

Dear LSC Campus Community:

January is often a time for people to reflect on the past year and perhaps make resolutions for the beginning of the new year. We promise to eat better, work out more often, study harder, and so on. Some of these resolutions are kept, some not.

Rather than make grand resolutions, I propose something a bit different for LSC. I propose that we continue our Equity 2030 work as planned. In fact, we can also promise to double and triple our efforts for the next five years to make LSC welcoming, inclusive, safe, and supportive for all. Resolutions can be fleeting, but commitment to values and the Equity 2030 promises we hold close as a College and as a member of the Minnesota State system must not be lost as we begin 2025.

Let me put this in context: there are very strong political winds blowing this year at the state and national level and much of the rhetoric is focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion work. There are threats to defund schools, close offices, and take away human rights. Much of the fuel for this fire focuses on assumptions around race, gender, and xenophobia. People are frightened. People are angry. The polarization seems to be real. And yet...

What is lost in the noise of political winds is the fact that working on equity, diversity, and inclusion is all about inviting everyone to partake, and NOT about giving advantages to any particular group. It is about giving equitable opportunities for all. Doesn't matter your political leaning, your religious beliefs, your gender identity, your skin tone, or your physical abilities; ALL are welcome to this work ... particularly here at Lake Superior College. I know not everyone agrees with aspects of this work and yet, I see beautiful examples of professional behavior, caring and kindnesses, and respect for differences of all kinds: opinions, beliefs, affiliations, and perspectives. I see folks having respectful debates or perhaps avoiding certain topics, not out of fear, but out of preference to keep professional relationships on a professional level. Indeed, we have created a space for all to enter and where no one is pressured or forced into someone else's world view. That takes work, folks!

Holding events and celebrating various groups, changing policies and cleaning up racist or sexist or ableist language in our written materials is definitely Equity 2030 work, AND so is the daily work we do to meet each other as humans and as co-workers and even friends. The work all of you have done to make LSC a place of inclusion is bearing fruit. Are we done? Not at all. We must continue and commit to this work on all levels and push even harder as we begin 2025.

No matter how things shape up around us, our values still stand. Our commitment to each other and our students remains the same. Our promise to serve all who come to us does not change. We celebrate our differences because they keep the work focused on truly becoming inclusive, welcoming, safe, and supportive for all.

Be well, Stay warm.

Patricia L. Rogers, Ph.D.  
President, Lake Superior College