MCSS Birds of a Feather Summer 2020 Tweet Chat Series
“#mifacultylead the way for #mistudentsuccess”

As part of its “Birds of a Feather” Twitter engagement strategy to connect more deeply with the Michigan student success network in the digital space, the Michigan Center for Student Success (MCSS) coordinated three Tweet chats in summer 2020. This brief summarizes the second chat on August 25, 2020, which focused on how “#mifacultylead the way for #mistudentsuccess” and covered topics related to teaching, learning and holistic student support for Michigan community college faculty. Themes from each question are summarized below (a full transcription of the tweet chat appears in Appendix A) and all digital resources shared during the Tweet chat are posted at the end of the brief. Follow @MCCACSS to stay engaged in the #mistudentsuccess conversation and look for other tweet chat summaries on our website.

**Discussion Summary**

**Q1 What obstacles have faculty members seen their students facing, especially those from racially minoritized and other underserved communities, in the current environment? #mifacultylead #MCSSEquity #mistudentsuccess**

- Students are experiencing scarcity of cash, food, housing and job security
- Mental health concerns are exacerbated in times of social distancing and scarcity
- Lack of access to reliable internet and capable devices are issues for online learning
- Time crunches abound – essential workers are still working, more hours than ever; student parents are caring for children at home on the daily
- Instructors must be empathetic and stress resilience
Q2 What silver linings have faculty members found in adapting to changes in the environment resulting from #COVID19, heightened #blacklivesmatter activism and the tumultuous political landscape in the United States? #mifacultylead #MCSSEquity

- Michigan community college faculty are inspired by and compassionate toward their persevering students
- This crisis has elevated the need to improve access to internet and technology for all students
- Equity is squarely in the limelight, maybe finally getting its due with emphasis on decolonizing curriculum, elevating activism and making room for more diverse perspectives

Q3 What are some brilliant hacks (activities, resources, technology solutions) that faculty have found to adapt their teaching methods to the current environment? #mifacultylead #mistudentsuccess

- Consider offering asynchronous learning options with flexible scheduling; added bonus is that students can go back and repeat lectures (this can’t happen with face-to-face learning)
- Co-facilitators make sure no one gets lost in digital spaces
- Smartphones are helping students get smart, especially in documenting learning processes and final products for hands-on activities
- Active, project-based learning has better results than static testing
- Personalize digital learning experiences by using students’ names, connecting 1-on-1 when possible and offering students options on how to connect with materials
- Wherever possible, faculty should work to master the digital bells and whistles (digital whiteboards, videography, video conferencing breakouts, etc.) that can improve online learning environments

Q4 What are suggestions for faculty members who would like to use their classrooms, whether physical or virtual, to address issues of diversity, equity and inclusion? #mifacultylead #MCSSEquity

- Seek equitable practices for distance learning
- Study abolitionist, decolonizing and antiracist teaching practices
- Preview potentially sensitive topics and set clear norms for engaging respectfully in these discussions; don’t assume everyone knows what it means to have respectful, difficult conversations
- Members of dominant groups must get comfortable being uncomfortable to progress equitable ideals
- Honesty and vulnerability will go a long way in cultivating a safe, hospitable environment for discussions on diversity, equity and inclusion
Digital Resources Shared

- @MCCACSS is proud of @MiColleges statement on racial equity
  https://www.mcca.org/Racial-Equity

- @jfftweets shared @DrCEWilson’s decolonizing curricula
  https://www.brynmawr.edu/tli/syllabusdesign/theprocess

- @ALPAdams shared the digital tool www.padlet.com

Inspiring Digital Partners

We are grateful to all #mifacultylead the way for #mistudentsuccess Tweeters for their participation. Special thanks to the following digital partners that contributed much to this dialogue: @AchievetheDream, @ALPAdams, @jfftweets, and the following MCSS Mentors: @LindseyCD (NMC), @sam_bazzi (HFC), @ShannaSimpsonS1 (HFC), @sonew24 (LMC).
Appendix A

Tweet Chat Transcription: #mifacultylead the way for #mistudentsuccess (August 25, 2020)

Can you believe it’s already #backtoschool time? Before we dive into more serious discussion, we want to see who’s out there! Let us know where you’re tweeting from and what your favorite #schoolsupplies are to stock up on this time of year. #mifacultylead #mistudentsuccess

