

So you want to complete a degree at LCCC and beyond.

Janet Maltbie: [00:00:00]

From the campus of Lorain County Community College. This is the career exploration podcast on College radio heard round the world, LCCC radio.com the boom. My name is Janet Maltbie. We explore careers college majors and more so you can be a success here on the LCCC campus and beyond. I believe completing a degree, pursuing passionate work and debt free living is key to your future. I'm here to help you on your journey and so are my guests.

Today on our program, our special guest is Marisa Vernon White and our topic of conversation is, So you want to complete a degree at LCCC and beyond. Marisa is the Associate Provost of Enrollment Services and Student Success here at Lorain County Community College.

She leads all team members who work with Enrollment, Financial, Career and Veteran service. She also facilitates college-wide efforts to ensure you have an opportunity to succeed as you pursue your academic and career goals at LCCC. Marisa has served as assistant Dean or director of student services at various colleges in Ohio to include Cuyahoga Community College, Columbus State Community College and Kent State University.

She also has had one-on-one experience working with college students directly as an academic advisor. Marisa holds a Master's degree in higher education Administration but is currently working on completing a doctoral program in higher education leadership through Colorado State University. Marissa loves working with students and is passionate about helping students succeed here at the Lorain County Community College campus and beyond. Marissa Vernon White, welcome to the program.

Marisa Vernon White: [00:01:46] Thanks, Janet.

Janet Maltbie: [00:01:48] You've been in this position for about a year. What are you most excited about as we enter the next semester?

Marisa Vernon White: [00:01:55] So, yesterday was actually my one year anniversary. I realized that because Facebook told me that it was and so that had me thinking a lot yesterday actually about just the last year and kind of where we're heading, what we've accomplished and then where we're going and I think one of the things that excites me the most about being here at Lorain is that there is automatic support for students built in because the people who work here actually believe in what they're doing and believe in supporting students. And so that actually takes very little coaching here because almost all of the staff are on board with that vision and actually believe that every student's dream really does matter.

And so I think that that's a really exciting place to be because we already have the foundation to basically build on top of that and make sure that students have what they need and have programs and initiatives and support services that actually address their

needs and I also think that our faculty and staff and our advising team and our Career Services team Financial Services veterans, they're really in touch with students and they adapt what they're doing based on what students are telling them.

So this ends up being a very student-centered place where we really are listening to our students and kind of making changes all along and constantly evolving with what our students need. It's not like everybody who walks in the door gets the same package. Everybody gets a package that sort of design for them and is driven by the conversations that they're having and the information that they're sharing and I think that's a really exciting thing for our campus to be able to serve students in that way.

Janet Maltbie: [00:03:22] Okay.

Yeah in preparing for this interview. I read your personal statement. It's quite interesting. Is it okay if I read a portion

Marisa Vernon White: [00:03:30] Sure.

Janet Maltbie: [00:03:30] of it?

It says, I am keenly aware of the perspective I've developed as a result of my social class and how it may create gaps in my ability to view the world through the eyes of the students I serve. As an administrator. I experience Community College as environments that opened doors to upward mobility but acknowledge that our students may experience economic personal and academic barriers as they pursue their dreams. This reality motivates me to examine and consider the student experience and create environments where others on my team seek to do the same.

Marissa when I read this it sounds like you really want to empathize and understand the challenges our students face from their perspective and you want to create environments or initiatives that help students overcome financial, academic and personal barriers they face. Can you talk more in detail about that? Can you give some examples of the initiatives that might help students overcome those barriers?

Marisa Vernon White: [00:04:29] So I think first even before talking about you know, initiatives and support services, I think a lot of it is creating the environment where students can actually share what's going on in their lives that that starts from the second that somebody engages with the college and so we don't know or understand or can empathize with what students are going through if they don't share that with us and if they don't share that with us, then we're at a disadvantage to be able to help them through whatever might you know stand in their way.

