

#EndCCStigma Podcast Project / Episode One

2018-04-03

[INTRO MUSIC – VOICE MONTAGE]

Aaron Gulyas: Misplaced snobbery and misapprehension and misunderstanding about what community colleges do and what they are... if we can eliminate that barrier, our students and our graduates are going to be in that much better shape.

Desiree Polk-Bland: Community colleges are probably better positioned than any higher education institution to change people's situations; to change a community; to change the economics of a community.

Tenisha Baca: You get a quality education at a community college. Don't let anyone tell you anything less than that. So wherever you're going in life, I feel that community colleges can help you to get there. They provided me quality preparation to help me to reach where I am right now.

Josiah Litant: It's to change the conversation that it's not a this-or-that. That the four-year degree, the two-year degree, technical trades; those are all options, those should all be on the table, and we have to get away from this idea that one is better than the other.

[MUSIC FADES]

Steve Robinson Welcome to the #EndCCStigma podcast project. I'm Steve Robinson, President of Owens Community College in Ohio, and this is Episode One of our podcast dedicated to ending the unfair stigma placed on America's community colleges. This is a four-part series of podcasts that is designed to amplify the voices of people from across the country who are using social media to create a more accurate view of community college and technical careers.

On today's episode we hear from a number of community college faculty members, staff and administrators, and most importantly... community college students. Guests on this episode include Matt Reed, Marquez Abercrombie-Williams, Tenisha Baca, Lilian Valasquez, Josiah Litant, Danielle Hooven, and Aaron Gulyas. I begin by talking with Matt Reed, who helped launch this campaign by writing about the hashtag in Inside Higher Ed.

Steve Robinson: I am delighted to be talking to Matt Reed, who's vice president for learning at Brookdale Community College, and author of Confessions of a Community College Dean and Inside Higher Ed. How you doing, Matt?

Matt Reed: Great, how are you?

Steve Robinson: I'm excellent, and I'm really delighted that you are going to be the first guest on this little podcast project, because I think you had a lot to do with kicking off the whole end the CC stigma thing that's going on right now. So what kind of resonated with you about seeing this hashtag, and seeing this issue come back that, you know, made you want to write about it?

Matt Reed: It's something I keep bumping into, and it comes up in weird and unexpected places. For example, New Jersey Monthly, which is a popular magazine here does rankings of high schools, and one of the criteria that it uses in ranking high schools against each other is the percentage of students who go directly to a four-year college.

Steve Robinson: Oh, I see. So we don't count as success in that?

Matt Reed: No, we actually count against a high school.

Steve Robinson: That's crazy.

Matt Reed: Yep. And the principles are aware of that, and come under pressure. So it's a number of, you hear that kind of thing a lot, and it's unhelpful.

Steve Robinson: Well, and I have a followup question about it. So you're now chief academic officer at a community college. You must talk to these superintendents and these journalists. What do they say?

Matt Reed: They're sympathetic.

Steve Robinson: Okay.

Matt Reed: But at the same time they have many masters.

Steve Robinson: Right.

Matt Reed: And they're pulled to many directions, and I have to kind of honor that. So, you know, we try to find ways to work with people, dual enrollment being sort of the [inaudible 00:01:48] example.

Steve Robinson: Right.

Matt Reed: Because that way the student can get community college credits, but then go directly to a four-year school as far as the outside world knows.

Steve Robinson: Right. So these are, when you're saying dual enrollment, you're talking about the high school K-12 students taking classes with you before they graduate?

Matt Reed: High school students, yeah.

Steve Robinson: Yeah, yeah. Now, I have a follow up question about that list. So who's in charge of that? Is it a media outlet, or-

Matt Reed: Yeah, yeah, it's a magazine.

Steve Robinson: Yeah, well that makes, I mean I don't know if you've seen this in your career, no offense, because I know you're sort of a journalist with your blog, but it's hard to get complex or nuanced higher-ed stories through to journalists. Like enrollment is a great example. I mean they're interested in total headcount enrollment, and you know, you doing the work you do at a community college are, you know, probably spending most of your time talking about completion and retention, and that's a hard story to get across.

Matt Reed: Right.

Steve Robinson: Interesting. So, can you think of any other examples of the stigma kind of popping up, a anecdote?

Matt Reed: Graduation rates. I really get tired of having to explain that, you know, 26%, 27% graduation rate is actually above average.

Steve Robinson: Yes it is, I would like to have that.

Matt Reed: Which is what we have.

Steve Robinson: Yeah, yeah. So when fold in transfer-

Matt Reed: Yeah. But to come from the outside that sounds terrible.

Steve Robinson: No, it does, it does. And so when you fold in transfer you must be higher.

Matt Reed: Oh, yeah.

Steve Robinson: Yeah.

Matt Reed: Yeah.

Steve Robinson: Okay. So yeah, and so trying to explain that is difficult. So, you know, you, you've got this great blog that a lot of us like to read.

Matt Reed: Thank you.

Steve Robinson: And you obviously care about this issue. What makes you proud to be a community college person? And this is where you've chosen to do your career, you're academic lead at your school, why are you so proud to be at a community college?

Matt Reed: I kind of backed into it. I went to grad school expecting to do the tenured professor at the liberal arts college thing. But the liberal arts colleges weren't hiring. So I found myself at DeVry of all places, a for-profit.

Steve Robinson: Right.

Matt Reed: First as faculty, and then after a few years moved into administration. And after moving into administration in a for-profit, I noticed very quickly sort of the way that decisions were made. The profit mode of always one.

Steve Robinson: Right.

Matt Reed: That was, to use the phrase we're not allowed to use anymore, that was the trump card. So, I got progressively more disenchanted and started looking at other opportunities, and the first one that came along was County College of Morris in north New Jersey. And when I got there I really liked the ethics of it. I really liked the clarity of the mission.

Steve Robinson: Right.

Matt Reed: And let me explain that, a lot of people don't get that.

Steve Robinson: No, I would love to hear more.

Matt Reed: Four-year schools often, not always, but often have a mixed mission. They're there for academics. They're also there for sports. They're also there for the college experience. They're there for a whole bunch of stuff. Community colleges teach.

Steve Robinson: Right. Right.

Matt Reed: Period, full stop, you know? They teach different things, but they teach. So, you know, at that County College of Morris, and then later at [inaudible 00:05:15] and now at Brookdale, we don't have dorms, we don't have football, we teach.

