

VOICES OF EQUITY PODCAST

Episode 3 Season 1

DR. JONATHON DRYDEN

FEMALE VOICE (SINGING): 0:00 We are the voices of equity podcast. We are the voices of equity podcast listen up ...ooh ... ooh...ooh...ooooh listen up.

MUSIC: 0:20 (INAUDIBLE).

DR. DENISE DOUGLAS: 0:23 Thank you for joining us for the Voices of Equity Podcasts at Lorain County Community College. We are your cohosts Denise Douglas and ...

KIONNA MCINTOSH PHARMS: 0:31 Kionna Macintosh Pharms.

DR. DENISE DOUGLAS: 0:33 As co-chairs of the Equity for Students Team at LCCC, we're excited to share the work of this team, the voices of those who do the work, and the voices of students who are the reason for our work.

KIONNA MCINTOSH PHARMS: 0:43 Today we're joined with Dr. Jonathan Dryden. Dr. Dryden is the Provost and Vice President for

Academic Affairs and University Partnership. Welcome to the podcast Dr. Dryden.

DR. JONATON DRYDEN: 0:55 Thank you for having me it's an honor to be here.

KIONNA MACINTOSH PHARMS: 0:57 Please share with our listeners, your role at the college and your background.

DR. JONATHON DRYDEN: 1:01 The Provost at a university or college is the person who's responsible for all of the academic programs and courses that the college offers. And that everyone has an opportunity to be successful and reach their potential.

KIONNA MCINTOSH PHARMS: 1:14 What is your equity story and why is equity important to you?

DR. JONATHON DRYDEN: 1:17 My father whose business was higher education. He was a scholar at an English Department at a major University. And so, he kind of paved the way for me. So, following in his footsteps was somewhat natural. I was kind of living in immersed in an academic culture of higher education. And so it was easier for me and because he taught at a University and I went to school at that University my tuition was covered. And so, I didn't have to worry about paying for college. It was it was paid for by virtue of the fact that I had a father who was in higher education at that college. And so, I went on to study literature, earn my PhD at the University of Arizona. So, I was here back in 1999; and then and then became full time in 2002 and have been here ever since. I'm aware that not

only did I have you know the benefit of a parent in higher education; my mom also was in Graduate School earned her master's degree. I'm a man, which historically in our culture provides certain amount of privilege historically and I'm white. And that also confers a certain advantage historically in our culture. So, I'm very aware of the fact that I do come from a background that has certain advantages that others don't have. And so, my work here has just made me more aware of those advantages. I should also say that growing up partly in the 60s, I was aware of Martin Luther King of how inspirational he was. And so, I think growing up in the 60s in that time were social justice concerns were so important. I mean I think that is part of who I am. Part of my equity story is my childhood. Part of my equity story is things I've learned to become aware of here at the college.

MUSIC: 3:03 (INAUDIBLE).

KIONNA MCINTOSH PHARMS: 3:11 Do you think that your passion or interest in equity had anything to do with the other side of you in terms of your research with genealogy?

Dr. JONATHON DRYDEN: 3:21 I mean certainly it's you know it's interesting historically to see where you come from. And and certainly in some parts of my family had advantages. My family goes back to the original colonists who came to United States and settled in New England. On my dad side, they were farmers they left religious oppression in Scotland in the in the 17th century and settled on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, And so, seeing sort of how class impacts the trajectory of lives from a big perspective; it does make you think about equity.

MUSIC: 3:57 (INAUDIBLE).

DR. DENISE DOUGLAS: 4:04 So now I want to ask you a question about the history of equity here at Lorain County Community College. Could you share a little bit more about the history of the work that has been done here already?