Icebreaker

- (@jfftweets) #JFFPostsecondary is proud to be representing #Boston, today! And yes, it’s super hot out!!! Stay hydrated!
- (@sonew24) Benton Harbor! And I have an unnatural obsession with binders... #schoolsupplies
- (@KatieGiardello) I’m here tweeting from Chelsea, MI and I’m all about those #postitnotes!
- (@ericaorians) A fresh new notebook!
• (@ShannaSimpsonS1) My favorite #schoolsupplies are binder clips and colored pens. 
  #HenryFordCollege #mifacultylead #mistudentsuccess
  o (@ShannaSimpsonS1) I have every size available in binder clips
• (@LindseyCD) Here from Northwestern MI College in Traverse City and am fully stocked 
  with every size and color of Post-It imaginable! #mifacultylead #mistudentsuccess

Here we go!

Q1 What obstacles have faculty members seen their students facing, especially those from 
  racially minoritized and other underserved communities, in the current environment? 
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  • (@jfftweets) A1.1 Housing instability, job insecurity, cash scarcity, unreliable WiFi and 
    lack of digital tools, mental health concerns, especially feelings of depression and 
    anxiety.
  • (@jfftweets) A1.2 Deepening divides in day-to-day engagement and the ability to 
    complete assignments based on digital access and resources, and home set-up.
• (@jfftweets) A1.3 Native language support, access to modalities of instruction (other than visual) that best support their learning, quiet spaces that allow them to concentrate, and a heavy reliance on print.

• (@MCCACSS) @jfftweets What a list! So many obstacles #communitycollege students are overcoming to achieve #mistudentsuccess!
  o (@jbschanker) A1 Faculty also note that for many students, time on campus provides their primary access to professional advising, learning resources and technology. With campus closed, they may be blocked from those resources. #mifacultylead #MCSSEquity

• (@jbschanker) A1 For both faculty and students, not being able to physically interact presents surprising obstacles. Hands-on teaching is frustrating for everyone when instructors and students are separated by miles and screens. #mifacultylead #mistudentsuccess

• (@KatieGiardello) A1 Living in a rural area, I feel the struggles @MiColleges faculty describe of students’ universal internet access and pervasive bandwidth issues. #thestruggleisreal #mistudentsuccess #mifacultylead #internetisabasicneedforvirtuallearning

• (@sonew24) A1. Not having to go to a physical space changes the perception of school... heard a story of a student taking a test in his family’s restaurant store room to have wifi. They had him change the soda syrup... oof. #MCSSEquity
  o (@MCCACSS) #multitasking #essentialworkers

• (@ericaorians) A1: My students have been resilient in the face of overwhelming challenges but the biggest obstacle has been time so I try to be flexible! #mifacultylead #mistudentsuccess
  o (@MCCACSS) Resiliency is going to be one of the best emotional skills developed from #COVID19.

• (@LindseyCD) A1 Students in NW lower MI facing issues with broadband access, technology tools, and uncertainty about what they'll do for childcare and/or school for their kids. #mifacultylead #mistudentsuccess #MCSSEquity

• (@ShannaSimpsonS1) A1 One of the biggest issues is access to the necessary technology for virtual learning, and a lack of empathy from some of their instructors. #mifacultylead #MCSSEquity #mistudentsuccess
  o (@MCCACSS) Great points all around. Remembering your take on device equity from a previous digital roundtable discussion. We also need empathy equity. Each is so important! #mifacultylead #mistudentsuccess #MCSSEquity

• (@AchieveTheDream) A1: Faculty are observing that minoritized students are disproportionately experiencing the effects of this pandemic. #mifacultylead, #mistudentsuccess and #MCSSEquity.
  o (@AchieveTheDream) We must create safe spaces for students to continue to learn and make progress towards their academic goals. And colleges must
support their faculty – full-time and part-time – so that they can in turn support their students. #mifacultylead, #mistudentsuccess and #MCSSEquity.

Let’s talk #silverlinings.