Steve Robinson: Well that's fantastic. [inaudible 00:05:23]-

Matt Reed: And I really like that.

Steve Robinson: Well I do too. And you know, of course there are community colleges who have some of those things, dorms and football. But I think, you know, you've put your finger ... Oh, are we being joined?

Matt Reed: [crosstalk 00:05:35] that's Sally.

Steve Robinson: Oh, that's so great. What's the dog's name?

Matt Reed: Sally.

Steve Robinson: Sally. Hey Sally. She's got, Sally wants to end the stigma against community colleges, I can tell.

Matt Reed: Yeah, well. Someone drove past and she's defending the homestead.

Steve Robinson: That's important.

Matt Reed: Yeah.

Steve Robinson: Well, we're defending ours, right?

Matt Reed: That's right.

Steve Robinson: [inaudible 00:05:51] one of the things I love about this is we are kind of speaking up. But one thing I wanted to kind of underline about what you said, is that's a faculty role, too, right? Because I spent 15 years in the classroom as a full-time community college faculty member, and unlike my counter parts at research universities, you know, teaching research service, you're exactly right. You know, your contribution is in the classroom. Doesn't mean there aren't researchers at community colleges, but the primary thing is teaching, right?

Matt Reed: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, we hire folks for that, and it's such a contrast from my experience in grad school. I went to grad school at Rutgers, and right before my first class as a teaching assistant, this is my third year of grad school, I said to the professor's class that I was Ting, "You know, I'm nervous, I don't know what to-" I had a couple of recitation sections, "... I don't know what to do, what should I do on the first day?" Because there had been no teaching training.

Steve Robinson: Right.

Matt Reed: And he looked me in the eye, and he said, "You'll be fine."

Steve Robinson: That was your onboarding.

Matt Reed: And that was the extent of my training.

Steve Robinson: That was your onboarding.

Matt Reed: That was my training. Yeah.

Steve Robinson: Yeah.

Matt Reed: "You'll be fine." So the students I taught got a 23-year-old TA who had no idea what he was doing, and they were paying a much higher price than the students 10 miles up the road at Middlesex County College who had a full professor and

25 students in the room, and all of that. I couldn't help but notice the difference.

Steve Robinson: Yeah, oh, absolutely.

Matt Reed: It was pretty striking.

Steve Robinson: Well you know, I tell a version of that story to folks in the community who aren't connected to our institutions, and it's something that they, you can see a light bulb go off. They're like, "Oh yeah, I guess that's right. It never occurred to me." Because a lot of them had experiences at four-year colleges so I think that's super important.

Steve Robinson: So you probably have been in this situation I'm going to ask you about, but if you were at a cocktail party, or a community gathering, where somebody said, "Oh, Matt's a community colleges guy, give us your best shot at why we should consider your institutions." What would you tell people?

Matt Reed: Well, aside from affordability, which obviously matters, we specialize. Any place that does one thing is going to get pretty good at the one thing that it does, or it's going to die.

Steve Robinson: Ah.

Matt Reed: We teach. We don't do research the same way that a research university does. We don't do football, we don't do high-profile sports. We don't even do Residence Life, although I know some of them do.

Steve Robinson: Right.

Matt Reed: But we teach. So we hire people who are good teachers, and they get very good at teaching introductory courses, because they do it a lot. And we focus all the professional development around teaching, it's all about teaching. So, okay, you're not going to have football Saturdays, but you are going to have amazing classroom experiences, and they're going to be affordable, and they're going to be local.

Steve Robinson: Sold. I'm ready. Sign me up, enroll me. No, I love that, because it's sort of a Jim Collins Hedgehog principle, right? Do one thing really, really well.

Matt Reed: Yeah.

Steve Robinson: And it's teaching.

Matt Reed: Yep.

Steve Robinson: And you know, in my universe that would be the thing I'd want to do best. So that's very cool. I bet you would convert a lot of people in that.

Matt Reed: I try.

Steve Robinson: So before we end the conversation I just want to thank you for getting this going. I mean I think that our folks in the marketing department kind of track like the, I'm really new to Twitter, so like the likes and retweets and stuff, you know, pretty flat until you got involved. And then, and a lot of people read your blog, and it was a great entry, and so I was, I felt like we were doing something Socratic when, like, you wrote a blog, and then I wrote on my blog in response. It seemed like a sort of a-

Matt Reed: Yeah, I liked that.

Steve Robinson: ... post-modern, I don't know what you'd call it. We-

Matt Reed: [crosstalk 00:09:50] telling, right?

Steve Robinson: Yeah, yeah, we were talking. We were talking. So, I really appreciate you talking to me, and we'll see you out there on Twitter when we try to end the stigma against our institutions.

Matt Reed: Absolutely. Fight the good fight.

Steve Robinson: All right, thanks a lot, Matt.

Matt Reed: Thanks, Steve.

Steve Robinson: Well I have the great fortune to be talking to Marquez Abercrombie Williams. He's told me that his friends call him Quez, gave me permission to call him Quez. How you doing, Quez?

Marquez Abercro: I'm good. How about you today?

Steve Robinson: I'm great. I'm great. So you're a community college student. What are you studying?

Marquez Abercro: I'm studying engineering, actually.

Steve Robinson: Engineering. Very important field. What do you like about being a community college student, Quez?

Marquez Abercro: Well, coming from the background that I have, you know, it was always a push, push, push. So, most people expected me to go to a four-year college to start off. I didn't really want that road. Through my entire school history I've really been in, like, you know, a higher-end school, private school. So I just kind of just

wanted to step down for a little bit. It's cheaper coming to a community college, you know, smaller class atmospheres, more of a friendly face-to-face type of environment. You get to sit there, and your teacher actually gets to know you for you, instead of you just being a number. Your teacher can tell who you are by your face. She doesn't have to say, "Hey, what is your name again?" You know, so that's important to me. I want to feel like I'm somebody, or something to a teacher. Because if I have a better relationship with my teacher, I'm going to have a better relationship learning and taking in my information.

Steve Robinson: That is awesome. So if I heard you right, the environment here at a community college is more similar to that private school environment that you were used to.

Marquez Abercro: Yeah, yeah.

Steve Robinson: That's fantastic. Now before coming here, did you hear any negative or bad things about community colleges?

