

#EquityChat - Brandy Johnson and Precious Miller, MCCA

October 16, 2024

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

Good evening and lets [#EquityChat](#) w/your [@equityavengers](#) [@Iamkeithcurry](#) [@DrTammeil](#) [@DrPamLuster](#) - tonight we are chatting w/ [@MCCABrandy](#) & [@PMillerBiz](#) to explore how their work with [@MCCA](#) supports equity in higher education. Welcome!

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

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

[Precious Miller @PMillerBiz](#)

(1/2) There are so many great songs to choose from, but I would have to go with “Going for Greatness” by Future Royalty. First off, the base is epic!

[Precious Miller @PMillerBiz·47s](#)

To me, this song depicts the rise of what I believe is a new day for learners. When it comes to closing equity gaps for student success, [@MIColleges](#), goes for greatness. Because half just won't do. [#EquityChat](#) [#EquityAvengers](#)

[Brandy Johnson @MCCABrandy](#)

I'm a kid of the 90s so I always start there. The walk-up song that comes to mind is the NKOTB classic hit “Step by Step”. I approach equity as an exercise in consistent, continuous improvement, and step-by-step I work on my own equity journey. [#EquityChat](#) [#EquityAvengers](#)

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

Q2 [@MCCABrandy](#) [@PMillerBiz](#), was there a defining moment or experience that catalyzed your journey to engage in this work, serving and championing community college students? [@DrPamLuster](#) [@DrTammeil](#) [@CollegeFutures](#) [#EquityChat](#) [#EquityAvengers](#)

[Precious Miller @PMillerBiz](#)

(1/3) My defining moment involves my mom returning to [@grcc](#) while I was in middle school. I watched her wake up before dawn for clinicals, study late with friends, and I even quizzed her before cheer practice.

[Precious Miller @PMillerBiz·4m](#)

(2/3) Seeing her hard work and dedication inspired me. My mom earned her LPN, and her pursuit of education opened countless doors for our family.

[Precious Miller @PMillerBiz·3m](#)

(3/3) As I followed my mom through the doors of opportunity, I vowed to hold the door open for others—to help create pathways to financial mobility through education. [#EquityChat](#)  
[#EquityChat](#)

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

Q3 @MCCABrandy, as President of the MCCA, how does your organization work to ensure Michigan's community colleges are leading efforts to close racial equity gaps and support diverse student populations? @DrTammeil @Iamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures #EquityAvengers

[Brandy Johnson @MCCABrandy·30s](#)

(1/2) Closing equity gaps is a strategic priority for [@MIColleges](#), embedded in our Strategic Plan. We believe a key to achieving 'Equity as Parity' is partnership, so we work across Michigan's across our 28 public CCs and 3 tribal colleges.

[Brandy Johnson @MCCABrandy·38s](#)

(2/2) We also prioritize data-informed conversations to understand which student groups are best served and where gaps exist. By continuously refining our systems, we ensure students who fall below the highest-performing group are better supported. [#EquityChat](#) [#EquityAvengers](#)

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

Q4 @PMillerBiz, how does addressing students' basic needs, like food and housing, play a key role in advancing racial equity in Michigan's community colleges? @DrPamLuster @Iamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures #EquityAvengers

[Precious Miller @PMillerBiz·1m](#)

Meeting students' basic needs, like food and housing, is key to advancing racial equity. When survival isn't a worry, students can excel academically. Support in this way helps close equity gaps and ensures success across racial groups. [#EquityChat #EquityAvengers](#)

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

Q5 @MCCABrandy @PMillerBiz, in your work with MCCA, what strategies have proven most effective in creating lasting change for underrepresented students? @DrPamLuster @DrTammeil @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers

[Brandy Johnson @MCCABrandy·1m](#)

(1/2) One key strategy has been Gateway Course and Developmental Education Reform. By redesigning English and math courses, we help underrepresented students succeed early and build momentum, setting the stage for long-term success. ALL students are college material.

[Brandy Johnson @MCCABrandy·1m](#)

(2/2) .Transfer, transfer, transfer! Ensuring seamless transfer pathways between community colleges and universities is critical to helping students, especially students from diverse backgrounds, honor learning, achieve their academic and career goals.