And so that has to do with things like, you know, being a friendly face asking open questions building trust with students. That's how you sort of draw out the student stories that actually inform the work that you need to be doing to help them. I think one of the biggest things that we have coming is the advocacy resource center that is essentially a center where students can go where they will receive that holistic intake to understand their story completely and to understand where we might be able to align better supports to alleviate

some of the stress. So we're doing that now, you know in advising and financial aid and career services and kind of doing that holistic intake and adding the advocacy Resource Center to that allows us to do that better in terms of connecting students to things like food, emergency aid, Counseling Services both on campus and out in the community. Things that can help with transportation, maybe getting connected with childcare options. So bringing all of those services together under the Arc really allows the student stories to come to life and for us to be able to do a full intake and some sort of see what else we can do for a student that might be able to alleviate some of the stress

Janet Maltbie: [00:06:07] and where will that be?

Marisa Vernon White: [00:06:08] That'll be on the first floor of the library, so it's right next to all of the other student support services that students are used to you know accessing. I know that that's a busy hallway because that's where my office is and I know that there's often a lot of student traffic and I also know that our advisors and other team members know a lot of the students and know their stories and so putting that there really helps make stronger connections so that as students are sharing, you know, bits and pieces of their lives with other staff members. It's right there and it's right in the hallway and we can go so far as to actually walk students to the Ark to say, you know, I'm concerned about you and here's a space where we might be able to get you some extra help.

So I think putting it there really makes a lot of sense for students

Janet Maltbie: [00:06:50] so it'll be called The Arc

Marisa Vernon White: [00:06:51] it'll be called The Arc the Advocacy and Resource Center.

Janet Maltbie: [00:06:53] Okay. And when do you anticipate that that will be available to students?

Marisa Vernon White: [00:06:58] That team is actually moving in today. And so everything is currently in place for that to be available for students starting in the fall. So fall of 2019

Janet Maltbie: [00:07:08] Exciting.

Marisa Vernon White: [00:07:09] Yeah . Definatly

Janet Maltbie: [00:07:10] What would you say to a student? That's just starting here at the college for the first time.

Marisa Vernon White: [00:07:14] I think that it can be really daunting and it seems as though it's going to take a very long time to get through the courses or to knock off degree requirements or to fulfill all of the steps that they need to do to actually complete but in reality time flies very quickly and I think that keeping that perspective is really important that you know, a 15-week semester flies by and before you know, it you've completed one semester and then it's time to move on to the next before you've even really processed that and before you know it you're at the end and so that's not to say that it's an easy process. We know that there's challenges that come along the way.

Janet Maltbie: [00:07:54] Yeah, it can be kind of overwhelming

Marisa Vernon White: [00:07:55] Definitely especially that first day when you get all of the syllabi for all of the classes and you start to think through oh my goodness, how am I gonna how many how am I going to take these, you know several classes and fit in all of the different assignments and things that are expected of me.

Janet Maltbie: [00:08:11] Yeah, and really anticipating some things and being prepared for that. A lot of students come fresh out of high school here, but there's also the non-traditional student. Okay, what are some of the barriers you think that they face and how does the college help them overcome some of the challenges they face as they return to school?

Marisa Vernon White: [00:08:29] I want to be fully transparent and saying that I was not one of them. I was able to I graduated from high school. I had that summer, you know between high school and college and then I walked onto a college campus and I lived there with a roommate and had a very traditional what you would expect college experience to be. But one of the things that I have learned in going back to school as an adult now is just how challenging that can be and I think that while I struggle in my own doctoral program to kind of juggle all of the balls. I'm thankful that I'm in it because it gives me a perspective on helping students to try to figure that out. I personally every week try something new until I have found what works for me. And so I recognize that a lot of our adult learners are probably doing the same thing in terms of trying to figure out the best time to do their schoolwork.

Or how much time it's going to take every week or how do you coordinate for somebody to watch your family so that you can have intentional time to sit down and write a paper. I think juggling work and school is can be something that is really challenging and I know a lot of our students are doing that as well. Because, it requires you to kind of switch off your work life and switch on into student life and sometimes depending on the work that you do things may come up in the middle of the workday that require you to maybe stay a little bit later or you come home and you might be stressed out and need to decompress from what happened in another aspect of your life but you have to switch gears and go into school. Those are some of the challenges that adult learners really face, but I think there is a reward to have for that but it's something that we need to acknowledge that a lot of our students are juggling a lot of different things to show up here every day.