Marquez Abercro: Well, actually, like I said, I was at a private school and everybody had that push to do bigger and greater things, so a lot of actually people that I graduated from high school with didn't go to community colleges. I'm probably one of the small few that did. I didn't even go to college right after high school. I took almost two years off. It was a big, you know, it was a gap for me. So getting back into school was kind of a struggle at first. But you can sit there and you can really look at yourself and find out who you are at this community college level, and it's just really a good place, if you're in that atmosphere where you haven't done anything for a while you can get back to who you are, and get back to the learning environment. It's just really good.

Steve Robinson: I couldn't agree more, and I'm delighted to hear that's what your experience has been. If you could go back in time and talk to those students who are considering college, what would you tell them now about a community college? What would you tell those students about community college?

Marquez Abercro: Don't count it out. Don't count it out at all.

Steve Robinson: Why, why?

Marquez Abercro: One, it doesn't matter if your parents graduated from this big school, your friends are going to this big school. Look at it like this, you're going to be somebody here, your name is going to be known, you're not going to have those stressful environments of not being able to get to sit down and learn anything with somebody in your class, or sit down with your teacher and have times. You gotta, you know, everything's more relatable here. I will really say consider a community college because it's cheaper. On top of that you're going to save a lot of more money than you will starting at a four year. And basically, college is college, you know? You learn, for the vast majority of your beginning part of

your college you learn the same stuff, everybody does, so why not knock it out for cheaper?

Steve Robinson: Quez, I couldn't have said it better. That was awesome. Well thanks for taking some time to talk to me.

Marquez Abercro: Yes sir.

Steve Robinson: All right.

Steve Robinson: Well I'm super excited to be joined by Tenisha Baca, who is faculty in communications and world languages at Glendale Community College in the Maricopa district. Tenisha, how are you?

Tenisha Baca: I'm great, how are you?

Steve Robinson: I'm excellent. I'm so glad you joined this conversation, and it's been great to connect with you on Twitter. I'm dying to know, what is it about this campaign that has resonated with you?

Tenisha Baca: Well, this campaign really resonated with me because it really hit me personally because I personally feel like I am a product of a community college education. That is where I got my start. I am really proud of the fact that I started at a community college. I feel like it was one of the best decisions of my life. So it really hits home when I hear about stigma against community colleges. I feel like I take it personally, me, because that was where I got my start, and many students got their start. And just some of the negativity that still follows students to this day, which I still find to be really surprising that this stigma still exists, and that we're still having these conversations, but these are conversations that need to be had. But it really resonated with me, because I started at a community college by choice. So I was-

Steve Robinson: Right, and did, am I seeing this right? You are now teaching at the institution where you started?

Tenisha Baca: Yes. I am currently now residential faculty, what's considered full-time faculty at Glendale Community College. But I started there as a student, so that for me was home base.

Steve Robinson: Yeah, well what's that like? That's gotta be such a great feeling. Or, well talk to me about it, what's it like to be full-time faculty where you started?

Tenisha Baca: It feels great. It's honestly a great feeling. Some of my best experiences, and just in my life in general, was at that college. And I truly feel that one of the reasons my experience was so rich was because of the faculty and staff and students who were there. So I feel like this is my opportunity to give back in the same way that they gave to me. [crosstalk 00:15:57]-

Steve Robinson: And now they're your colleagues, right?

Tenisha Baca: Yeah, now we're colleagues. So some of the professors who were my professor at that time are now my colleagues, so it's great.

Steve Robinson: That is great. That is great. And so it's wonderful to hear how passionate, and I share your view. I mean you would think that a stigma like the one we're talking about would have like a half-life and die out after a while. And it seems not to have. I share your view. Can you give me an example, or an anecdote about how you've seen this stigma kind of popup in your experience?

Tenisha Baca: Oh, yeah. I, let's see, I enrolled at GCC around 2001, that was when I graduated. But before even enrolling I remember having a conversation with a friend of mine about my decision to actually go to a community college as opposed to going straight to the university that I was expected. And he didn't necessarily understand why, because he was like, "Well you're a good student, you're a great student, why wouldn't you start there? That's an opportunity for you to go, you could get scholarships." But I felt like that this was the right decision for me. But even that response, I found particularly surprising that someone would have that opinion or that thought of a community college. So I thought, "Well, why wouldn't I go to a community college?"

Tenisha Baca: So, but that was kind of one of the experiences that I experienced before I even enrolled at GCC.

Steve Robinson: So what I hear you saying is, so this person you were having this conversation with, they knew that you were excepted to, and had the opportunity to attend a school other than a community college, and they're just sort of scratching their head about, like why, why would you do that?

Tenisha Baca: Right. And it kind of gave me this feeling like it was a step down.

Steve Robinson: Right, right, mm-hmm (affirmative).

Tenisha Baca: Like why would you go over there to that community college when you can go over here to a university that you have been accepted to. They just didn't necessarily fully understand that.

Steve Robinson: Right. Well, interesting. So, you know, in your career, I mean you've obviously, you know, you come full circle, you started at Glendale, now you're faculty there. You're obviously proud of being a community college educator. What is it that you find rewarding about this calling of teaching at a community college?

Tenisha Baca: I think what I find most rewarding is representing what could be someone's future, even if you start at a community college. Does that make sense?

Steve Robinson: It does.

Tenisha Baca: So to me it's really rewarding to go into the classroom and see students who really remind me of myself when I was younger.

Steve Robinson: Wow.

Tenisha Baca: That student who is, which our population really is, which are first generation college students, female, minority students, I mean across the board I see myself reflected in them. And when I stand in front of the classroom I think to myself that this to me is the reward, to be an example, and to be a representative of being someone who started at a community college, and you can still have quality work and value in your education, and still go somewhere in your life.

Tenisha Baca: I mean granite, at the same time, we're all, I think as students, we're working towards the same goal, which is a bachelors degree. We're all going to get there in different ways, but we're still going to get to the finish line somehow. So this was just the path that I had chosen. So, to me the greatest reward is being able to give back to these students, and show them, hey, you can do it, too. Don't let people make you feel bad for coming to a community college. Unfortunately, you're not less than anyone else. You are still a student and a scholar, and you're here, and that's what matters.

Steve Robinson: That is so powerful to me. I mean just hearing, I've got goosebumps hearing you talk about that. No, I do. Because here's what I'm thinking about while you're telling that story, such a powerful story about yourself looking at your students, right? Seeing your earlier self reflected in them. But you must be aware of the fact that the inverse is true, right? That they're looking at you, and they're saying, "Hey, I could become a college professor. Look, she did it. She can help me do what I want to do." So what you're explaining from your own perspective is equally true from theirs.

