

Dr. Matthew Reed

Feeding Hills, MA 01030

October 1, 2014

James McCormick, AGB Search

Dear Mr. McCormick and Members of the Committee,

I'm writing to apply for the presidency of Housatonic Community College. I'm an experienced senior-level executive leader at the community college level, and a recognized figure in the national political discourse around higher education. In Housatonic, I see an opportunity to work with a talented group to make a real difference for the people of the Bridgeport area.

Since 2008, I've been the Vice President for Academic Affairs (Chief Academic Officer) at Holyoke Community College, in Massachusetts. Holyoke and Springfield, our two largest feeder communities, are both struggling cities with extremely high concentrations of low-income residents. I've spent my tenure at HCC focusing on student success, and particularly on closing achievement gaps for underrepresented groups. I've been the Project Director for a five year Title III grant, in which we surpassed our five-year goals by year four. I've shepherded the development of an entirely self-paced, modularized developmental math sequence, to allow students to move as quickly as their drive and talent will allow. I'm proud of a record of five consecutive years of improvements in course completion rates, despite a dramatic increase in the percentage of our students who are Pell-eligible.

Prior to HCC, I was the Division Dean of Liberal Arts at the County College of Morris (NJ) for five years. Both CCM and HCC are collective bargaining environments, so I have over a decade of experience managing in unionized settings. At CCM, I participated in a successful round of contract negotiations in 2007, resulting in an agreement that won easy acceptance on all sides. At HCC, I've been a member of our monthly labor-management committee, MACER, since my arrival. MACER (Management-Association Committee on Employee Relations) meets to prevent misunderstandings or potential issues from developing into grievances. I'm happy to report that in my decade-plus of managing in unionized settings, I've consistently had good working relationships with unions. Disagreements happen, but most of the time, they can be settled amicably if there's an environment of mutual respect. I strive to create that environment.

When I arrived at HCC, it lacked a faculty-specific venue to discuss issues of common concern. Working with faculty leaders -- and to some raised eyebrows among my administrative colleagues -- I established the Faculty Council. After some initial growing pains, the Faculty Council has evolved into a constructive source of ideas, and a reliable venue for quality control. Over the years, I found greater success in taking ideas to the FC when the ideas themselves were still in the formative stages, rather than taking finished proposals. The latter technique lends itself to a theatrical "which side are you on" event, often generating more heat than light.

The former technique allows people to see their input reflected in the process itself; when people feel heard, they don't feel as much need to shout.

Between Title III and the Strategic Enrollment Management Team, I've been active in several efforts to improve student retention. Several years ago, we brought back January Intersession to see what would happen to completion rates if we offered shorter classes. Course completion rates in Intersession have hovered consistently between 90 and 95 percent. That served as an object lesson to spur the development of accelerated courses in other sessions. (We also found that having a robust set of online offerings makes a difference in January, since a couple of snow days can wreak havoc on a short course.) I've been on the Long-Range Planning Committee since my arrival, which is HCC's venue for strategic planning. I've also engaged in evidence-based planning within my own area, such as in the development of several entirely-online degree programs, and in moving career counseling to the first semester. Under the umbrella of Title III, we even made New Student Orientation mandatory, which has had positive effects on retention.

I've engaged in successful outreach to community partners, as well. On my watch, HCC established its first entirely online bachelor's degree completion articulation agreements, with Westfield State University. We've established an onsite weekend bachelor's completion program with Elms College. We even signed an unprecedented articulation with another community college -- Springfield Technical Community College -- for our medical billing students to transfer there for medical coding. We've established co-taught classes with faculty at Amherst College, UMass/Amherst, and Mount Holyoke College. We've taught classes at Holyoke High School and Ware High School. I've also worked variously with the Holyoke Housing Authority, the Holyoke Medical Center, Leadership Holyoke, Leadership Pioneer Valley, the Robinson Park School Techno Trot, and the Lego League in Agawam.

