

**Michelle Coach, Ed.D.**

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December 16, 2020

Connecticut State Colleges & Universities  
61 Woodland Street  
Hartford, CT 06105

Dear Members of the Campus CEO Search Committee:

With great enthusiasm, I submit my application and curriculum vitae for the Campus Chief Executive Officer (CEO) position at Asnuntuck Community College (ACC). I will highlight my educational, professional, and leadership experience and demonstrate why I believe I am the ideal candidate for this position.

First, I possess three advanced degrees, which have served to shape my leadership style and professional experience:

I attained a Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) from the University of Massachusetts, which built skills and confidence that would serve me well in evaluating and implementing organizational change. In the role of Microbiology Laboratory Manager, I completed a reorganization of the Microbiology laboratory by restructuring departments and corresponding group leaders, implemented a new employee evaluation process, and employed more effective, streamlined workflows. More recently, as the Interim Campus CEO, a more evolved version of those same skills enabled me to implement successful cost-saving measures at ACC, even while facing budget constraints, and to carry out an effective restructuring of the management team in order to meet and better address student challenges and downward enrollment trends.

Achievement of a Master of Sciences (M.S.) in Biology led to my adjunct and full-time professor positions, where I came to understand the challenges and triumphs in the classroom experienced by faculty members while, at the same time, encountering the barriers to success faced by our community college students. Acting as the Interim Campus CEO, I prioritize student success by embracing the Achieving the Dream framework, participating in Guided Pathways work, and allocating resources to support retention initiatives, like Starfish software. I will continue to advocate for and support student success and shall strive to create a campus environment promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion, for employees and students alike.

During my studies as a doctoral candidate in the Higher Education Leadership program, I applied research and projects to my professional position and situation. I analyzed policy and procedures, examined the annual budget, restructured management teams, investigated frameworks like Guided Pathways, and reallocated resources to focus on campus and student needs. Furthermore, I chose my dissertation topic in order to study the impact of adjunct faculty member percentage rates on retention and graduation rates at the New England community colleges. My academic and professional experiences were combined, and I deepened my understanding of faculty workload, collective bargaining unit agreements, and the subsequent impacts on student success.

I possess 16 years of supervisory and managerial experience, with 10 of these years spent in higher education in roles of increasing responsibility. Most recently, as Interim Campus CEO at ACC, I have observed firsthand the critical need for an effective leader during this time of dramatic transformation to the Connecticut State Community College (CSCC).

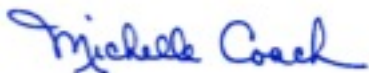
On January 1, 2018, I was appointed as the Interim Dean of Academic Affairs, and then on July 1, 2019, I became the Interim CEO for ACC. The importance of engaging the local community, valuing faculty and staff contributions and voices, and empowering and supporting students to succeed became immediately apparent. Relying upon my management and leadership experience in higher education and private industry, I have demonstrated the successful and effective ability to:

- Oversee and lead a campus through allocating and managing resources in alignment with strategic planning, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic and difficult fiscal times.
- Raise funds and resources through grants and local sponsorships to successfully support student initiatives, such as the ACC Health and Wellness Center & Pantry.
- Passionately advocate for and share the ACC experience at community events to gain support for the campus and opportunities for students. Most recently, I attended the annual ACC Golf Tournament, and I addressed and thanked the participants and spoke with community leaders.
- Use channels such as All-College meetings, email, the “What’s Up Asnuntuck” radio show, the “Changing Lives” TV program, and other communication platforms to communicate change management, share campus information, and engage the students and community.
- Create enhanced student equity and success opportunities by becoming an Achieving the Dream institution and providing future technology access to the CT Second Chance Pell students.
- Successfully apply my extensive knowledge of the NECHE accreditation process to lead faculty and staff through self-studies, which has resulted in NECHE approval of a substantive change request (2018) and a Fifth-Year Interim Report (2020).
- Manage resources and reorganize personnel according to campus needs and CSCU structure. Plus, I evaluate hiring needs that align with the future CSCC structure, which includes communication and participation within a matrixed organization. During this past month, I worked with the CSCU Chief Information Officer to review the Information Technology (IT) staffing and make decisions related to positions.
- Foster a strong connection with the ACC students. Regularly, I meet with students at open forums, student-led events, and student organization meetings to listen to their experiences, successes, and challenges. Recognizing that students are key stakeholders, I strive to stay engaged with the students and incorporate their inputs in decision-making.

Along with the qualifications and experiences noted above, I have a holistic understanding of community college students’ challenges and triumphs, a deep appreciation for the work and extreme efforts of every ACC employee, and an intense desire to deliver life-changing experiences to both students and employees. These understandings have guided me in leading a vibrant campus community best described by ACC student Victoria Orifice: “Asnuntuck Community College’s crowning jewel is its small, family-like environment.”

