

Dr. Kurt Hoffman

Senior Vice President of Instructional and Student Affairs, Allegany College of Maryland

September 25, 2024

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

Welcome to #EquityChat with your hosts @lamkeithcurry @DrTammeil and @DrPamLuster Tonight we welcome Dr Kurt Hoffman !

[Dr.KurtHoffman @Dr\\_KurtHoffman](#)

Thanks for having me!

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

Q1 @Dr\_KurtHoffman. As you engage in equity-focused work, what is your walk-up song or anthem?  
@DrPamLuster @lamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers

[Dr.KurtHoffman @Dr\\_KurtHoffman](#)

A1 Sunday Bloody Sunday by U2 (it's a protest song) or Ghost of Tom Joad (Pete Seeger folk version, Bruce Springsteen rock, or Rage Against the Machine alt rock/rap metal). All will get the blood pumping. [#EquityChat](#)

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

All excellent anthems that absolutely will get the heart and mind going! [#EquityChat](#)

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

Q2 @Dr\_KurtHoffman. Was there a defining moment or experience that catalyzed your journey to engage in this work specifically around student community and civic engagement? @DrPamLuster @DrTammeil @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers

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

All excellent anthems that absolutely will get the heart and mind going! [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr.KurtHoffman @Dr\\_KurtHoffman](#)

A2 (2/3) My friends suffering was profound. And he said he was one of the lucky ones because he didn't descend into drugs or self-harm. It made me sensitive to the plights of others and how we could become immune to the suffering of others. What happens when...

[Dr.KurtHoffman @Dr\\_KurtHoffman](#)

2 (3/3) marginalized people lose real power that diminishes their dignity and right to a productive life? I wanted to be on the side of trying to tip the scales back for others, especially issues impacting children. And I own I am a W/M gifted with certain privileges [#EquityChat](#)

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

Proud Vietnam Vet spouse here...unfortunately lost my husband to all of the issues that mounted over the years. An absolute travesty, but thankful for folks who've worked so hard to support them. [#EquityChat](#)

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

Q3 @Dr\_KurtHoffman. Tell us about @alleganycollgmd's involvement with The Democracy Commitment. From your perspective, how does preparing students for civic engagement support student success and advance racial equity? @DrTammeil @lamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures [#EquityAvengers](#)

[Dr.KurtHoffman @Dr\\_KurtHoffman](#)

A3 (1/2) ACM was 1 of the original signatory colleges on The Democracy Commitment (TDC), with only a few rural schools. TDC helped us start our civic engagement work. The biggest equity and student success benefit is that this work builds bridges across difference.

[Dr.KurtHoffman @Dr\\_KurtHoffman](#)

A3 (2/2) Students have experiences with "other" and realize "they" are now "us." It's a humanizing experience. Students then feel they have a place at our college and in our community. We are the place where students find their people. "Student retention" results. [#EquityChat](#)

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

I love that you talk about the outcomes, and that your intentionality to see success, and for whom is inspiring [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr.KurtHoffman @Dr\\_KurtHoffman](#)

Outcomes let us know we are having an impact.

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

Q4 @Dr\_KurtHoffman. What are unique barriers for student voters, particularly in the rural community college setting? What innovative strategies has @alleganycollgmd implemented to address them? @DrPamLuster @lamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures [#EquityAvengers](#)

[Dr.KurtHoffman @Dr\\_KurtHoffman](#)

A4 (1/3) Rural communities are often described by “deserts”: transportation, daycare, broadband, news, etc. We have addressed the #1 transportation by establishing the campus as a polling place. We have grants for training students to register fellow students. We are bringing...

[Dr.KurtHoffman @Dr\\_KurtHoffman](#)

A4 (2/3) democratic participation TO the students. Also, during debate watches we present on how to recognize logical fallacies, play buzz-word bingo, and live-time fact check via Politifact. Students see (learn?) how to be critical consumers of political information...

