](#)

[5:46pm] Dr. Gilkerson (@DrTammeil)

Q7 @MichaelHGavin. We all have a vision of the future we want to live in. What is your freedom dream for higher education and what gives you hope for its future? @DrPamLuster @lamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers

[Michael H. Gavin @MichaelHGavin · 1m](#)

1. I hope that community colleges are seen as the answer to the nation's poverty, racism, and educational ills; that we are viewed as the solution to the question of colleges' 'high cost' by the mainstream. I hope that we can disrupt the norms of higher education so much that the

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2. norms of societal oppression are disrupted through equitable educational achievement. And I wish that the college sector writ large saw theory & practice as how we get the work done. I think [@followtheleague](#) is poised to help us find the nexus of innovation and equity.

[5:53 pm] Dr. Curry (@lamkeithcurry)

Q8 @MichaelHGavin. The road to racial equity is long. How are you sustaining yourself? What practice would you recommend to other #EquityAvengers? @DrPamLuster @DrTammeil @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers

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1. Keith, and I met in a gym before a conference started: I have to work out. It is my me time to decompress. I also meditate, and watch really bad tv--like really bad. I have great friends, and groups of people in higher ed who know what it's like to be a president and also

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2. who have common values that I like to check in with. And I have 3 awesome kids who center me. [#equitychat](#)

[6:00 pm] Dr. Luster (@DrPamLuster)

TY @MichaelHGavin for being a leader in this fight for DEIA and racial equity in #highered. Join us for #EquityChat @CollegeFutures next week as we host @AdrianTrinidad, Assoc. Dir. of CC Partnerships @USCRaceEquity. @lamkeithcurry @DrTammeil @DrPamLuster @equityavengers OUT!