Janet Maltbie: [00:10:07] We're going to take a short break and when we return we'll discuss what a student can do on the LCCC campus if they're trying to find a career that's right for them. We'll be right back.

Break [00:10:26]

This program is being brought to you by the generous support of enrollment financial and Career Services who reminds you that enrollment for the fall semester has begun. To see an academic advisor for the same day appointments call for 440-366-4775. That number again is for 440-366-4775.

Here on the Lorain County Community. Campus, we have a scholarship available for non-traditional students. It's a privately funded scholarship for individuals that meet just one of the following criteria. You're a veteran or your over 24 years old support your own child the amount of the award varies per student and can be used to pay for tuition books transportation and childcare. To qualify you need to carry six credits complete financial aid and scholarship forms. You also need to be a new student or have a 2.5 grade point average. Restrictions apply for more information call financial aid services at Lorain County Community College in 440-366-4034. That number again is for 440-366-4034. You are listening to the career exploration podcast on College radio heard round the world LCCCradio.com, the boom. I'm Janet Maltbie.

Welcome back. If you're just joining us we're speaking with the Associate Provost Marisa Vernon White and our topic of conversation is, "So you want to complete a degree at LCCC and beyond."

What are some of the supports that they might take advantage of?

Marisa Vernon White: [00:12:09] Yeah, I think for adult learners, I think one of the really important things would be the career advising and career counseling. One of the reasons why I think that's important is because I know that adult learners probably don't have time to waste on getting their degree.

And so the sooner they can determine whether or not they want to go into a certain career field or if a certificate might be a better short-term option and then work on the degree. After earning that or if they're going to go on for a bachelor's or Master's I think all of those decisions become really important for an adult learner because you want to make those decisions early on so that you don't feel as though you're wasting your time or that you're spinning your wheels and that goal that gets established as one of the important things to keep a student motivated through all of those hard times and those stressful times.

So if you have that articulated early on it's not to say that it may not change and it's for many students it does and that's okay, too. But the sooner you can find that goal and really articulated and understand what it is the sooner you're going to have more motivation to be here,

Janet Maltbie: [00:13:11] Right. It's hard to come here and just take classes for no reason at all or just just for the sake of taking classes. I mean, that's that's okay too. Some people want to do that but most people are here because they want to advance their career

Marisa Vernon White: [00:13:24] Definitely

Janet Maltbie: [00:13:25] and really finding out something that they're passionate about something about that really fits their personality their interest values skills, and that's some of the things that career services does really really well and also speaking with their advisor.

Marisa Vernon White: [00:13:38] Yes

Janet Maltbie: [00:13:38] as well. I mean taking the time to really think through some of those things and saying is this the direction that I really want to take for me at this time.

Marisa Vernon White: [00:13:48] I also think too that you know, a lot of students especially adult learners they have prior experiences that might make sense to talk to somebody about to see what we can do with them. And that's something that I don't think a lot of students recognize that we can actually work with them on so, you know, there are opportunities for students to you know, put together a portfolio of their work and have it assessed for credit and things like that.

So there are some, you know flexible options for adult learners that I think could be really helpful and it's just a matter of being fully transparent with your advisor about what your life experience has been so that we can get you connected with the right things.

Janet Maltbie: [00:14:27] Was there anyone in your life that mentored you or encouraged you in your career direction?

Marisa Vernon White: [00:14:34] The person who got me into this work was somebody that I met when I was a college student. I had become really involved on campus with leadership opportunities. And I one thing kind of led to another I always say like if you just get involved in one thing it kind of takes off from there and for me, the first thing I did was serve as an orientation instructor, so the school that I went to, you could teach orientation courses as an undergraduate student while working with a faculty member and I did that and then from there started getting more and more involved in the institution and by my junior year the person who I was working for in a student worker role had said what are you planning on doing when you finish your bachelor's degree?

Because I think what you should be doing is staying here a little bit longer and getting this degree so that you can turn this into a career and so she was really the person that introduced me to this work and said I think you're really well suited for it and you might want to consider getting another degree.

So that's your name work go into that. Her name's Lauren panetti. I don't think she's at Kent State any longer. I think she's retired since then, but she was the Director of the orientation course program and the orientation programs at Kent State at the time.

