

## **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Report to the Board**

**Presented by Mike Reagan**

**June 26, 2014**

I would like to thank the MCC Board for allowing me the opportunity to speak this evening. I'm not here tonight as an instructor of sociology, but as the former Chair of The Curriculum and Academic Policy Council. During the 2013-2014 academic year, CAPC took on the task of discussing whether McHenry County College should be closed in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This past spring semester, CAPC voted in favor (7-3-1) of recommending that MCC be closed the third Monday of every January in honor of Dr. King. This recommendation did not occur on a whim, nor did the CAPC representatives take it lightly. Approximately three to four whole CAPC meetings were spent discussing the legacy of Dr. King.

A brief history on MLK Day at McHenry County College. Many may be surprised to discover that McHenry County College did actually celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day for one year in 1986, the year it was established by President Ronald Reagan as a federal holiday. The following year (1987) however, the Curriculum Council recommended to eliminate certain holidays during the spring semester, and recognize only the week of Spring Break. This was done to create a four week intersession period between spring and summer, as well as establish balance among the fall and spring semesters (five days of no classes in the fall and five days of no classes in the spring). This structure continues to exist today.

The following are reasons discussed at CAPC in support of MCC being closed on Dr. King Day:

1. Our peer institutions are closed in honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
  - a. This illustrates how the day has become institutionalized in society and education, much like other holidays such as Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, and Thanksgiving.
  - b. Some commented that MCC should remain open and use the day to educate students on the legacy of Dr. King. However even with MCC being open this year on Dr. King Day, the activities honoring Dr. King were scheduled on Tuesday (1/21), not Monday (1/20). Other peer institutions such as Oakton Community College hold their Dr. King activities and celebrations later in the week.

2. Pedagogical issues that limited teaching in the late 1980s no longer apply.
  - a. Today, most disciplines can move pedagogy out of the classroom and online when necessary. Learning Management Systems, such as Canvas, have become embedded into the curriculum and culture of higher education.
  - b. The Illinois Community College Board has also approved online, blended, and Fast Track courses, all of which have moved away from seat time as the only measure of pedagogical content.
  
3. Scheduling and the Academic Calendar
  - a. Eliminating all the holidays except Spring Break made it possible to create a four week, four days a week intersession period between spring and summer.
  - b. Now, we have flexible summer scheduling, which has eliminated the ninth week (finals week) for main summer courses. This has added an extra week of flexibility to the academic calendar. This flexible week could be used to help accommodate MCC being closed in honor of Dr. King.