

Women in Business 2012

Gena Glickman, President of Manchester Community College

MCC's first female president responsive to change and innovation

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Manchester Community College's Gena Glickman, the college's first female president, has taken a holistic view of the school as a major part of the surrounding community. Four years after taking over the college's top post, Glickman has been a catalyst for ensuring that MCC is a center for higher learning while also serving to boost the area's economic development.

Glickman's priority when she arrived was to get to know the college, the students and the service community.

"I think it's critical for a new leader to understand the culture of their organization, to examine and build on successes," Glickman said.

Glickman has positioned the college to be a first choice for higher education, including MCC's lower division curricula, cultural offerings, community events and business partnerships.

"One of my priorities was to ensure that MCC remained positioned to be a civic and cultural center as well as part of the solution for economic development," she said.

Glickman's interest in art has been a bonus for the Manchester Community College community. She has helped to develop a partnership with the Town of Manchester for "MCC on Main," a collaborative effort made possible by First Niagara Bank to bring a gallery, events and classes, via an arts and cultural center, to downtown Manchester.

Glickman's passion for life, people and art are intertwined.

"I'm always curious about what makes people tick, how life experiences influence us, and how culture and art help us make sense of the world around us," she said.

Glickman said the challenges of being a woman in a high level position are fewer in her industry, where there is a large percentage of women in leadership. As the leader of a college, the well-being of her organization — its culture and its success, are in her hands.



“The most significant work leaders do is building a team who, together, create a think tank, and are people willing to challenge ideas and decisions,” Glickman said. “Whether that was writing our master plan or our self-study, designing and measuring learning outcomes, increasing diversity, dealing with issues of academic standards, collaborating with partners on college readiness or expanding community access, you need the best minds to meet your strategic goals.”

Endia DeCordova, acting associate dean of institutional advancement at MCC, said Glickman is a true leader.

“She knows how to bring people together to create a unique vision, and she also knows how to communicate with them to ensure that they are working together to create a final product that is beyond expectations,” DeCordova said.

In addition to putting together a strong team, Glickman said her role is not about her — it’s about how she represents the college. She said that role is an important one.

“I have the opportunity to make a difference in thousands of lives and in our community, to help fulfill dreams,” she said. “I’ve been in this field for over 30 years. Even at an average of 5,000 students annually, that’s over 150,000 lives.”

Known as a problem solver, Glickman knows how to get it done right, DeCordova said.

“Gena has navigated some of MCC’s most difficult situations, including unprecedented budget cuts, threats of potential layoffs, a hurricane and a freak October snowstorm, all the while keeping her composure and ensuring that the MCC community — students, faculty and staff, all had the instructions and leadership that they needed to navigate very difficult situations,” DeCordova said.

Glickman is known for being extremely approachable to staff and students.

“As president of the college, she truly has an open door policy,” DeCordova said. “She meets with her constituents frequently and communicates on a weekly basis about items such as legislative issues and contracts that could potentially affect the College. She truly believes that the college is only as good as the community surrounding it.”

Glickman said she sees new developments in higher education moving forward, as colleges and universities become more accountable for outcomes to a myriad of constituencies.

“We must partner with our public schools and with our senior institutions for a seamless educational pathway for students,” she said. “We will see growing federal and even state mandates for college readiness and transferability. Resources will continue to be tight and we will be challenged to provide a quality and accessible education for our students.”

Glickman’s advice to other women seeking high-level leadership posts is to believe in yourself and your potential.

“Be competitive with yourself, not your colleagues,” she said. “Don’t move too quickly, but don’t get stuck in one place too long either. You need to build up experiences — not only your functional expertise, but your emotional intelligence. Have fun.”