[#EquityAvengers #EquityChat](#)

[Precious Miller @PMillerBiz·1m](#)

With support from [@ECMCFoundation](#), we helped colleges understand student needs, connect services, and build community partnerships. Our work on financial insecurity has been vital. Systemic change drives lasting equity! [#EquityChat #EquityAvengers](#)

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

Q6 @MCCABrandy @PMillerBiz, 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

[Precious Miller @PMillerBiz](#)

(1/2) I prioritize learning by attending state & national conferences—shout out to [@NCOREou!](#) I'm also grateful for the [@MIColleges](#) DEIB Alliance —an amazing group of DEI leaders from MI community colleges.

[Precious Miller @PMillerBiz·5m](#)

(2/2) Collaboration and partnership sharpens my work, fosters a growth mindset & keeps me informed. [#EquityChat](#) [#EquityAvengers](#)

[Brandy Johnson @MCCABrandy](#)

(1/2) We are fortunate to have equity-minded leaders in our association, like [@MichaelHGavin](#) from [@DeltaCollege](#), [@LCCPresident](#) Steve Robinson from [@LCCStars](#), and Dr. Beverly Walker-Griffea from [@MichiganLEAP](#), who continuously inform and inspire our work. Leadership matters.

[Brandy Johnson @MCCABrandy·7m](#)

(2/2) Their leadership exemplifies how to drive meaningful change by centering students' diverse needs and removing barriers. Learning from them, alongside engaging in state/national dialogues, helps ensure our practices are rooted in equity & impact. [#EquityChat](#)  
[#EquityAvengers](#)

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

Q7 [@PMillerBiz](#), the road to racial equity is long. How are you sustaining yourself? What practice(s) would you recommend to other [#EquityAvengers](#)? [@DrPamLuster](#) [@lamkeithcurry](#) [@CollegeFutures](#)  
[#EquityChat](#)

[Precious Miller @PMillerBiz·3m](#)

(1/3) DEI work can feel like mopping the ocean. I focus on what I can control, avoid overcommitting, prioritize rest and move with authenticity. This mindset helps me to work from a place of impact, rather than burnout.

[Precious Miller @PMillerBiz·2m](#)

(2/3) The gym also keeps me grounded. Lifting heavy and practicing failure builds my resilience, helping me handle any pressures and new challenges with strength.

[Precious Miller @PMillerBiz](#)

(3/3) To other practitioners: Find safe spaces where you can practice tough actions and conversations. When it's time to execute, you'll be ready and confident in doing so. [#EquityChat](#)  
[#EquityAvengers](#)

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

Q8 @MCCABrandy, what innovative strategies are Michigan's community colleges implementing to connect talent development with racial equity efforts, ensuring all students have access to high-demand careers? @DrPamLuster @DrTammeil @CollegeFutures #EquityChat

[Brandy Johnson @MCCABrandy·2m](#)

(1/2) Thanks to [@AscendiumEP](#), [@MiColleges](#) has led initiatives to connect equitable student outcomes with Michigan talent needs. Projects like MiWorkorce Pathways have helped colleges realize equity in program outcomes.

[Brandy Johnson@MCCABrandy](#)

(2/2) Our colleague, [@meikled\\_john](#) (John Fink), at the [@CommunityCCRC](#) has created several dashboards that inform our work and illuminate racial equity outcomes in program completions and post-graduation labor market outcomes.

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

[Dr Pamela Luster #EquityAvengers #RealCollegePrez @DrPamLuster·10s](#)

This has been an absolutely [fire emoji] [#EquityChat](#) w/ [@MCCABrandy](#) & [@PMillerBiz](#) everyone needs to read all the Q's and responses! TY so much for all you do! Next week we chat w/ [@TICAS\\_org](#) [@MannyRodri7](#)-thats it for us [@lamkeithcurry](#) [@DrTammeil](#) [@DrPamLuster](#) [@equityavengers](#) OUT! [#VOTE](#) 🇺🇸!