

LCCC Investigating Board Chair Due to "Concerning" Social Media Shares

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
May 9 2019 12:05 PM



GODFREY – Calls for resignation are following an investigation by Lewis and Clark Community College (LCCC) into its current board chair, David Heyen.

Heyen was voted as chair of the LCCC board during a special meeting held to seat the three new members. Those members, Julie Johnson, Kevin Rust and Charles Hanfelder won from April elections. They nominated and elected Heyen chair of the board on April 30. On May 1, Riverbender.com was sent screenshots from a Facebook attributed to a “David Heyen” in which the user shared several posts deemed disturbing by those

who submitted them. Further investigation by Riverbender.com found around 13 other posts with anti-Islamic, anti-foreigner and pro-Confederate stances. A request for comment was sent via Facebook Messenger to that page, and it was not returned. An additional request for comment was sent to Heyen's campaign profile. It was marked as "read" and no further action was taken by either party. Riverbender.com is seeking further avenues for communication with Heyen at this time, including telephone numbers.

Yet another request for comment was sent to fellow board member Johnson. She said she wanted to talk with Heyen before she could comment.

LCCC Vice President of Administration, Lori Artis, delivered the following comment to Riverbender.com when requested:

Lewis and Clark first was notified May 1 of a Facebook profile for "David Heyen," and subsequent public posts that were labeled as "concerning" by those who brought it to our attention. David Heyen is the new board chairman of Lewis and Clark's elected Board of Trustees, who was seated on Tuesday, April 30. We are looking into this issue just as we would look into any alleged conduct of a student, employee, board member, visitor or contractor. The college has a long history of its commitment to providing an inclusive environment for all stakeholders of the college, including students, employees and visitors. Lewis and Clark remains committed to modeling our core values of service, respect, responsibility, compassion and integrity.

Because of the posts fueling the investigation, the Missouri chapter of the Council of American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-Missouri) is pushing for Heyen's resignation. In a release sent late Thursday morning, the group, which is a chapter of the nation's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization, used screenshots submitted to them by Riverbender.com as part of a request for comments to back their push for Heyen's resignation.

"Anyone who shares such anti-Muslim, racist and anti-immigrant views has no business serving in a leadership position for any educational institution," CAIR-Missouri Executive Director Faizan Syed said in a release. "We urge Lewis and Clark Community College to thoroughly investigate this matter and ensure that the college remains a welcoming place for all of its students."

CAIR – Missouri showcased some of the posts attributed to Heyen's page especially inflammatory towards Islam. One said, "Anyone notice that there is no terrorism in Iceland or Japan? (Quick fact-check, there have been awful terrorist attacks in Japan) Weird coincidence, there are no Muslims there either." (There are in fact Muslims in both nations).

Because of this Islamaphobia linked to a Facebook page sharing Heyen's name, CAIR-Missouri and several other local action groups are planning demonstrations ahead of the next meeting of the LCCC Board of Trustees. That meeting is set to be held on May 14, 2019, at the Trimpe ATC building. The meeting has been moved to that location to accommodate a higher-than-normal amount of guests expected to attend.

Numerous attempts have been launched by Riverbender.com to get comment from Heyen. None of them have been answered at this time. If such comments are given, the story will be updated accordingly. The page attributed to Heyen also commented on posts from the page called "Candidates for Accountability," which campaigned for Johnson, Rust and Hanfelder. On those comments, the page attributed to Heyen was identified as belonging to the board member specifically by other users.