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To Whom it May Concern:

I met Jacqueline DiBella, as a referral by former State University of New York (SUNY) Chancellor, Nancy Zimpher. Ms. DiBella contacted Chancellor Zimpher about SUNY Genesee Community College (GCC) Multicultural Communications Club that Ms. DiBella founded. Chancellor Zimpher felt that the club was very aligned to my area of expertise and leadership, as at the time, I was Vice Chancellor and founding Chief Diversity Officer for the entire SUNY organization based in Albany, New York.

In the summer of 2014, Ms. DiBella drove from Rochester to Albany to personally meet with me at SUNY's headquarters and brought two students with her. One student was an international student from Tanzania and the other student was from the U.S. She wanted me to meet the students and have them tell me about the Multicultural Club and what it has done for them. At that meeting, I could immediately identify that Ms. DiBella and the students recognized how the club and its diversity enriched the campus community of GCC and enhanced intellectual dialogue. The students told me that it opened the windows of their world for greater innovation and productivity. The two students prepared a PowerPoint presentation about the Multicultural Communication Club that exhibited the tireless efforts that Ms. DiBella and the students were addressing and raising awareness about issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) on the GCC campus.

The efforts of a few individuals can be so impactful, and I could tell that Ms. DiBella and the students were attempting to make a difference in how the GCC community embraced diversity – equity and inclusion. I recognized that promoting true diversity within a higher education environment was Ms. DiBella's professional commitment and is something that she cared deeply about. The club was educating the students how DEI promotes personal growth, a healthy society, encourages critical thinking and is a great source to learn how to communicate effectively with people of varied backgrounds.

At the conclusion of that meeting in Albany, I told Ms. DiBella and the students they should apply for a SUNY Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion grant for \$10,000 that supports innovative approaches that illuminate and strengthen the intersections between diversity and academic excellence. I believed the club would qualify for this grant based on what was outlined to me at the meeting in Albany. Of course, the club applied for the grant and was awarded \$10,000.

About six months later in 2015, I was invited to attend an event at GCC – Batavia, New York entitled East Meets West (EMW) that was to showcase the utilization of the grant. EMW was an exemplary way to build awareness of global diversity and empower students to adopt a "can do" attitude despite the challenges or barriers of language, heritage, color of skin, physical ability, sexual orientation, religion, or genders. That evening I witnessed student success and pedagogical innovation.

By the conclusion of that event, I publicly announced to an audience of over 100 for Ms. DiBella to contact me the following Monday to apply for another SUNY Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion grant and of course, she did. That is how impressed I was how the EMW program expanded so many opportunities

for the many international students attending GCC and how engaged they became in allowing their cultural values and traditions to be shared with a larger campus population and beyond.

April 2017, I attended another EAST MEETS WEST event utilizing the second grant of \$10,000 plus the college Foundation matched those dollars to bring a keynote speaker from Singapore, Darren Tay. Darren was a remarkable 24-year-old lawyer who shaped a career around public speaking, competing at the Toastmasters International annual public speaking competition and won the World Championship of Public Speaking in 2016. His talk helped the audience learn about confidence, humor, body language, gestures, and facial expression as ways to become an effective communicator. It was obvious the students were able to relate to Darren as a real-life role model and as an individual worth emulating as he encouraged students to explore and pursue their passions.

Ms. DiBella was able to have several graduates of GCC, who have since finished their undergraduate degree, return to the college to speak at this event. Additionally, all the former and current students conveyed the importance of the club, and how it provided an overview of their heritage and their ability to navigate their campus life through confidence and friendships that they developed through the Club. The current and former students repeated that they learned from their peers, and they found spending time in such a diverse group inspired self-reflection and promoted cross-cultural awareness, inclusivity, and collaboration. Understanding diverse cultures encouraged them to become more sensitive to social practices and traditions.

At both EAST MEETS WEST events I attended; Ms. DiBella incorporated a seamless evening of musical entertainment. All music was in keeping with the evening's aspirational tone about diversity – inclusion and equity including “You Have to Be Carefully Taught” “Children Will Listen”, “Let There Be Peace on Earth - Let It Begin with Me” and “Ebony and Ivory”, to name a few.

Ms. DiBella and the club's students built a diversity, equity inclusion mindset and developed wide-reaching initiatives at GCC to drive DEI imperatives that created an environment that truly strived to overcome systemic injustice.

The time I have spent with Ms. DiBella has demonstrated that she possess so many good qualities such as loyalty, responsibility, sincerity, integrity and is a consummate professional in the workplace as well as having excellent communication skills.

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