Tenisha Baca: Right, right, very true.

Steve Robinson: Wow. I just, to me that's what we're all about. And you've got like the best job in the world. Teaching in a two-year college is so cool. It was the most rewarding, I love what I'm doing now, but I loved my time in the classroom. And particularly that lens that you talked about, about letting the students know the range of possibilities for them, and being a personal example, that's phenomenal, what you said about that.

Tenisha Baca: Right.

Steve Robinson: I really appreciate that. Now you've probably been in this situation I'm going to ask you about, but you know, as community college folks, we're sometimes called upon to speak for the whole, you know, all 1200 of us. So if you were at a event where someone said, "Hey, Tenisha, you teach at a community college.

Give us your best case about why we should have our kids or our neighbor's kids consider community colleges." What would your argument or presentation be?

Tenisha Baca: Well one of my arguments would be that you get a quality education at a community college, don't let anyone tell you anything less than that. And I think I'm a representation of that. It's like, hey, this is an opportunity, and you could see me reflected in that. But if I was to give like a quick elevator hitch, my statement would be that at a community college you can get quality preparation for your elevation.

Steve Robinson: Ooh, I love it, it rhymes, too. Say it one more time.

Tenisha Baca: Yes. Quality preparation for your elevation. So wherever you're going in life, I feel that community colleges can help you to get there, maybe as a stepping stone, or maybe help you get to the finish line. Because I think the great thing about community colleges is that I feel that community colleges have a come as you are focus.

Steve Robinson: Thank you. Yes. Absolutely.

Tenisha Baca: So we, yeah, we have like this open door of access, so we do our best to try to provide the support and the resources that are needed for the students who come to our door. So, and like veterans, students who are coming out of high school, parents who are coming back to school, it's just like a really, really wide range. And I believe that we do provide quality. Because some of my best instruction came from a community college, honestly.

Steve Robinson: Right.

Tenisha Baca: I'm not downplaying, or saying anything negative about the university that I transferred to. I got a great education there, as well. But I felt that at the community college it really, they provided me quality preparation to help me to reach to where I am at right now.

Steve Robinson: To help you elevate, right? [inaudible 00:23:13] I love it.

Tenisha Baca: To help to elevate, yeah.

Steve Robinson: If you haven't copyrighted that you should. It's awesome. Preparation for your elevation. I'm almost thinking of, you know, a melody for it. It's a great phrase.

Tenisha Baca: Yeah, yeah, I should make it a T-shirt.

Steve Robinson: You totally should, you totally should.

Tenisha Baca: Yes, absolutely.

Steve Robinson: Well, look, Tenisha, I gotta tell you, it's really cool to talk to you. You're the first faculty voice in this conversation on the podcast. It's such an important lens. Thank you for what you do for your students.

Tenisha Baca: Thank you. And thank you for the opportunity to share on this platform. I think this is wonderful.

Steve Robinson: Well, we'll just keep it going, because, you know, we just gotta keep the message out there. And I'll see you out on Twitter, and I really appreciate you taking the time to talk to me.

Tenisha Baca: Thank you.

Steve Robinson: Well I'm really happy to be talking to Lillian Valasquez as a community college student. What are you studying Lillian?

Lillian Valasqu: Business administration.

Steve Robinson: Business administration. It's a great major. What do you like about being a community college student?

Lillian Valasqu: I actually used to attend a bigger school than this, and I actually liked the transfer from the bigger school to here, just because like how Taylor was saying. It's, the teachers all know you. You're not in a class with over a hundred students and you're just a part of the classroom. You're engaged. You actually want to participate just because you know you're going to be heard. And yeah, I just like the environment.

Steve Robinson: That's good. I'm interested in what you said about being heard. That's important. People want to have their voices heard. So speaking of hearing things, have you heard any negative things about community college since you've been a community college student? What negativity have you heard about it?

Lillian Valasqu: To be honest, the reason why I attended the bigger school before I came here was because of that, I don't even know what the word is, but-

Steve Robinson: Well we're calling it stigma. It's a stigma.

Lillian Valasqu: Yeah, a stigma, that stigma of community college means you're not as a smart, or you can't go to a bigger school. Because I had the opportunity to actually play at another community college before I went to the bigger school, but I said no because I don't want to go, I don't want to be the one person that's going to a community college. But I mean now that I look back at it I'm glad I took the route I did so I could end up here.

Steve Robinson: Yeah.

Lillian Valasqu: But, I think I had it all messed up in my head, and I let other people dictate what I did.

Steve Robinson: That is so smart. Because that's what I was going to ask you. You're clearly, your head was in a place where the community college was a lesser than option, and you changed your mind.

Lillian Valasqu: Yes.

Steve Robinson: So what was it that helped you change your mind?

Lillian Valasqu: The love of basketball, actually. I wasn't playing basketball at the bigger school. I wanted to try out for the team, but I needed a, I had a really bad injury my senior year, so I needed to be realistic with myself, and I need to, community college is a great segue between the high school and then college, bigger schools like that, competition. So coming to Owens was a really great decision for me. I'm really glad I did that.

Steve Robinson: Fantastic. So if there was a group of students who were thinking, where you were, before, where they think, where am I going to go to college? Is community college an option for me? What would you tell them?

Lillian Valasqu: I would tell them don't listen to what other people are saying. Really think about what's best for you and go with it. I would definitely encourage them to do that.

Steve Robinson: Thank you social media Lillian.

Lillian Valasqu: Mm-hmm (affirmative), you're welcome.

Steve Robinson: Well I am super happy to be talking to Josiah Litant who is the acting chief diversity officer and the dean of students at Minnesota State College Southeast. How are you Josiah?

Josiah Litant: I'm good Steve, how are you?

Steve Robinson: I'm excellent. I was so happy to hear from you on Twitter, because it sounds like this #endccstigma campaign has really resonated with you. Why is that?

Josiah Litant: Well I was so happy to stumble across it, and see the work that you are doing, and that others are jumping onto. Because it really resonates me, certainly from my position here at the college, and just as an educator as well. And, you know, I've been thinking that the last few months I'm just seeing more and more pieces out there in the news about the need for technical education, and the possibilities of two-year degrees, and there is such a stigma still attached to that. So I was thrilled that you are leading the way, helping to shed some light on that, and jumped on the hashtag bandwagon.