Thank you for your time reviewing my application. I look forward to discussing my qualifications with the search committee and learning more about this exciting opportunity.

Respectfully submitted,



Dr. Michelle Coach

## Dr. Michelle Coach

### EDUCATION

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**Doctor of Education, Leadership in Higher Education**, Northcentral University, La Jolla, CA  
Dissertation: *Adjunct Faculty Member Impact on Student Success at the New England Community Colleges*

**Master of Science, Biology**, St. Joseph University, West Hartford, CT

**Master of Business Administration**, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA

**Bachelor of Science in Biology, Elementary Education Certification**, Westfield State University, Westfield, MA

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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**Asnuntuck Community College (ACC), Enfield, CT**  
Interim Chief Executive Officer

**January 2010-Present**  
July 2019-Present

Provide executive leadership for all areas of college operations. Advocate for the college, students, faculty, and staff by collaborating with internal and external partners in the CSCU system and in the communities ACC serves.

#### *Executive Leadership*

- Collaborate with the Regional President, Campus CEOs, and other high-ranking officials within the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) system to implement the Board of Regents for Higher Education policies and make decisions to benefit students.
- Restructure the ACC campus management team to effectively align with the future structure of the Connecticut State Community College (CSCC). Redirected resources to the student experience, enrollment, and retention efforts, so a cabinet-level manager focuses on current trends of declining enrollment and increasing student challenges, while a second cabinet-level manager concentrates on the Business Office, Information Technology, and Facilities.
- Supervise ACC senior-level managers including: Dean of Academic Affairs, Dean of Student Services, Dean of Workforce Development & Continuing Education, Dean of Administration, Director of Human Resources, and Director of Institutional Research (prior to management team restructure). Supervise Dean of Academic Affairs, Dean of Student Services, Associate Dean of Campus Operations, and Director of Institutional Research (post management team restructure).
- Represent CSCU campus CEOs and ACC on multiple system-wide committees: Guided Pathways Task Force, Transfer Task Force, Academic and Enrollment Management Steering Committee, Remote Teaching and Learning Crisis Team, Fall Planning Committee, Choice Architecture Committee, Accessibility Committee, Connecticut Higher Education Resilience Working Group on K-12, and other major committees as established in order to influence and advocate for CSCU policies and procedures.

- Effectively manage an annual \$21M budget. During the system-wide budget reductions and holdbacks, able to realize over \$1M in savings and complete the FY20 fiscal year with an operating surplus of \$331,144, which was added to the unrestricted net reserves. Installed the campus solar canopy that offsets approximately 40% of annual campus electricity consumption.
- Work to continuously improve the overall campus environment by collaborating with the CSCU system office, contractors, and the CT Department of Health, to address concerns raised from a Connecticut Division of Occupational Safety and Health (CONN OSHA) consultation visit. Secured funding and resources of almost \$2M for remediation and ventilation recommended by CONN OSHA. Re-establish the Health and Safety Committee as a forum to receive employees' concerns and to provide campus leadership with inputs relevant to campus health and safety.
- Led the study and completion of a constructive NECHE Fifth Year Interim Report (2020).
- Evaluate and update ACC Strategic Plan (2021-2023) to incorporate new strategic goals from Guided Pathways initiatives, the Achieving the Dream (ATD) Action Plan, and other new campus initiatives. Act on results of the ACC employee survey (2018 Institutional Effectiveness Survey).
- Establish a Labor Management Group according to the Collective Bargaining Unit Agreement to allow for regular, productive discussion of union contracts-related terms, conditions, etc. in Spring 2021.
- Achievements and credentials attained by ACC under my leadership:
  - In 2020, ACC ranked Best Community College in CT by [Stacker](#).
  - ACC is the 4th Most Distinguished Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) chapter in the world. ACC Chapter has been the number one chapter in New England three out of the past five years.
  - ACC consistently has the highest graduation rate within Connecticut Community Colleges (37%), which is higher than the national average of 22%.
  - Highest total degrees and certificates conferred in the college's history (452 total).
  - ISO 9001:2015 Accreditation of Advanced Manufacturing Technology Center (2017, 2020).
  - American Welding Society Accredited Test Facility, the only program in CT (2020).

