

# Rallying for Resignation: Scores Shout for LCCC Board Chair's Removal

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer  
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GODFREY – A rally calling for the resignation of Lewis and Clark Community College (LCCC) Board Chair David Heyen was held outside the Trimpe ATC Building where the meeting of the board of trustees was set to take place later Tuesday evening.

The rally began at 5:30 p.m. and was co-hosted by Muslim activists from St. Louis and Action Metro East, an Illinois-based progressive activist coalition. Speakers at the rally included Center for American Islamic Relations (CAIR) Missouri Executive Director Faizan Syed, St. Louis 21st Ward Alderperson John Collins-Muhammed and organizer Umama “Umi” Khenissi, a progressive Muslim activist from St. Louis. The rally was in response to several anti-Muslim posts shared by Heyen's personal Facebook page.

In an official statement issued to St. Louis NBC-affiliate KSDK, Heyen stood by the posts he shared, saying he did so to “start a conversation.” He said they were not shared under his official capacity as LCCC Board of Trustee Chair, and accused a “small faction” of people from distracting people from Heyen asking “tough questions” of the current trustees and college administration.

Syed said Heyen had freedom of speech to say what he wanted to say on social media. He said as the executive director of a civil rights group, freedom of speech was vital. He said Heyen, like everyone else, must accept consequences for his speech.

“If I go cuss out my boss and get fired the next day, will people yell about my freedom of speech?” Syed challenged.

He also shared a story of how Muslims helped with the relief efforts following an EF-5 tornado in Joplin, Missouri. He said the Islamic center there was firebombed on the Fourth of July. While that fire was unable to burn it completely, a second attack by the same man did just that. Syed spoke of smelling the smoke the day after the fire on a return trip to the area. He said that man was inspired by similar propaganda to what Heyen shared on a personal Facebook page.

A poll posted by a gun shop in St. Peter's recently asking if people thought a shooting at a mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand, which resulted in the murder of 50 Muslims, was a tragedy or if it was great, Syed said a many as a third of the people said it was great. He again blamed propaganda similar to that shared by Heyen for the views of that shooter.

His views were echoed by Baptist Pastor Rodney Burton. Burton said his church, too, was attacked by those with hateful views. He said LCCC should be a haven for multiple points of view, as should America. He described people with Heyen's views as hypocrites instead of patriots.

Alton Unitarian Church Pastor Amy Brooks also spoke on behalf of those calling for Heyen's resignation and said hate has no place in the area with his hateful views. While neither Muslim nor black, Brooks said she was an immigrant and gay, so she felt such views were inappropriate.

Pastor Mike Adams said he was unable to attend the event, but brought dates (the fruit) to the event for the Muslim folks to enjoy at their iftar meal to break the daylight fasting of Ramadan (a holy month celebrated in Islam currently occurring). He told a reporter it was an act of solidarity.

Many at the rally did not speak with the megaphone, but still supported the efforts of those who did. More than 50 people were a part of that rally.

Megan McGlasson of Jerseyville later spoke during the public comment section of the meeting. She spoke as an educator. She teaches English as a second language in St. Louis. To the board, she said working with Muslims is rewarding and wished they could do the same to reap those benefits.

“I think it's a real shame, comments like these will discourage Muslim students from coming here,” she said at the rally. “Everybody has opinions on money, but these are real human beings they're discussing. That's different.”

Heyen was escorted to the meeting by deputies from the Madison County Sheriff's Office.

Madison County Green Party Chair Joshua Young said Heyen's views shared on social media were against everything for which the Green Party stands. He said it stands on both “true values” and a “respect for diversity.”

LCCC Sustainability Director Nathan Keener said sustainability is “all about inclusion.” He said Heyen's views did not represent the college as a whole.





[Chris Rhodes also contributed to this story.](#)