Steve Robinson: Well, and it's fun to have a bandwagon like that isn't it? Because you're onto something there. There are more and more national stories about the fact that we've probably thrown the baby out with the bathwater when it comes to technical careers, and anything other than a mom and dad pulling the Station Wagon up to the dorm after you graduate from high school, right?

Josiah Litant: Right. That's right. And I come from a background of, I worked at a four-year liberal arts school for a decade. I loved my work there.

Steve Robinson: It's important work, right? And we're not putting down those schools when we have this conversation.

Josiah Litant: Well, and that's just it, is that, and I am, myself, in the product of, you know, my bachelors and masters are both from liberal art schools. So it's not to say, it's to change the conversation that it's not a this or that, it's both.

Steve Robinson: Thank you.

Josiah Litant: And it's that, the critical need that when we are talking with future college students about pathways, that the four-year degree, the two-year degree, technical trades, those are all options, those should all be on the table, and we have to get away from this idea that is so deeply entrenched, and not even necessarily said as such, but that, you know, one is quote unquote, better than the other, or more of a degree, or will even, you know, I think the biggest misnomer is will lead you to more money. You know, I have friends who have a two-year degree who are working in manufacturing or in trades who are making plenty more dollars than I am. So you know, that's-

Steve Robinson: Isn't that the truth?

Josiah Litant: ... that's not necessarily accurate, either.

Steve Robinson: Well, right. Well you said something that I kind of want to rewind and underline. I want to make sure I got the words right because it was so well phrased. Tell me again, you said it's not this or that.

Josiah Litant: This or that. It's, right, it's not, when we sit down, and I worked most recently for a number of years with high school students, and so talking with them about options. At the school that I ran, one of our, our key approach was always college is not necessarily for everyone, but it is an option for everyone.

Steve Robinson: Right.

Josiah Litant: And so as we talked with our students about that, the nuance part of the conversation once we got into the college part is, not only is college an option for you, what kind of college? There's lots of options.

Steve Robinson: That's smart.

Josiah Litant: So it's about options.

Steve Robinson: Well, I love it. So if I could paraphrase a bit it's almost like a both/and rather than either/or. Not that it's either a career in the trades or you go to college. And one of the things we see in a lot of our institutions, is some of these technical trades based careers, they carry a lot transcribed college credit, including degrees.

Josiah Litant: Mm-hmm (affirmative), that's right.

Steve Robinson: Yeah, yeah, well fantastic. Well, you know what, because you've been paying attention to this, I'm sure this has happened to you, have you seen an example or an anecdote about this stigma, the way it speaks out in the culture? Because you made an interesting point just now. You said maybe people don't consciously say it, but it comes out. So what, have you seen it, have you seen any like cultural artifacts of this stigma out in the world?

Josiah Litant: Yes, all the time, everywhere. [crosstalk 00:31:10]-

Steve Robinson: Can you give me an example?

Josiah Litant: Yes, absolutely. And you know, the one that comes most to mind for me, so I've been here at Minnesota State College Southeast since October as the dean of students, and it was really important to me. I took a hiatus from higher ed to run my high school that I ran. When I decided to go back into higher ed it was really important to me that it was a community or technical college. And I happened to find a community and technical college.

Steve Robinson: Very cool.

Josiah Litant: Because I am just ever increasingly concerned about acceptability to higher education, and the higher-ed model as a whole, the private higher-ed model in particular, it's just not sustainable, and it's not accessible. So that's how I landed here. However, my example takes me back to when I was working with high school students, and working with them. We were a very small school called the LightHouse Holyoke, focused on personalized education for teens. And so everything that we did was, you know, we met each student where they were at. So parents were very involved, as well, when they could be and were able to be.

Steve Robinson: Cool. Very cool.

Josiah Litant: And so I think about conversations I had, and there's one in particular in my mind, as a student, sophomore, junior, is beginning to think about college, and I'm thinking about a conversation I had with a student and his mom. And just,

you know, the student, before he came to us had never even considered college, and that was something that he was thinking about, which is very exciting. He didn't really quite know what he wanted to get into, but this was a student who just thrived with hands on, and had really, you know, the students that came to LightHouse came there because, for a variety of reasons, but for all of them the traditional model didn't work for them. And with this student, he would do projects on his own, all sorts of sort of hand craft, and wood carving, and all sorts of other things.

Steve Robinson: He was like a maker.

Josiah Litant: Really, yes, yes, that's, and it's funny you say that, because he spent most of the time in our maker space.

Steve Robinson: So cool.

Josiah Litant: Really succeeded at hands on classes.

Steve Robinson: It's so cool.

Josiah Litant: So as we started talking about college, and he was my advisee, so I knew a lot of about what some of his struggles in traditional school had been, you know, we started talking about what the options were, and we started talking about technical college. And as I talked to the student with his mother, with some other people, some advisors, there was definite hesitation. Like, okay, this kid's thinking about college, great, let's get him on the four-year track. And my comment wasn't that's good or bad, my question was, so why? To what end? What are we trying to accomplish?

Steve Robinson: Right.

Josiah Litant: There are certain goals, certain careers where that, yeah, that makes sense, that's great. I love four-year colleges and liberal art schools and state universities. But again, to me it's coming back to that choice. Let's not start from that assumption. If we're talking about college, here's the options on the table, what's the better fit for you? And so I sort of posed, well, you know, based on what I'm seeing and what we've talked about and all these examples, I want to recommend that, sure, we can look at that, but let's also look at a technical college. And there was just a sense in the conversation of that that is not as good.

Steve Robinson: Right. Like you had thrown cold water on this idea of going to college.

Josiah Litant: Yes. Well, if he's, you know, I'll give you an example of a comment. "Well, you know, I think he's capable enough to go to a four-year school."

Steve Robinson: Right.

Josiah Litant: You know, there's number one that's wrong is that-

Steve Robinson: Yeah, exactly, exactly.

Josiah Litant: Right? Equating going to a community college or a tech school, I think that's part of what's so deeply ingrained, is this idea that it's not as much. Or it's, you know, sort of an old fashioned concept of, well I guess if you can't get in that's your backup, that's what you can do. When in fact, you know, especially when it comes to trades and tech, we are best equipped to train and prepare students to succeed in there. And so that, but it was just so pervasive, that sense that four-year colleges were the better pathway to success. And now, being steeped in community and technical education every day here at Southeast, not only do I see the incredible ... You know, and we're a small college. We got 1300 students combined ... the incredible facilities that we have, but also the partnership with industry that we have.