In my other role as a national advocate for community colleges, I'm the author of the most popular blog on InsideHigherEd.com, "Confessions of a Community College Dean." Last year I also published a book on community colleges with Jossey-Bass. This side of my career has allowed me to venture to conferences to which I otherwise would not have been able to go, and to hear perspectives that chief academic officers often don't hear. For example, I covered the first CASE conference on community college development for IHE, at which I roamed freely among development officers and saw through their eyes. Both CCM and Holyoke have active foundations and strong alumni networks, so I've seen those in action (and shown up for my share of dinners), but I've also plugged into national research on the subject.

Over the past couple of years, I've been a keynote speaker at the National Association for Community College Entrepreneurship annual conference, and an invited presenter at NEASC, NEACRAO, and EWA. I've also done a well-received solo presentation at the League for Innovation in the Community College, and have been a return speaker at the Massachusetts Community College Leadership Academy. I'm an effective and comfortable public speaker, and my thoughtful style works well on a one-to-one basis. I don't have to be the center of attention,

but I don't shy away from it, either. Unlike some leaders, I believe strongly that listening well is at least as important as speaking well; my Diversity Digest article, "Learning to Listen as We Lead," came from direct experience.

I've also been active in pursuing and receiving grants. Title III is the most obvious case, though we also have two NSF grants, and I'm versed in the ATE program. We also received two rounds of Department of Labor TAACCCT funding, focusing mostly on allied health programs. I have seen the impact of private fundraising, and I'm eager to tap into that source more actively than my current role allows.

After more than a decade of managing in unionized community colleges, and participating in the national conversation about public higher education, I'm eager to step into a role that would allow me to make a greater difference. Housatonic has the raw material to achieve more than it has, but it has also been whipsawed by a difficult political environment for community colleges in Connecticut over the last few years. It needs a leader who understands both the technicalities of the public sector, and the big political and educational picture. My doctorate in political science from Rutgers, and years of teaching experience, give me an understanding of the classroom that you can only get from within. (A political science background also comes in handy in deciphering state politics, which is not a small part of the role.) My managerial experience is both broad and deep. Housatonic would be my second "HCC," but my first priority.

Thank you, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Dr. Matthew Reed

Matthew Reed, Ph.D.

Feeding Hills, MA 01030

Current Higher Education Experience

Holyoke Community College, Holyoke, Massachusetts. 2008-present

Vice President for Academic Affairs 2008-present

Chief Academic Officer. Direct supervisor of an assistant vice president, six deans, and two grant directors. Responsible for over 130 full-time tenure-track and tenured faculty, over 400 adjunct faculty, and the library and academic support center. Project Director for a \$1.8 million Title III grant. Report directly to the President of the college.

Notable Achievements:

- Shepherded creation and rollouts of new developmental math sequences.
- Achieved five-year goals of Title III grant in four years.
- Presided over five consecutive years of improved course completion rates.
- Established Faculty Council, improving communication on campus.
- Initiated onsite degree-completion program with Elms College.
- Increased diversity of faculty and staff through strategic hiring.
- Reduced achievement gaps while maintaining academic standards.
- Instituted widely-recognized General Education Assessment Committee.
- Reorganized Academic Affairs to streamline administration and preserve full-time faculty.
- Served as management representative on MACER labor-management working group.
- Represented the college to external groups on a regular basis.
- Participated in very successful NEASC reaccreditation at HCC.

- Participated in NEASC reaccreditation visit at another New England community college.
- Chaired and presided at Professional Association meetings (all-campus meetings)

Author, Blogger, Public Figure

Book: Confessions of a Community College Administrator (Jossey-Bass, 2013).

Blog: “Confessions of a Community College Dean,” for InsideHigherEd.com

Most popular blog on IHE, with widespread readership throughout higher education and education policy circles.

Speaking Engagements

Keynote panelist, National Association for Community College Entrepreneurship annual conference, Charlotte, NC, 2013.

Panelist, “Obama’s Proposal: Will Performance Ratings Hurt Student Access?” Education Writers of America Higher Education conference, Boston, 2013.

“Dean Dad’s Advice for New Deans,” League for Innovation in the Community College annual conference, Dallas, 2013.

Year-end Wrapup Speaker, Massachusetts Community College Leadership Academy, 2013.

