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ECTC envisions a 3.0 version of community impact

April is Community College Month, a time to recognize the far-reaching impact of community colleges across the country. This month at Elizabethtown Community and Technical College, we'll celebrate student success, highlight employer partners and invite our friends and neighbors to get involved at ECTC.

This month also is the perfect time to reflect on ECTC's mission — to add value to the lives of our students and return that value to our community. As our faculty, staff, board of directors and community partners work together to increase that value and elevate ECTC from a good college to a great college, we're beginning to think about our success differently.

We want to become what has been coined a "3.0" community and technical college.

First, a little background. A 1.0 college is about access. Consider that ECTC has paths for all applicants regardless of their income levels, grade-point averages or test scores. Plus, we're close to home with five locations across our 10-county service area.

A 2.0 college is about student success. ECTC students are making incredible gains in this area, and the college's graduation rate climbed to 59.5% last year, up 21.5 points from 38% in 2018-2019, while the national average hovers around 34 to 35%.

We'll never stop working to increase access and student success, but we also must broaden our focus to include post-completion outcomes. Are students using the credentials they earned at ECTC to secure good jobs with good wages? Are the students who completed the first two years of a bachelor's degree at ECTC completing that degree at a four-year college or university?

As a 3.0 college, ECTC will equip students to have an even greater impact on their communities. We will measure our

success by what truly matters: How well our graduates are doing after they leave us. After all, students don't come to us exclusively to complete academic programs. That's a means to an end. They come to us inspired to live better lives.

The Robbins University Center is a great example of a 3.0 endeavor. As it strengthens our partnerships with four-year colleges and universities, it allows us to contribute to bachelor's degree attainment in our region in more meaningful ways.

First, the center's partners offer bachelor's degrees that lead to in-demand careers available right here in our region. Secondly, all partners offer in-person support services on our Elizabethtown campus. Plus, we're able to connect those bachelor's-degree-seeking students to Family Scholar House for wraparound support services when nonacademic barriers threaten their success.

The college is in the very early stages of this long-term work. It will take some time to develop strategies and even more time to collect data that reflects our impact.

Still, at the start of our journey, I'm excited to share our vision with the communities we serve.

I assure you, we're ready for this. I know ECTC can be one of the top 10 two-year colleges in the nation. Our faculty, staff and administration have built a positive culture of change and are as committed as ever to growth and aligning with the workforce and economic needs of our region.

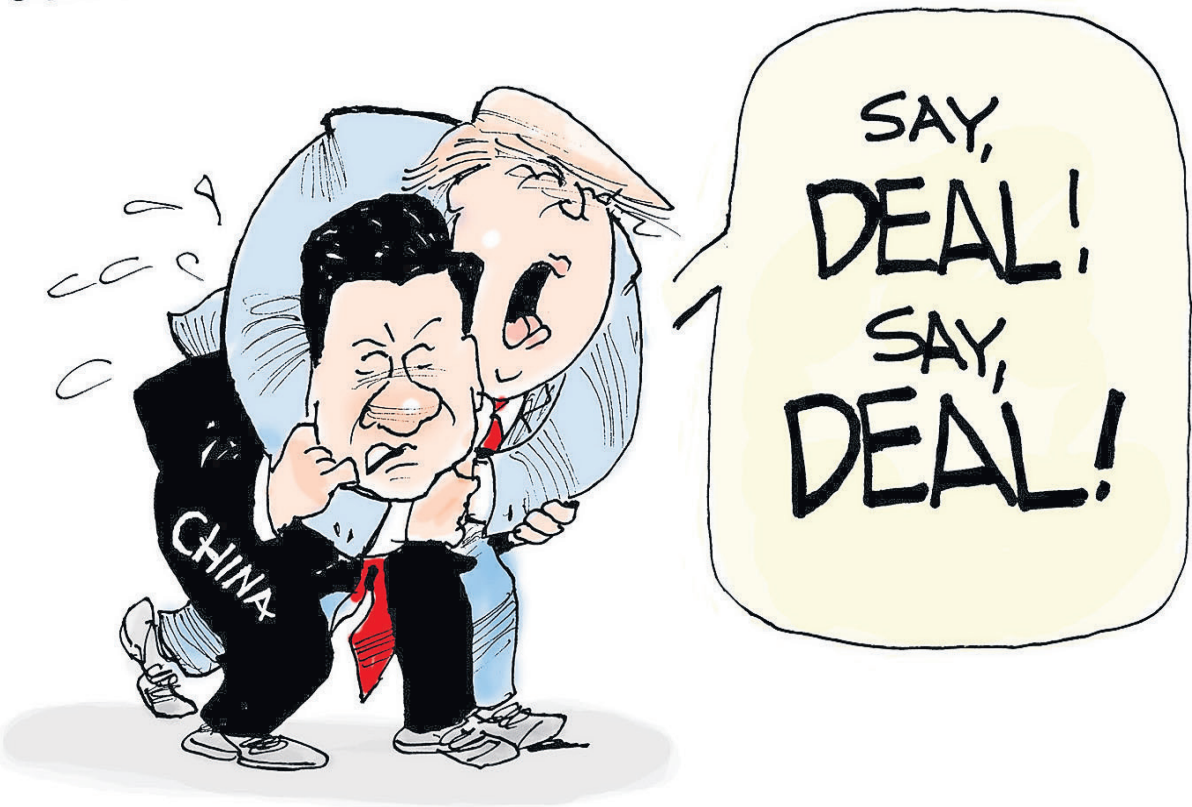
With Community College Month upon us, I encourage you to look for ECTC's impact on your own life and the lives of your family, friends and co-workers. I hope you'll see evidence of our value throughout the community because we are, as always, your community college.