Steve Robinson: Exactly.

Josiah Litant: Right?

Steve Robinson: Exactly.

Josiah Litant: So students are able to make connections to find, you know, hopefully many of them want to stay in the area to find local jobs. Where we're located, we have a campus in Winona, Minnesota and another campus in Red Wing, Minnesota, we're steeped right along the Mississippi in manufacturing, in agriculture. There's so much expertise and experience that a student can get hands on.

Steve Robinson: And you can get those students plugged into that a lot faster than other higher-ed institutions, can't you?

Josiah Litant: That's right, that's right.

Steve Robinson: So how did that conversation end? So it sounds like you did the counter factual, you started teaching, saying here's what you don't know about technical colleges. What was the outcome?

Josiah Litant: The outcome was the student went to a technical college.

Steve Robinson: Really? Oh, you got one for the team. That's awesome. That's great. Do you know how he's doing?

Josiah Litant: He's doing really well.

Steve Robinson: Oh, good, good, good.

Josiah Litant: It was really, you know, it was a fit that, it just made sense. And I think what happened is that, you know, as we talked about it more a lot of that stigma was able to melt away. And you know, what I found with a lot of my students at LightHouse was, we had a terrific community college, Holyoke Community College, and the next city over, Springfield had a Springfield Technical and Community College. And I would often, we would just do trips with our students. We'd setup, because we're small, we could do that sort of, you know, one or two or three kids at a time. And we'd setup an appointment, we knew the admissions folks there, and we'd bring them over. And I'll never forget, one of my students who's in Springfield Technical Community College right now, taking it in, and walking with them through the autobody shop. And we talked about it, and we looked it on the website, but being in there, talking to current students, and seeing them having these hands on experiences. You know, the desks for the class were in the autobody shop. What, you know, it-

Steve Robinson: That's too cool. That is so great.

Josiah Litant: Right.

Steve Robinson: Oh, I love it. And so, you know, I kind of want to ask this question. So, you got a win there. You did this intervention where you confronted a stigma with some facts and reality, and probably changed the pathway of a young person's life for the better, which is just so cool. Imagine that there were a room of parents like that, and you were called upon to give the group value proposition about why folks should entertain technical and community colleges, what would your pitch be?

Josiah Litant: You know, it's multi-pronged, right? First and foremost for me is, you should not go into debt to get your degree. So, you know, our college, we're affordable, we're accessible, we're open enrollment.

Steve Robinson: Right.

Josiah Litant: So the amount of, of course, this week is big stories in the news about admission scandal.

Steve Robinson: Oh my goodness, aren't there?

Josiah Litant: Right? And I couldn't help but comment, it wasn't intended to be snarky, but you know, for less than the cost of what some of these bribes were you could've completed multiple degrees at a two-year community technical college.

Steve Robinson: Absolutely, for multiple people. I mean, and-

Josiah Litant: For many, many people, right?

Steve Robinson: Yeah, so you're, that first prong is you don't need to go into debt. And then where do you go from there?

Josiah Litant: So from there, you know, I think one of the things that stands out from me, particularly working with our amazing faculties here at Southeast is, the faculty that you get to work with at a community technical college are there because they want to work with you, right? They're not there for fancy labs, or research. Which is not, again, not to put any of that down. Those are all critical things and have their place.

Steve Robinson: Correct.

Josiah Litant: However, for our students who are here, these faculty are here because they want to be working closely with our students. That's the core of what we do. We don't have, you know, we have some great facilities. We don't have multi-billion facilities on our campus, but we have, we're working with industry, so we're meeting current-end, emerging industry standards. And so you're working hands on with faculty who that is what they're committed to, is spending their time helping you to succeed, and then connecting you in the community. I mean, and what more can I say than that? [crosstalk 00:40:13]-

Steve Robinson: Yeah, well I think you'd have parents flocking to you there, right? You know, you probably had some of them [inaudible 00:40:18] don't need to go into debt. They're waiting for somebody to tell them that. Because, right? People are thinking, gosh, the success of my kid is dependent upon this ginormous financial expenditure that I'm probably not prepared to make. And so that would be one value proposition. But I think what you said about teaching is so key for our institutions.

Josiah Litant: Absolutely.

Steve Robinson: And it's what we need to be telling. So, look, Josiah, this has been a great conversation. I'm so glad that we connected on Twitter, and I really appreciate you working with us in this social media campaign to end the stigma against community and technical colleges.

Josiah Litant: Well, Steve, it's a please, and I really appreciate the opportunity to chat about this, because it's so important, and I feel strongly that we need to get this message out. And you know, one last thing I'll add that I thought of, because I'm going to give myself the opportunity to add one-third prong-

Steve Robinson: Please do it.

Josiah Litant: ... which is that our schools are so well prepared to work with students from a variety of backgrounds. So here at Southeast, you know, we have a number of students who are working, sometimes multiple jobs.

Steve Robinson: Right.

Josiah Litant: They have their own family or children that they're taking care of. They have a parent they're taking care of. They have all sorts of, they're coming back to school to start a second career. And we are so well positioned to support that. So, to me, these things are the heart of why I want to be part of the moving your great campaign forward. I should say our campaign. [crosstalk 00:41:54]-

Steve Robinson: It is, ours. Totally ours, yeah. I couldn't agree more. And that was what attracted me to the sector, by the way, is not only do we have the ability to work with so many diverse types of students, that's what makes these places amazing places to be. I mean, I taught for a while at a college that wasn't a community college, and my first experience in a community college classroom literally changed my life. So I feel the same way as you. So I really appreciate you joining the conversation.

Josiah Litant: Thank you, Steve.

Steve Robinson: All right, thanks, Josiah.

Steve Robinson: I'm super happy to be talking to Danielle Hooven who is a student here. What are you studying, Danielle?

Danielle Hooven: My major is computer programming. I'm also going for my certain in web design, and then I have a minor in engineering.

Steve Robinson: Wow, that's a lot of stuff in very important in-demand fields.

Danielle Hooven: Thanks.

Steve Robinson: So, tell me what you like about being a community college student?

Danielle Hooven: What do I like? I like. There's a lot of things that I like. Well, I guess, to know a little bit about my background, I am a non-traditional college student. So I am returning to college after seven years, and so I'm a little bit older. And what I like about community college was that it was easier, to me it was easier to go back to a community college than to go back to a university. To me, I felt like it was achievable to do an associates degree, and then go on. So that's what I really liked about, like that's what the community college was able to offer.

