

Merrill L. Irving Jr., Ed.D.

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Dr. Merrill Irving, Jr. became the fourth president of Hennepin Technical College (HTC) in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system on July 1, 2015. As president, he is responsible for overseeing the college's mission of providing excellence in career and technical education for employment and advancement in an ever-changing global environment.

Dr. Irving is a visionary leader with an accomplished record of serving diverse learning communities and championing underserved and nontraditional students. He is committed and focused on systematic and transformational changes embedded in equity and inclusion to create structure, culture and management that fosters belonging and engagement of diverse populations. He remains authentic by sticking to his values of trust, honesty and integrity.

Dr. Irving began his presidency by leading the college through a successful reaffirmation of accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) with no findings. This accomplishment reinforces HTC's commitment to educational quality, continuous improvement and ensuring ethical responsibility of public and private resources.

Following reaffirmation of accreditation, Dr. Irving, together with the college community, began a 3-year process of developing a new 5-year strategic plan (Access to Success), effective July 1, 2020. Access to Success, under guiding values of excellence, innovation and inclusion, includes four (4) areas of focus (Equity & Inclusion, Student Success, Quality Education and Resources), that serve as a roadmap to ensure accountability and continuous quality improvement that meets the needs of HTC's diverse student population, workforce partners and community members.

Since 2015, Dr. Irving has significantly increased fundraising to support student success including specific retention and completion efforts. Dr. Irving collaborated with the HTC Foundation Board to redesign the scholarship program to support targeted enrollment initiatives that increase access and retain diverse student populations. He also cultivated partnerships with minority/immigrant serving schools and community organizations and created additional pathways and advanced employment opportunities for students by initiating a partnership with Metropolitan State University located on the HTC campus.

The college as well as its faculty and staff have received numerous awards and recognitions including being ranked 22nd nationally for granting Associate's degrees for minorities in Engineering Technology (Diverse Magazine, December 2019); White House Healthy Campus (2017); Minnesota State Board of Trustee Educator of the Year awards (2017, 2018). In 2017, the Minnesota State College Student Association (LeadMN) named Dr. Irving President of the Year for his efforts around equity and inclusion and student success.

Dr. Irving is engaged in local, state and national communities of interest including being appointed by the State of Minnesota Governor to the Workforce Development Board and the Young Women's initiative of Minnesota Council. He was also appointed to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) Task Force on Community College Apprenticeships and the Public Relations and Advocacy Commission. Other roles include serving as a Peer Reviewer for the Higher Learning Commission, and a member of the President's Round Table (PRT, an affiliate of the National Council of Black American Affairs (NCBAA) and LGBTQ Presidents and Chancellors in Higher Education. He is a former AACC Board of Director; former chair of the Commission on Diversity, Inclusion and Equity; former chair of the Commission on Public Relations Advocacy and Advancement; and former chair of the Commission on Economic and Workforce Development.

Dr. Irving earned a Bachelor of Arts and Masters of Public Administration from West Virginia University. He also holds a Doctorate of Educational Psychology from the University of Southern California.