

PIONEER PROFILES



IMAGE: MCC Dean Richard DeShields

Pioneer Profiles: Meet Richard DeShields

MILES CITY, MONTANA: Richard DeShields' first job was selling shoes at Anthony's Clothing Store in his hometown of Borger, Texas.

He now appreciates the variety of roles he fills in his current position as Miles Community College's Dean of Student Engagement and Auxiliary Services, saying, "I love the ability to interact with most of the students and that I get to wear many hats that never let my job get boring."

A typical day might find DeShields' hat collection going through a rapid rotation. DeShields states, "I work to advocate for students and to engage students with the college faculty and staff. I oversee multiple units and work to develop a team in the student engagement area."

These engagement efforts include negotiating students' rights and responsibilities, as well as their grievance and appeal processes; overseeing Title IX on campus as a deputy coordinator; counseling students; helping students explore careers; coordinating student government, clubs, and organizations, and helping students plan and host campus activities such as fundraisers, dances, and other events.

Campus safety provides another hat for DeShields, who leads emergency response and serves as the campus Clery Act officer. DeShields also oversees student living, supervising housing, dining services, and the bookstore.

In addition to his administrative duties, DeShields teaches as an adjunct faculty member. He loves the classroom; in fact, if he were not in his current position, he would probably have become an elementary teacher.

One of his greatest achievements at MCC has been developing the Opportunity Realized Program. Opportunity Realized forges partnerships between Miles Community College and local and regional high schools, now numbering 15, by offering a free, dual-credit course in College Studies to high school juniors and seniors.

The class includes the development of interpersonal skills like resolving conflicts and managing time – skills that position the students for real-world success in post-secondary education, training, or employment.

In addition, the career course DeShields teaches represents the best of what community colleges offer: choice.

“I love teaching the career services course because it helps embody the role of the community college. We help students understand the pathways to a four-year college or university; we help students with the pathway directly into the workforce, or we help students decide on an area of study,” he states.

DeShields is also proud to have overseen a comprehensive campus capital campaign for construction, renovation, and operations—funded at nearly \$280 million. The campaign has had far-reaching effects.

“The program impacted students, children, our community, and the entire campus,” DeShields says.

And there’s that word: “impact.”

“Remember the impact,” DeShields states when asked for his most valuable piece of advice. “Everything we do impacts someone else, either positively or negatively.”

Currently completing his sixth year at MCC, DeShields does not expect his position to get boring anytime soon. There’s too much variety in his hat collection for that.

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