

Terra Column for October – Heath Martin

In June, I moved to Ohio to join the staff at Terra Community College. I have found the Fremont community to be a great place to live and the College to be a beacon of possibility for so many members of our community during these difficult economic times.

Several years ago I chose to dedicate my professional career to America's rural community colleges. I strongly believe that every citizen in our great country should have the opportunity to access a quality education close to their place of residence. In addition, I chose community college's because of their long-standing commitment to diversity. At Terra, diversity is listed as one of its core values.



There is common belief at Terra that diversity in the student body, faculty and staff are essential in providing a quality education. When diversity is present, it enriches the educational experience and allows students to learn from those whose experiences, beliefs, and perspectives are different from their own. Diversity within an educational setting prepares students to become good citizens and helps build communities where citizens are judged by their character and contributions.

This fall, the College boasted not only its largest enrollment during one term but also its most diverse student body. Students' ages range from 14 to 71 and the average age of our student body is 28.

This fall we have more than 100 students receiving Veterans benefits, a 100 percent increase over a year ago. The number of students who identify as students of color grew by 29.3 percent over last year and has grown by 82 percent over the past three years. These numbers are only a small microcosm of the diversity that is represented in the student body at Terra.

To be competitive in the new global economy, it is vital that our community have an institution of higher learning that brings together all members of our community and their diverse experiences, backgrounds, and cultures to chart our future in these less-than-certain times.

Terra is proud to be this institution.

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