Q2 What silver linings have faculty members found in adapting to changes in the environment resulting from #COVID19, heightened #blacklivesmatter activism and the tumultuous political landscape in the United States? #mifacultylead #MCSSEquity

- (@jbschanker) A2 At the @MCCACSS roundtables, faculty members reported being surprised and empowered by their ability to move activities online that, in some cases, worked better for students than their typical on-campus instruction. #mifacultylead
- (@sonew24) A2 Conversations on campus about improving our already robust online learning. Increased conversations about empathy and equity in the classroom. I need #silverlinings right now! #mifacultylead #MCSSEquity
  - (@jbschanker) We all do! #mifacultylead
• (@KatieGiardello) A2 I’m so inspired by @MiColleges faculty members’ compassion for their students and commitment to #MCSSEquity. Blown away by stories of their motivated #communitycollege students who are achieving #mistudentsuccess in the face of so many challenges. #mifacultylead

• (@ericaorians) A2: Huge investments from leaders at #micolleges to address equity. #mcssequity https://mcca.org/Racial-Equity

• (@AchievetheDream) These conditions have created new opportunities for faculty to teach in ways that demonstrate to their students that they care deeply about them as people, that they care about their well-being and want to guide them towards success. #mifacultylead #mistudentsuccess #MCSSEquity

• (@jfftweets) A2. Looking at and presenting material from decolonized perspectives, taking a deeper look at their pedagogy and how it must be adapted for diverse learners, something that could be carried over to in-person classes, and increased collaboration among faculty. #mifacultylead
  o (@MCCACSS) Great points! We'll be asking for resources to share soon. Would love to see what resources folks have on hand regarding decolonized teaching materials. #mifacultylead #mistudentsuccess #MCSSEquity
  o (@jfftweets) We'll be sure to share that out with you all! #mifacultylead
  o (@jfftweets) Good morning @MCCACSS! A resource that one of our experts utilizes is @DrCEWilson's decolonizing curricula. You can review here https://brynmawr.edu/tli/syllabusdesign/theprocess. Happy to follow up on this directly as well. Just let us know! #JFFPostsecondary #StudentSuccess

• (@LindseyCD) A2 Love seeing returning adult students who are taking even just one class to be able to "do school" online with their kids and set an example.

• (@LindseyCD) A2 Also incredibly impressed with our @nmc_tc faculty who went "back to school" themselves this summer to amp up their online teaching skills. #mifacultylead #mistudentsuccess

• (@ShannaSimpsonS1) The silver linings has been the relationships I’ve formed with students. They’re more outgoing via chat. They’re comfy letting me be their voice for social change. #COVID19, #blacklivesmatter #mifacultylead #MCSSEquity
  o (@MCCACSS) Yes! We’ve heard this from other @MColleges faculty members. Some students prefer digital engagement!

• (@sam_bazzi) I noticed increase conversation about racial disparity and more awareness of issues pertaining to equity/diversity/inclusion on our campus. Our diversity group is being activated and given charge to come up with recommendations. #MCSSEQUITY #mifacultylead #mistudentssuccess
  o (@MCCACSS) So good to see heightened awareness everywhere on issues of equity, diversity and inclusion! #MCSSEquity #mifacultylead #mistudentssuccess #BlackLivesMatter
On to brilliant hacks ...

Q3 What are some brilliant hacks (activities, resources, technology solutions) that faculty have found to adapt their teaching methods to the current environment? #mifacultylead #mistudentsuccess

- (@jfftweets) A3.1 Asynchronous learning with flexible scheduling, focusing more on the task as opposed to when it is due and increased use of virtual brainstorming materials (Mural, Miro, and others) to capture student thought and feedback in flexible ways. #mifacultylead #mistudentsuccess
- (@jfftweets) A3.2 Co-facilitation of classes, allowing for monitoring of chats/messages to answer questions in real-time, encouraging collaboration among students that instructors monitor and assess as opposed to assignments that are collected and graded. #mifacultylead #mistudentsuccess
  - (@jbschanker) So much this! @MCCACSS we have multiple staff members in every meeting so we can stay on top of chat questions, etc.
• (@jfftweets) A beautiful model of collaboration tactics! #mifacultylead #MCSEquity

• (@jbschanker) A3 Faculty say that phone cameras have become essential learning tools in several disciplines. Students filmed their process, progress and final products in classes ranging from art to phys ed. #mifacultylead

• (@sonew24) A3 We will see if this is brilliant in a couple of weeks... but I’m breaking the once a week virtual meeting of my classes into small reading groups based on the Puente program. #mifacultylead #mistudentsuccess

• (@KatieGiardello) A3 Loved hearing about how @MiColleges culinary/hospitality programs shifted budget for food products in their labs to gift cards they sent for students to purchase ingredients and keep cooking at home. #mifacultylead #mistudentsuccess

• (@ericaorians) A3: Not exactly brilliant, but I created short videos focused on more challenging concepts. Not highly produced but effective. #mistudentsuccess #mifacultylead