DR. JOHNATHON DRYDEN 4:14 We knew in 2011 that we had a lot of work to do at Lorain County Community College. Because our we knew that our graduation rate and that students weren't completing at the rate that we would like them to. And that really sort of causes to look more closely at the data. And one of the things, so we joined Achieving the Dream and a network of community colleges that are really all about helping students complete but also addressing equity gaps. And sort of realizing that there are certain populations of students who aren't as successful as others. And sort of helping colleges identify the barriers that are preventing those students from being successful and then implementing strategies to help close those equity gaps. And so, we in 2011, began looking at our data. It's called disaggregated data. When you don't just look at a graduation rate, but you begin to look as well what's the graduation rate of our white students compared to our students of color. Or our traditional students in our older nontraditional students. Or between our students who do not qualify for a Pell Grant and those low-income students who do qualify for a Pell Grant. How are their rates different? And so, it's looking at those gaps that existed and realizing we had some work to do to help make sure that, for example, our students of color were graduating at the same rate as our white students

are. And so, our equity work on equity really began when we started looking closely at that disaggregated data; began to identify where our equity gaps were and began sort of intentionally working to address them. And so, that really began in 2011. 2012 we've made some significant progress. We have a lot more work to do in closing equity gaps. But you know, it really began there.

DR. DENISE DOUGLAS: 5:59 And of course I'm aware that while we have a quite a distance to go, we certainly have won some awards recently can you share a little bit more about that?

DR. JONATHON DRYDEN: 6:07 Sure! so we participate in Achieving the Dream. Which I said is this national network of colleges. And of course, we were also selected by the Gates Foundation to participate in Completion by Design. Which was also about improving student success outcomes. Because we had some initial success and the work that we were doing; Achieving the Dream in 2015 identified us as a leader college. Which meant you know; we have proven that we have made important strides in addressing equity gaps and improving student outcomes. And so, part of being a leader college was also a recognition of the success that you've had, but also an expectation that you're going to work with other colleges and sort of help them implement some of the things that you've done and learn from you so that you're spreading the work and helping others. And so, a couple years later we were invited to participate in Frontier Set. Which is again, really a collection of warrior institutions, two-year institutions, a couple of University systems; recognized for their innovation. And so, being in that network; allowing them the people who work at those colleges to work

together and share best practices. And then try again further the rate of innovation. And so, that's been a great opportunity for us. And then Achieving the Dream last year, we were named a leader college with distinction because of the success we had. This year, we got the most prestigious award presented by Achieving the Dream, which is the Leah Meyer Austin award. Which recognizes that is a very highly competitive award that we have made significant progress in closing equity gaps. And of course, I forgot 2018 it be AACCC American Association Community Colleges award is with the award for Excellence in Student Success. And the Aspen Institute is identified as one of the top 150 community colleges in the United States. So, all of those accolades are the direct result of the efforts we have made since 2011 and we're not done.

MUSIC: 8:07 (INAUDIBLE).

DR. DENISE DOUGLAS: 8:17 Where do you see the work moving toward, what's next for the college?

DR. JONATHON DRYDEN: 8:21 So, one of the things is we have really made an effort to listen to what the students think and say. And we've done that through student focus groups and we've done that through various surveys. And the students are sort of helping to guide where we need to go next with our equity work. And I think one of the things that's come out of the multiple surveys that we have administered recently, is that there are opportunities for for example cross racial conversations. Opportunities to embed more conversations about equity and race into our curriculum. So that the entire student population is being engaged in these

very important conversations that maybe aren't happening as frequently as they need to be. Not just at this college, but in higher education across the country. And so, in many ways we got lots of positive feedback from students. But these are some things I think that we can do is hearing what the students are saying to us and then providing opportunities for additional conversations about these important topics. And also engaging students and faculty in dialogues. Getting them together and to further the conversation too. So, I think that's an example of a way that we can take the work further. I think we can take the work further in the classroom and in many ways. I think that we've done many many things on the academic advising. We've done many many things to help students complete their college level math and English sooner. But I think there's more that we can do to address equity in terms of policies in the across campus and also within the classroom. And in teaching also, what are some things we can do as teachers in the classroom to address equity gaps that were that we're seeing in course completion.

KIONNA MCINTOSH PHARMS: 10:10 We we talked a lot about individuals of color, but we also have a focus on other aspects other you know individuals of the underserved population. Such as Accessibility,0 such as the LGBTQ+ community. So, I want to make it clear, that this particular guest is one who exemplifies all of that.

DR. DENISE DOUGLAS: 10:33 That's right, I couldn't agree more. Thank you, Dr. Dryden.

DR. JONATHON DRYDEN: 10:36 Thank you very much too and I learned from you Dr. Douglas and you Kionna every day.

DR. DENISE DOUGLAS: 10:43 Thank you for joining us for this episode of Voices of Equity Podcasts at LCCC brought to you by Boom Radio.