Danielle Hooven: So I like that, but now since I've been here, I like, I've noticed that it's really easy to interact with the faculty. That they're very approachable if I'm having an issue. And this isn't just my instructors, but like administrators as well. That it's easy to get an appointment face-to-face, one-on-one, and get my problems solved. Even if I have to go to a few different people, I don't lose hope. I don't get distraught in the process of it all.

Steve Robinson: That's really insightful, because a lot of the national research is saying that's what makes people successful in college, is that interpersonal, one-on-one connection. And so what I'm hearing you say is that you have that as a community college student.

Danielle Hooven: Yeah, absolutely. I don't feel like I'm lost in the hustle, I don't feel like I'm in this huge crowd of people and I don't matter. I do feel like I am important here, yeah.

Steve Robinson: Yeah, well, you certainly are. So, have you heard anything negative, or kind of disrespectful said about community colleges?

Danielle Hooven: I don't think people necessarily come out and say anything disrespectful, but I do think that there is negative connotations that go with it. I do think that there is this underlying feeling that, you know, maybe on a resume that a community college may not look as prestigious as a university. So, I mean, I don't think I've heard anybody actually come out and say it, I just feel like maybe that's something, like a custom you grew up kind of knowing, or have this feeling that that's truth. But I don't actually think that it is at this point anymore.

Steve Robinson: Well that's good to hear. So if there was a group of people who were considering going to college, and you had the opportunity to tell them about community colleges what would you say to them?

Danielle Hooven: I would say that it's a great idea, especially financially. That, you know, we're all worried about student loans in the end, and this is a great way to get that education and spare yourself all the debt in the end. And, oh, can I say something about adjunct professors?

Steve Robinson: Please do.

Danielle Hooven: There are a lot of adjunct professors here that I'm learning, or that I'm realizing, and I'm actually quite amazed at the different experience. Because I went to UT before, and I've noticed that with my adjunct professors, a lot of them are actually working in the industry. So they're bringing a lot of up to date knowledge. They're really, like, so my web design classes, I have this, can I say her name? I don't know [crosstalk 00:46:09]-

Steve Robinson: Sure, go for it.

Danielle Hooven: So, Cheryl Catlin is my instructor, and I've had her for a few of these classes and I'm just so amazed at the information that she's presenting, and the way that she's going about teaching these lessons, it's non-traditional. She's sending us links to articles, to news, like, you know, really up to date things that are happening, and these programs and these practices. And I'm just so amazed because I feel like it's so different than somebody who is not working in the field, who is just teaching straight out of a textbook. She's saying, like these are

the skills you need, we're going to concentrate on this. And, you know, because when you're done you're going to be out there ready to do it. I really appreciate that.

Steve Robinson: I love that you brought that up, because that is one of our great strengths is our adjunct faculty bring real world experiences into the classroom.

Danielle Hooven: Yeah.

Steve Robinson: That's fantastic. Well, look, thank you so much for talking to me, Danielle. It was a great conversation.

Danielle Hooven: Thank you very much. I enjoyed it, too.

Steve Robinson: Well I am super excited to be joined by one of my former colleagues, somebody I served on a faculty with at a two-year college, it's Aaron Gulyas, who's a history faculty member at Mott Community College in Flint, Michigan. Aaron, how are you, man?

Aaron Gulyas: I'm doing well, Steve. How are you doing?

Steve Robinson: I am great, and I'm so happy to be talking to you, and I'm really glad that we've connected over Twitter on this social media campaign to push back on community college stigma. Could you tell me why this campaign matters to you as a community college faculty member?

Aaron Gulyas: Well I think it matters to me as a community college faculty member in general, just because of the pride I have in the work that community colleges all across the country, and in Canada, are doing to bring a greater degree of equity to higher education. But in particular it really spoke to me because students from Flint, and many similar communities in the Rust Belt, you know, more broadly, have sometimes some additional, some additional stigmas and hurdles to overcome. You mentioned Flint, Michigan these days, and it's been a few years, and I still get asked at conferences, "Oh my gosh, can you drink the water?"

Aaron Gulyas: And so there are so many barriers in students' ways, that misplaced snobbery, and misapprehension, and misunderstanding about what community colleges do and what they are, is something that, if we can eliminate that barrier, you know, our students and our graduates are going to be in that much better shape.

Steve Robinson: Well, you know, I guess I didn't put that together, because of course we worked together for so many years in Flint. If a community that understood a need to overcome stigma existed, it could be Flint, Michigan, right?

Aaron Gulyas: Yeah, absolutely.

Steve Robinson: Well, and as we both know, there's so many vibrant, fantastic things happening in Genesee County and Flint, Michigan. So I'm delighted to be talking to you. So, can you give me an example or an anecdote of this community college stigma in practice? Have you seen it in your career? What does it look like, and tell me about that.

Aaron Gulyas: I think one of the ways I've seen it career wise, and in sort of academia, is when I go to professional conferences that are focused on a discipline or a subject area, and I won't specify any particular one because it's pretty consistent, there's very little programming in the way of teaching and learning stuff related to a particular discipline, be it history or cultural studies or what have you. There's a lot of very cutting edge theory and research, and that's great, and it's fun to find ways to take cutting edge research in your field and work it into a lesson in your survey classroom.

Aaron Gulyas: But I think even those great strides have been made, I think there is space for professional [inaudible 00:50:04] organizations to do more to integrate people who teach at two-year institutions into those organizations more fully. And while I appreciate sort of the one-off initiatives that might take place here or there to include us, it always sort of feels like, oh, they got a grant to do this, and now they have to talk to us. And when this initiative is done they will go back to ignoring us.

Aaron Gulyas: So that's one thing just from a professional standpoint that I've noticed. And I find myself gravitating more toward more general teaching and learning conferences literally, rather than subject specific conferences for that reason.

Steve Robinson: Well, you know, that resonates with me from my time in the classroom as a community college professor. It happened to me in my discipline, too. So, wow. I mean you're bringing all these memories back. And it also is a great segue to a question I wanted to ask you, specifically. This is a question I haven't asked other folks, because, you know, you and I, we taught in the same classrooms, we were colleagues for many years. So here's a question. You are very engaged in your field, you're an historian, you love to teach, and your career trajectory could have sent you to a lot of kinds of post secondary institutions. But you chose to teach at the community college. What do you like about being a community college academic?

