

## **Michigan Tech and the Michigan Civil Rights Initiative**

*Submitted by Michigan Tech President Glenn Mroz*

The passage of the Michigan Civil Rights Ballot Initiative (MCRI), Proposition 2, has prompted a number of actions. The MCRI basically ends affirmative action programs in the State by Dec. 22. Currently, the law is being challenged in the courts, and state officials as well as our own legal counsel are exploring our obligations and options in the coming weeks and months. It appears this proposition will be the subject of litigation for a long time. In the meantime, I am assuring our partners and the campus community that we remain committed to our strategic plan that embraces diversity, and we will do everything within the law to continue our efforts to promote diversity in all aspects of campus life.

While MCRI has removed affirmative action as a tool, it is especially important at this time of uncertainty to remember why a diverse university community is critical to all of us. Diversity is often discussed in the context of composition. These different characteristics encompass race, gender, sexual orientation, culture, national origin, disabilities and others that reflect a broad spectrum of human experiences. Our structural diversity, however, is not an end in itself. The benefit is the intellectual advantage that is derived by each of our students, faculty and staff by living and learning in a diverse community. This is where we will continue to focus our attention and reflection.

As faculty and staff who are educators by profession and by heart, we often talk about creativity and critical thinking skills that are essential to the success of our students. Certainly, these are learned in the classroom. But in large measure, they are honed by experience--the experiences that come through day-to-day interaction with others who are different from us and challenge us with new ideas. The more we are challenged, the more we grow both as individuals and as a community. We improve in our knowledge and understanding of cultures and in our abilities to interact constructively with others, to lead, to adapt, to change and to achieve our goal of serving the state, nation and world. Our commitment to this simple notion will ensure that that we will create a community that understands and values diversity as a resource that enhances life, learning and creativity.

In order to prepare students to create the future, Michigan Tech remains committed to all aspects of diversity and an inclusive campus environment.