

Nov 20, 2014 – Full Text of Trustee McGuire’s Speech

Posted by [BOT Blogger](#) on November 24, 2014 at 9:40 pm

Thanks to Trustee McGuire who agreed to provide the full text of her speech.

Martin Niemoller was a German pastor and theologian, born in 1892. Initially supportive of Hitler during the lead up to WWII, he eventually became the leader of a group of clergymen opposed to Hitler. In 1937 he was arrested and sent to Dachau. He survived and became a widely known public figure. His poem/statement describing the dangers of political apathy is widely quoted...

First...they came for the Socialists and I did not speak out...I was not a Socialist.

Then...they came for the Trade Unionists and I did not speak out....I was not a Trade Unionist.

Then...they came for the Jews and I did not speak out...I was not a Jew.

Then ...they came for me and there was no one left to speak for me.

My statement tonight is directed at the various extremist, right wing ideologues and groups attempting to discredit this stellar institution, its administration, and its elected leaders. The most recent personal assault today on our Chair, Erin Birt, is the tipping point for me, just as Trustee Hamilton’s threat to the Chair (What goes around, comes around...I’ll get you!) was the tipping point for my support for the Censure resolution for Trustee Hamilton.

Edgar County Watchdogs, Illinois Leaks, and For the Good of Illinois, and their ilk, including members of the Tea Party, feed on misinformation, scurrilous inferences, and outright lies.

Imprest checks...absolutely nothing illegal, against Board policy or otherwise is to be found among these invoices/receipts/checks. If the Board had expressed an interest in seeing these checks, we could have had access to them at any time. We had and still have no compelling interest in overseeing this housekeeping account...this account has operated within the parameters of Board Policy.

The Waterleaf/Inn at Water’s Edge...these were facilities in which the ed specs were carefully drawn and executed to provide maximum return on the taxpayer investment...the current numbers all indicate an upward trend...our students have the benefit of a world class environment in which to train for careers in the hospitality field; the various events for trustees and administrators help to create a cohesive team experience...and the amounts listed in the most recent expose posted to the Huffington Post and emailed to COD employees amount to just .00017 of our annual operating budget of \$187,000,000, or .017%! The Waterleaf has been used more often than not for marketing purposes for the college...I myself requested a lunch for several leaders of the Chinese community in Naperville...was that a waste of taxpayer money? I certainly don’t think so! One of those leaders will be teaching a continuing ed class for the college this spring on Chinese Culture!

Let’s talk about the President...Despite the criticism he has received –and some of it earned—he is a most remarkable leader who has accomplished many, many good things here at the college. He is the Board’s only employee and we take our responsibility very seriously. He sets the tone for the college and he is our ambassador to the district’s residents. Show me the organization with the perfect leadership dynamic? I’ve lived long enough to know that perfection is not out there...well meaning and talented folks do the best they can...constructive criticism is valid and welcome, but personal attacks? Never.

Let’s also mention the \$20m grant from the State of Illinois that was the subject of so much press in June. The College was actually promised \$25 million as far back as 2002; in 2010, those same dollars were listed as a separate line item in the State capital budget. \$5 million was granted to the college over the past four years, money that was used by the college for demolition of “temporary” classroom buildings circa 1965 that had well outlived their usefulness by that time. As trustees, we often lobbied our legislative delegation, as well as the Constitutional officers, for the remaining funds (\$20m) promised so long ago. As it turned out, the hope that the \$20m might actually come our way was communicated to us by various individuals and the email in which the President speculated about a way to move that process along sooner rather than later was conveniently the target of a FOIA request from Adam Andrzejewski (For the Good of Illinois)...and then became an embarrassing, and ultimately losing scenario for COD. The preposterous assertion that we would create a need for this \$20m out of whole cloth is absolutely false. The request for the Teaching and Learning Center had been on our annual RAMP request to the State of Illinois for years. The proposed original use for the money –demolition—had been accomplished, as the need grew to the point where we could no longer wait for the State’s money for that purpose. But, certainly, we had other worthy uses for it!

And, let’s talk about the expense of this vendetta....the proposal tonight for a forensic audit of the Imprest accounts has a price tag of \$85,000...enough to provide full ride scholarships for 17 of our students...the \$20m we lost, at least up to this point, has to be added to the total; and then there are the legal/staff expenses to process over 50 Freedom of Information Requests...upwards of \$100,000...\$20,185,000 in total! And, all for what? These are dollars that could have been so much better directed...these are tax dollars actually wasted...NONE of the accusations has been validated! None!

And, before I close...

Let me say that this college is one of the most renowned community colleges in the United States; we are second only to the U of I for undergraduate higher ed in Illinois! Let me share some really fabulous stats:

Nearly 25% of the district’s high school graduates are selecting COD for their post-secondary education

20 academic programs feed into 12 baccalaureate 3 +1 programs...programs in which— in specific fields of study— our students can achieve a bachelor’s degree awarded from one of five reciprocating universities, all in, for about \$35,000!

Completed or have underway \$550m in campus improvements, including a renovation of the Naperville Regional Center which will have its debut in January

Reduced energy costs by 13.8% while adding more than 630,000 square feet of space...LEED certification for every facility

From 2010-2014, COD has enjoyed a 10.3% increase in headcount enrollment, contrary to the rest of the state’s community colleges which experienced an overall decline in headcount of 11.1%. During that same time period, COD enjoyed an increase of 6% for FTE, compared to the average across the state of a decline of -13.1%!

Introduced the Presidential and Academic Scholars Program for academically enriched students...enrollment from 2009 to 2014 is up 595%!!

The Chronicle of Higher Education ranked College of DuPage as a top producer of Fullbright Scholars within its institution’s Carnegie Classification

Awarded \$26.7 million in capital funding from the State of Illinois

Maintained the College’s Aaa/AAA bond rating from Moody’s and Standard and Poor’s...the United States bond rating is now AA++...we’re doing something very right here!

Awarded the Illinois Performance Excellence Bronze Award in 2012...making COD only the 6th community college to receive this award since its inception in 1996

More than doubled the number of student scholarships awarded by the College of DuPage Foundation between 2009-2013...from 300 to 800!

Received the Governor’s Award for Academic Excellence in serving veterans...COD was the first community college in the State to receive this award...and we serve upwards of 1200 veterans on our campus

And, we can boast of a faculty second to none, nearly all with advanced degrees, including 30% of our full

time faculty with an earned doctorate! Combine their expertise, with small class settings, an abundance of hands-on instruction, all in state-of-the-art classroom/lab settings and you have the makings of a world class college education experience tailored to meet the variety of needs within our district!

This treasure is being threatened...I am asking for an end to the harassment and attacks from sources both within and outside our community. COD is a true treasure, one which we all support through our tax dollars for the benefit of everyone...community colleges are unique to our country...and a lifeline for so many, as they make their way through life. I have never encountered anyone who was critical of the education they received at this institution, NEVER...and that is our mission: to support the students and faculty of COD to the best of our ability and to safeguard the resources with which we are entrusted. I sincerely hope that reasonable people will come forward to re-assert their commitment to COD and to push back these unwarranted attacks on the college, especially the very personal attacks on our Chair, Erin Birt. The important message so eloquently stated by Martin Niemoller is that we cannot stand idly by and say nothing, do nothing. It is time to be counted...time to stand up for the community's college. Please pay attention to the upcoming election for Trustees in April...be informed.

Thank you for listening and I'm hoping that you will join with me to put an end to these vicious unwarranted attacks.