Aaron Gulyas: What I like about it is that I get the best of both worlds. I get to teach and be in the classroom and do survey classes. And I think survey classes are fun. Because I personally have a very low, sort of boredom threshold. And when I teach more specialized topics, even at the 200 level, I find myself thinking, ugh, another week of medieval Europe, or military history or something. And with world history, for example, it's always something different. And, you know, so I like doing survey classes. I like that level. I like seeing students who know nothing about history, and care nothing about history, and finding some hook to get them interested.

Aaron Gulyas: And from the scholarly side of it, so that's why I like teaching in a community college. From a scholarly side of it I enjoy writing books, and writing book reviews for journals, and presenting at conferences, without the feeling that that's what I'm being judged on professionally, rather than my teaching. Because I enjoy the scholarly work, but it's very much a, I'm extremely fortunate to be able to have time in my life to do this, in addition to teaching, rather than, you know, I want to write books, and speak at places, and the teaching is something I have to put up with. It's sort of, I get the best of both of those things that I enjoy doing, without one of them necessarily predominating, or dominating the whole thing.

Steve Robinson: I love that answer. So there's a both/and for you.

Aaron Gulyas: Yes. Yes.

Steve Robinson: You get to focus on teaching, and when you're doing your research, it's not like at the expense of teaching, or vice versa. The other thing I'd throw in there, because I follow you on Twitter, so am I right about this? One of the things, one of your research interests, one of the things you like to write about is not specifically something you could get published in a history journal. You're interested in paranormal, UFOs, you've got this great podcast. And it might be hard to have that as part of your research portfolio if you were at a research university. But it's one of these cool things you get to do to follow your passion because of where you are.

Aaron Gulyas: Yeah, that's absolutely right. I mean a lot of what I have done in my writing is, I mean very interdisciplinary, but not interdisciplinary in a way that would necessarily, might be, you know, what I would have been hired to do at a four-year school for example. And so, you know, it's like, well that's fun if you want to do that, but no. You know, it would sort of be-

Steve Robinson: Right, well, and you're in charge.

Aaron Gulyas: Yeah.

Steve Robinson: You would have more-

Aaron Gulyas: Exactly.

Steve Robinson: Isn't that paradoxical from a outside perspective, and somebody who used to be a faculty member and now is an administrators, I look at your career and I'm like, you know, you don't have a dean or a tenure comity saying, yeah, no, that article doesn't count, or, we're not going to look at that podcast. You are in charge.

Aaron Gulyas: Yeah, and when I do something, whether it's edit a collection of primary courses that's a very history-ish sort of thing, but more of a, you know, I don't want to

say commercial thing, but more of a job type of thing, and, or whether I'm doing a flying saucer history podcast, or writing a book on conspiracy culture, the response I get from my colleagues, and my superiors at Mott is, "Oh, neat. That's really cool. Do you want to come do a talk at the library?" Not, you know-

Steve Robinson: Because it is.

Aaron Gulyas: Right.

Steve Robinson: Because it really is.

Aaron Gulyas: And it's not like, oh, gosh, I don't know if that's a good idea, I'm not sure how that looks for your career. Never anything like that.

Steve Robinson: I think people-

Aaron Gulyas: Aside from a few tinfoil hat jokes.

Steve Robinson: Right. Well, and those are fun, too.

Aaron Gulyas: Yes.

Steve Robinson: But I think people outside of our world might be surprised by that. That, and here's the thing, if you're listening, and you know a little bit about higher ed, you know a community college academic who loves the classroom, but has passions in learning, and speaking, and writing, and creating media, paradoxically could have more control over their academic output than somebody who is in a publisher parish track, don't you agree?

Aaron Gulyas: Oh yeah, absolutely. And you know, we need both. We need the, I firmly believe we need the dedicated scholars who are creating new knowledge as their primary job, and goal, and path. But I think there needs to be space for something a little more relaxed, too.

Steve Robinson: Well, and I'm glad you said that, because I'm very careful to not, you know, even though some of this is in opposition to what people understand about higher ed, this is not to say that the standard research career, where you're focused on one unified topic, and building the literature in that field is wrong. When, you're right, we need that. And so this is a both/and, not an either/or.

Aaron Gulyas: Yep.

Steve Robinson: And so that's fascinating to me. So, one more question. So you've been doing this for a long time, you're a great community college faculty member, the students love your classes. So imagine, a little thought experiment here, imagine you have an assembled group of folks who are thinking about post secondary. They're looking at what's next in terms of college. And you're kind of called

upon to be the ambassador, or the person who's going to speak up for a community college choice. What would you tell that group?

Aaron Gulyas: I would tell them that whatever they want to do in higher ed, or whatever they think they want to do, or if they don't know what they want to do, whether you are undecided because your parents have said it's time for you to go to college, or whether you have been downsized, or your job no longer exists, and you're looking for the next thing to do, no matter what you want or need to do in higher education, you can start at a community college. From being a welder to being a physicist, you can do that starting at a community college. It takes planning, but so does going to a four-year school. It takes a lot of work, but so does going to a four-year school, and the statistics show that if you start at a community college you, on average, will be as or more successful than students who start at a four-year school. So, don't think that going to a community college limits your dreams or your aspirations, because it doesn't.

Steve Robinson: No, it does not. That was very well put. Aaron, it is so wonderful to connect with you again.

Aaron Gulyas: Absolutely.

Steve Robinson: I appreciate you spending time with me, and let's stay connected out in social media, and on Twitter, and thank you so much for talking to me.

Aaron Gulyas: Thank you.

[MUSIC FADES]

Steve Robinson Well, that's it for Episode One of the #EndCCStigma podcast project. I hope you have enjoyed hearing the voices of our many allies who are working to end the stigma against community colleges through social media. Stay tuned for future episodes, as we are producing three more segments with the same format during community college month.

The podcast is produced, recorded, and engineered by yours truly: Steve Robinson, president of Owens Community College in Ohio. My Twitter handle is @OCCPresident. More information about our campaign can be found at our landing page at endccstigma.org. The soundtrack was composed and performed by Scott Holmes of scottholmesmusic.com, and is licensed through Creative Commons.

Until next time, please push back against inaccurate and unfair characterizations of community and technical colleges in real time wherever you are, and especially on social media, use the hashtag #EndCCStigma to focus our efforts. Thanks for listening.