Dr. Justin Pate is president and chief executive officer of Elizabethtown Community and Technical College.



JUSTIN PATE
ECTC PRESIDENT/CEO

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Political gamesmanship often precipitates shifting principles

"Those are my principles, and if you don't like them ... well, I have others." — Groucho Marx

Guess who said this: "China takes total advantage of the United States. They steal our intellectual property using cyber theft. Not only do they steal our intellectual property, they keep our good companies out, and say the only way you're going to be able to sell your American products in China ... is if you come to China, make them there, and give us the techniques and intellectual property."

Elon Musk? Nope. President Trump? Wrong again.

That was then-Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) in a 2018 radio interview. On another occasion that same year, Schumer said: "I'm closer to him (Trump) on trade than I was to either Obama, a Democrat, or Bush, a Republican, because we've got to get tougher on China. ... But the president and his team

have to stick with it, be strong, and not sell out for a temporary purchase of goods without addressing the real issue: the theft of American intellectual property which will cost us millions of American jobs in the long run."

How about this one: "In terms of tariffs, it's interesting to note that the average MFN (most favored nation) tariff for Chinese goods coming into the United States is 2%, whereas the average MFN tariff on U.S. goods going to China is 35 percent. Is that reciprocal?"

Same list of choices? Wrong again.

That was Rep. Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., in 1996. One more: "It's also proper for advanced economies like the United States to insist on reciprocity from nations like China."

That was President Barack Obama speaking in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2018.

What changed and caused many Democrats who previously favored tariffs to now excoriate Trump over the tariff



CAL THOMAS

Some financial analysts believe Trump has the upper hand with China as that country's economy is anything but strong. China's leaders don't want to lose face with the U.S. and if President Xi Jinping mishandles this war his leadership could be threatened.

policies they once supported?

Why, politics, of course. Politicians can change positions faster than they can change lanes.

On Wednesday, the president announced a 90-day "pause" in his implementation of tariffs. China was the lone exception as the trade war with that communist country continues.

The stock market reacted swiftly. The Dow Jones Industrial Averages immediately jumped by 2,500 points. NASDAQ rose 10%. The Dow still is 2,000 points under where it was when Trump first announced his tariff regime, but the market's quick response should calm especially retirees with modest investments in their 401k accounts.

Some financial analysts believe Trump has the upper hand with

China as that country's economy is anything but strong. China's leaders don't want to lose face with the U.S. and if President Xi Jinping mishandles this war his leadership could be threatened.

President Trump might consider a nationally televised address in which he would explain in simple terms his goals and how all of this will play out.

So far all this razzle-dazzle hasn't resulted in any foreign nations, especially members of the European Union, reducing or dropping their tariffs against U.S. products. They appear to be waiting to see what develops. They are not alone.

Cal Thomas, a nationally syndicated opinion columnist, may be reached at tcaditors@tribpub.com.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Call for help to protect funding for Humanities

How would you feel if someone took your child's favorite book out of his hands?

What would you think if your local museum wasn't important enough to keep its doors open?

If someone said, "Sorry we can't help your community recover from a natural disaster" would you feel sad, outraged, lost?

For more than 53 years, Kentucky Humanities has helped communities across Kentucky celebrate what makes them unique and vital. We have been there for you and with you, connecting you to your neighbors, promoting your unique history, inspiring the next generation, championing

what makes your town or city special.

But right now, we can't. And we are angry about it. You should be too.

In 2022, we assisted libraries, historical societies, artisan centers, radio stations, community centers, and cultural institutions in navigating a disaster like what we are experiencing right now, an historic flood. We requested and received emergency grant funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities and poured every dime back into places that were devastated by flood waters because it is our mission to help Kentucky communities thrive. We wanted then, and want now, to be part of the rebuilding of Kentucky's communities ravaged by

flooding, but we can't.

Why? Because at the federal level, DOGE has targeted the NEH and terminated Kentucky Humanities' operating grant and any emergency funding sources that previously allowed us to provide aid in the Commonwealth.

We are sorry, but most of all we are angry because you and us — we — are the ones looking out for Kentucky and all Kentuckians.

If you're angry, too, please contact our elected officials and insist they support continued funding of the NEH and Kentucky Humanities. Together, our voices can make a difference.

Bill Goodman
Executive Director
Kentucky Humanities

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“The test of good manners is to be able to put up pleasantly with bad ones.”
— Wendell Willkie, American lawyer (1892-1944)



ABOUT THIS PAGE

Opinion pages are intended to provide a forum for discussion of issues of local interest. If you have a question, call 270-769-2312 or write 200 Sycamore St., Suite 134, Elizabethtown, KY 42701. Letters to the editor may be submitted by mail or sent by email to letters@thenewsenterprise.com.

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