• (@ShannaSimpson1) A3 Project-based assessment instead of my boring problem-set tests. Projects are so much more fun!! #mifacultylead #mistudentsuccess

• (@sam bazzi) Definitely, the ability to record lessons was viewed very favourably by students who needed to go back and review the lectures. This is not an option the face to face experience. #mifacultylead

• (@sam bazzi) Virtual office hours using video conferencing software, digital whiteboard, and document camera provided great support for students who needed the extra help. #mifacultylead

• (@AchievetheDream) Most of the platforms used for synchronous class mtgs allow us to show our names (or nicknames) by our faces. Faculty call on students by name during class discussions, even from day one of the term. This has a huge positive impact on fostering class community. #mifacultylead

  o (@MCCACSS) So important to personalizing digital learning experiences! We have also found it helpful to have colleagues "rename" themselves on Zoom meetings to associate their name with their college. Helpful to deepening engagement in virtual meetings, too.

• (@LindseyCD) A3 We have faculty teaching the same class in two different formats, who allow students to flex in and out of the formats -- online one week, livestream the next. #mistudentsuccess #mifacultylead

• (@ALPAdams) A3 Using Padlet as an online substitute for the newsprint I used to post around the room for groups to report out on. #mistudentsuccess

• (@ALPAdams) Using Teams to set up breakout rooms where small groups of students can meet all semester. #mistudentsuccess

  o (@jbschanker) We have been chatting about some creative uses of breakout rooms for our meetings @MCCACSS #mifacultylead #elbowpartners
Q4 What are suggestions for faculty members who would like to use their classrooms, whether physical or virtual, to address issues of diversity, equity and inclusion? #mifacultylead #MCSSEquity

- (@jfftweets) A4.1 Study abolitionist teaching & antiracist practices, push through faculty senates and teacher/learning centers for the establishment of equitable norms and practices for distance learning, and establish learning “pods” and more individual learning experiences. #MCSSEquity
- (@jfftweets) A4.3 Realize there are those who want to participate & may need to be encouraged or invited to do so and preview, if possible, topics to be discussed so that students have a sense of what to expect, esp. important to those for whom certain topics might be sensitive. #mifacultylead
- (@jfftweets) A4.2 Clearly name issues of DEI without having a hidden agenda, establish norms for presentation, listening, responding, and agreeing/disagreeing, and ensure that all who want to participate are able to do so. #mifacultylead #MCSSEquity #mistudentsuccess
• (@jfftweets) A4.4 Offer sources of pre-work to establish context before exploring an issue to demonstrate that there are various levels of awareness, empathy, and ambivalence & these levels not only vary from person to person but for the same person depending on the issue. #mifacultylead

• (@KatieGiardello) A4 LISTEN TO YOUR STUDENTS. Ask them what they need. Especially members of dominant groups - Don’t shy away when you become uncomfortable (and you will). As @BreneBrown says, “Vulnerability is the birthplace of innovation, creativity, and change.” #mifacultylead #mistudentsuccess

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• (@AchievetheDream) Be honest and vulnerable with your students. You may not have the same expertise on diversity, equity, and inclusion that you have in the field of your academic training. But these issues are everybody’s issues and we need to model that engagement for our students. #MCSSEquity.
  o (sonew24) THIS (GIF)

• (@ericacorians) A4: Deliberately finding more opportunities to connect course content to inequality and injustice especially through discussion posts. #mifacultylead #mistudentsuccess

• (@AchievetheDream) Begin by accepting that our students are looking to us to engage with them around these issues. We cannot simply say that the topic of a course doesn’t lend itself to a discussion of diversity, equity, inclusion. #mifacultylead #mistudentsuccess #MCSSEquity

• (@ShannaSimpsonS1) A4 Be genuine, be transparent, be empathetic, LISTEN to your students, they need a voice. Share their concerns with administration, show them how to contact admins themselves #mifacultylead #mistudentsuccess #MCSSEquity

• (@sam_bazzi) Not all students can meet the technical requirements of the course. Need to be mindful of that. Not all students can commit to specific time to meet. Accommodate as many learning styles as possible. Offer different ways to engage. Build a community by doing introductions

• (@LindseyCD) A4 From one of my advisees this week: "I wish we'd have a talk right up front in every class about what it means to have respectful conversation -- don't assume everyone knows what that means." #MCSSEquity #mifacultylead #mistudentsuccess