“What We Talk About When We Talk About Performance,” NEASC annual conference, Boston, 2013.

Keynote speaker, NEACRAO (New England Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers) annual conference, Providence, RI, 2013.

Previous Higher Education Experience

County College of Morris, Randolph, New Jersey. 2003-2008

Division Dean of Liberal Arts 2003-2008

Responsible for managing seven academic departments in the humanities and social sciences, with approximately 80 full-time faculty and over 100 adjunct faculty.

Notable Achievements:

- Restructured Teacher Education program, resulting in 25% enrollment growth.
- Shepherded first cross-divisional major from concept to fruition.
- Increased faculty participation in online instruction, without resorting to mandates.
- Played leading role in reforming faculty hiring practices.
- Established unprecedented 96-credit articulation with College of St. Elizabeth.

Adjunct Instructor 2004

Introduction to American Government. Online/onsite hybrid, using WebCT.

DeVry University, North Brunswick, New Jersey. 1997-2003

Dean of General Education 2002-2003

Associate Dean of General Education 2001-2002

Responsible for department of 25 full-time and 60 adjunct faculty.

Duties included hiring, evaluating, and terminating faculty; monitoring and improving student retention; coordinating outcomes assessment; course and instructor scheduling; and fielding student complaints and issues.

Associate Professor, General Education 1999-2001

Assistant Professor, General Education 1997-1999

Adjunct Instructor, General Education 1997, 2001-2003

Courses taught:

Introduction to American Government
Ideology, Politics, and Culture (Emergence of the Modern Era)
The Legal Environment
Social Movements
Debate and Critical Thinking
Composition

Notable Achievements:

Primary author of local self-study for North Central Association visit, 2000-2001.
Authored systemwide curriculum guides for Political Science 330 and 410
Founded and Ran "Eureka!" speaker series

Kean University, Union, New Jersey 2000

Adjunct Instructor

Course: The Rule of Law (upper-level seminar)

Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey 1992-1997

Adjunct Instructor

Courses:

Ancient Political Thought 1997
Introduction to American Government 1995, 1996

Teaching Assistant

Courses:

English Composition 1994-1996
Nature of Politics (Political Theory) 1992-1993

Papers and Panels

"Learning to Listen as We Lead," **Diversity Digest**, vol. 9, no. 2, 2005

"And the Next President of the United States Will Be..." invited talk to senior citizens, CCM Celebrates Seniors, 2007.

"The Graying of New Jersey," invited talk to senior citizens, CCM Celebrates Seniors, 2006.

"What the Candidates Won't Tell You," invited talk to senior citizens, CCM Celebrates Seniors, 2005.

"Technology-Driven Challenges to Higher Education," invited talk given to Faculty Development Committee, Union County College, Cranford, New Jersey, March 2005.

“Apathy and Its Discontents,” **New Political Science**, vol. 23, no. 3, September, 2001.

Discussant, “Civic Education II: Lessons from the Field,” APSA, Boston, 2002.

Chair, “Party-Switching in Comparative Perspective,” APSA, San Francisco, 2001.

Discussant, “Challenges to the Conventional Curriculum: Reports Across the Discipline,” APSA, Washington, DC, 2000.

Chair, “Putting the Educational Spotlight on Civic Involvement,” APSA, Washington, DC, 2000.

“Back to Square One: Reinventing Political Science as a Humanistic Pursuit with Career-Minded Students,” APSA, Atlanta, GA, 1999. **Winner, Best Presentation Award, APSA Undergraduate Education Section**

Chair, “Women as Citizens,” APSA, Boston, 1998.

“The City as Temptress: Cosmopolitanism and Submission in the Work of Richard Sennett,” Pacific Division, American Philosophical Association conference, Seattle, WA, 1996.

Education

Ph.D., Political Science. Rutgers University, 1997.

Coursework in Political Theory, American Government, Public Law, Women and Politics.

Dissertation: *A Universe Two Stories Deep: Social Criticism and Masculinity in Postwar America*

Advisor: Wilson Carey McWilliams

B.A. *cum laude*, Williams College, 1990.

Departmental Honors in Political Science.