Janet Maltbie: [00:15:54] And it made all the difference to you

Marisa Vernon White: [00:15:55] It did and I think that's that's a good story for I think a lot of our students to keep in mind is that..as your... there's a temptation, especially when you're busy and for adult Learners, especially to just go to class and do what you need to do and finish it as soon as possible and I can certainly appreciate that perspective because there is time and resources going into the college experience, but it really does pay off to actually get to know some people.

Janet Maltbie: [00:16:25] Yeah

Marisa Vernon White: [00:16:25] Because people have their own networks. People have their own knowledge base. And building that network of people who know you and that, you know them that starts to kind of build opportunities. And so you never know when somebody sees something in you or has it connection that you may not have considered before so that level of connection with people while you're going through school is really important because it could actually change your career trajectory in a really important way.

Janet Maltbie: [00:16:54] You can also experiment with different things. Some things are not going to be so good at

Marisa Vernon White: [00:16:59] Right

Janet Maltbie: [00:17:00] But then you try something else, especially on a community college. It's a lot about experimenting, trying something new.

Marisa Vernon White: [00:17:08] Yes

Janet Maltbie: [00:17:09] and until something clicks and it just really I see a lot of people struggling with this and sometimes they're hesitant to come in and see advisors or even, you know, try to go to get some help but it really really helps to be willing to put yourself out on a limb takes some risk try something new because coming to a campus can be kind of scary sometimes but it can also be exciting. So what would you say to students? We had already talked about Career Services services, but what would you say to students that are really struggling with finding a career that's right for them?

Marisa Vernon White: [00:17:45] I think. It's a combination of conversations with people like advisors career counselors even family members and people that know you outside of school. I think can really be helpful. I mean, my son is only two years old, but I can see certain skills and abilities in him already and I can kind of see what makes him tick and I feel like a lot of people have people in their lives who if they sat down and said tell me a little bit about how you see me or tell me where you see me getting excited or things that I've been good at throughout my life. I think sometimes our family and friends can kind of turn that mirror on us and show us what we're good at.

Janet Maltbie: [00:18:24] Yeah. It's interesting how we're really good at seeing what we're bad at

Marisa Vernon White: [00:18:28] definitely

Janet Maltbie: [00:18:29] not good at

Marisa Vernon White: [00:18:29] right,

Janet Maltbie: [00:18:30] but we're not so good at seeing what we're really gifted in because we think well can't everybody else do this. This is just normal and natural for me.

Marisa Vernon White: [00:18:39] Yes. Absolutely. And I think you know. It's sort of a combination of things. It's working with an advisor here. It's seeking out Career Services. Talking to family and friends if you're in a class that you like the content and maybe you're

surprised that you like the content because it's not something you ever thought you would enjoy it's probably worth the extra time to talk to the faculty member and say, can you tell me a little bit more about this in terms of how did you get to teach this? What does this look like in terms of a career? I didn't think I would like this but I really do and so what what can I do to learn more? I think it's a matter of kind of having your antenna up for all of the things that kind of make your heart sing or make you excited in that first few, you know weeks and months of being in college and actually going down those paths right and pursuing them and then talking it through with people who can help you articulate that into like a major or a program or a career

Janet Maltbie: [00:19:31] Right. Seeking out volunteer experiences. We have great internship and externship work-based learning opportunities here on the campus. Lots of things that are available for people to you know, try what we call career tryouts.

Marisa Vernon White: [00:19:45] And I also think too that you know, we only know what we see and so. I remember when I was in college, you know, my mom was a nurse growing up and I had always really liked my teachers and I had taken art classes and that was about all I knew so I just think it's a lot of about what you see growing up and there's more out there that you don't realize can be a job.

Janet Maltbie: [00:20:12] And that's what the career exploration podcast is all about exposing

Marisa Vernon White: [00:20:17] Exactly

Janet Maltbie: [00:20:17] people to alternatives.

Marisa Vernon White: [00:20:20] Yep

Janet Maltbie: [00:20:20] Marissa. Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with us today. I wish you the best as you complete your doctoral program. I hope you're able to help many many students in the lifetime of your career. Just as a reminder enrollment for the fall semester has begun you can make a same-day appointment and meet an academic advisor by calling 440-366-4775.

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