[Dr.KurtHoffman @Dr\\_KurtHoffman](#)

A4 (3/3) —addressing misinformation and how to search for reliable information. We are also addressing mental health thru our Holistic Mental Health Network. A stepped-care model from self-care to immediate emergency assistance. All resources clearly identifiable. [#EquityChat](#)

[5:32 pm] [Dr. Curry \(@iamkeithcurry\)](#)

Q5 @Dr\_KurtHoffman. How can we embed civic and community responsibility into curriculum and institutional programming to keep students engaged in this work beyond election cycles? @DrPamLuster @DrTammeil @CollegeFutures [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr.KurtHoffman @Dr\\_KurtHoffman](#)

A5 (1/2) This work must be institutionalized. Not just embedded, not a single champion, not single classes...but a culture. It has to be who you are as an institution. Then the college must support and nurture the work. At ACM “personal and civic responsibility” are included...

[Dr.KurtHoffman @Dr\\_KurtHoffman](#)

A5 (2/2) in our general education learning outcomes—every student graduates with a level of proficiency. Cultural awareness, civic awareness, and community involvement are included in these outcomes. Students can select courses flagged as “community engagement.” [#EquityChat](#)

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

Wonderful idea [#EquityChat](#)

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

Q6 @Dr\_KurtHoffman. To do this work, we must continue learning and partnering with others. How do you educate yourself and who is informing your practice? @DrTammeil @iamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures [#EquityChat](#) [#EquityAvengers](#)

[Dr.KurtHoffman @Dr\\_KurtHoffman](#)

A6 (1/2) We cannot do this work alone. It is paramount we stay informed. Conferences, organizations, collaborators are all needed to support our work. Campus Compact, Civic Learning Democratic Engagement (CLDE), Community Learning Partnership (CLP) to name just a few.

[Dr.KurtHoffman @Dr\\_KurtHoffman](#)

A6 (2/2) CLDE Oct. 1 Every Student, Every Degree <https://events.compact.org/clde-every-student-every-degree...> The Dignity Index to ease divisions and heal divides <https://dignity.us> The All In Democracy Challenge <https://allinchallenge.org> Book: The Bill of Obligations: The Ten Habits of Good Citizens [#EquityChat](#)

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

Q7 @Dr\_KurtHoffman. If you could achieve one breakthrough in racial equity that would have the most significant impact on student success, what would it be? @DrPamLuster @Iamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures [#EquityChat](#) [#EquityAvengers](#)

[Dr.KurtHoffman @Dr\\_KurtHoffman](#)

A7 (1/3) We talk about “wicked problems” in higher education—complex social issues with no easy answers. The achievement gap is a wicked problem. The disparity of academic performance of students of color, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or gender. Some have stated its really...

[Dr.KurtHoffman @Dr\\_KurtHoffman](#)

A7 (2/3) ...an opportunity gap; that these students do not have the same educational opportunities. At the college we leverage extensive resources to attempt to close the gap. However, a year or two at ACM is often not enough to overcome years of being under-resourced.

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7 (3/3) Imagine a world in which all students were college or career ready out of high school no matter race, ethnicity, gender, or socio-economic status. That their success was not hindered before they even reached college. Sounds closer to an equitable world. [#EquityChat](#)

[5:53 pm] [Dr. Curry \(@iamkeithcurry\)](#)

Q8 @Dr\_KurtHoffman. What words of advice would you give to practitioners who are passionate about engaging in equity work but are unsure of where to start or how to make a meaningful impact? @DrPamLuster @DrTammeil @CollegeFutures [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr.KurtHoffman @Dr\\_KurtHoffman](#)

A8 (1/3) There are efforts to disenfranchise people. Don't let them. Apathy is the enemy. That's what they want. Engagement is the antidote. Find an issue or cause that lights your passions. Find someone who is doing something about that. Do what you can, even if is small.

[Dr.KurtHoffman @Dr\\_KurtHoffman](#)

A8 (2/3) Mother Teresa stated "Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love." And if you are fortunate, you can turn this into your life's work.

[Dr.KurtHoffman @Dr\\_KurtHoffman](#)

8 (3/3) Theologian Frederick Buechner described vocation as that place where "your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." I would argue there is a lot of work for all of us to do in that space, if we search for it. [#EquityChat](#)

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

Absolutely!

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

Thank you so much @Dr\_KurtHoffman @alleganycollgmd for sharing your work and the focus #CivicEngagement...it is a critical skill for our students and the country! Stay tuned for news on next weeks' guest-until then @lamkeithcurry @DrTammeil @DrPamLuster @equityavengers OUT!