#### *COVID-19 Pandemic Crisis Management*

- Create, communicate, and implement multiple safety plans for the campus. Coordinate all campus efforts for security, personal protective equipment (PPE), staffing, use of CARES funds, and other actions.
- Ensure healthy crisis communications by convening virtual All-College meetings to address and discuss Reopening Plans and Phase 3 plans. Deliver CEO's updates with regular cadence by email to all employees for transparency in communications. Establish a streamlined webpage for COVID-19 information for students and employees that explains campus plans and services online and on-campus.
- Provide over \$360,000 to 730 eligible students funding from the CARES Act Higher Education Emergency Relief Funding, in the amount of \$494.48 each, in order to help alleviate financial impact from the pandemic. Receive an additional \$20,000 grant from

the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving to support students that did not qualify for CARES Act funds.

- Distribute laptops and hotspots to students needing technology to complete coursework and continue with courses in subsequent semesters. Advocate for allocation of \$9,000 from the ACC Foundation budget for purchase of additional technology for students in need.
- Advocate for and provide online support and training to faculty due to the immediate pivot to virtual delivery of courses. Provide resources and supports necessary to enhance pedagogy and engage students in a fast-changing virtual environment.
- Sponsor ACC's Advanced Manufacturing Technology Center (AMTC) self-production and delivery of personal protective equipment (PPE), including over 500 face mask straps and more than 300 face shield assemblies for area healthcare workers, and ten incubation boxes sent directly to Yale New Haven Health Network of Hospitals in the spring of 2020.

#### *Fundraising and Community Partnerships*

- Speaker at ACC Foundation and community events: Chamber of Commerce events, Rotary Club meetings, and Foundation fundraisers, to share our students' success stories and generate additional funding for our students.
- Host the Town of Enfield Economic Development Breakfast attended by the State and local government leaders. Highlight ACC's economic impact within the community and in the State of Connecticut.
- Establish ACC Foundation support for Phi Theta Kappa membership scholarships in the amount of \$8,000 for the next two years, which enables eligible students to be afforded honors society membership, benefits, and opportunities.
- Raise over \$300,000 with the ACC Foundation (2019). Awarded over 60 students with \$47,000 in scholarships ensuring their financial ability to continue their education. Exceeded Annual Appeal goals of \$110,000 (2019) and \$115,000 (2020) creating additional financial support for student activities, scholarships, and campus improvements.
- Aid in securing over \$200,000 from Aerospace Components Manufacturers (ACM) in support of ACC's AMTC student scholarships and development of a workforce relationship with ACM members.
- Apply for and receive a \$45,800 grant from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving to bring technology into four CT DOC facilities where ACC offers educational programs through Second Chance Pell grant to incarcerated inmates and to provide 25 new laptops to Latinx and Black students on campus.

#### *Student Support*

- Since 2012, as advisor, chapter leader, New England Regional Coordinator, and CEO, respectively, through Phi Theta Kappa, cultivate student leadership and develop world class student leaders. Write countless recommendations for student at ACC and throughout New England.
- Strong advocate for the Achieving the Dream framework for student success. Foster diversity, equity, and inclusion on campus by working with Phi Theta Kappa students to generate an equity work report of all 2020-2021 campus committee efforts.
- Sustain "Dare to Cross the Line" initiative enabling Massachusetts (MA) residents to pay in-state CT tuition (MA students comprise 10% of the ACC population).

- Regularly hold Student Open Forums, in-person and online, to listen to and stay engaged with students to hear their triumphs, challenges, and needs.
- Secure CT Health Foundation Grant in the amount of \$25,000 for creation of ACC Health and Wellness Center and Pantry, assisting more than 300 students weekly with food insecurity, mental health and wellness services.
- Authorize application for and obtain funding of a Campus Compact AmeriCorps VISTA student employee (Spring 2019) to support student-initiated Health and Wellness Center and Pantry.
- Cultivate an environment of highly engaged student and staff interaction through personal participation in the monthly student-run Eagle Challenges, regularly scheduled club meetings, and other student activities.
- Leverage media communications such as “What’s Up Asnuntuck” radio show and “Changing Lives” community channel on cable TV to deliver relevant ACC information and messaging to campus and the surrounding community.
- Expand the Second Chance Pell (SCP) program from the initial 3 certificate programs to additional courses and programs, which allowed 700 incarcerated inmates to pursue higher education over 3 years. Eight percent of the inmate graduates have been inducted into Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) during graduation ceremonies at the DOC facilities.
- Secure capital funding for new market-demand programs, i.e., Cosmetology Program. Renovation of campus spaces occurred for the hands-on component.
- Obtain Perkins funding to help support 300 high school students annually in dual enrollment programs, so they can earn ACC college credits before high school graduation. Additionally, fund transportation to bring 250 high school juniors and seniors on-site to the Advanced Manufacturing Technology Center (AMTC) to explore career options and earn college credits.
- Advocate for students by participating in system-wide planning and campus implementation of the CSCU Transfer and Articulation Programs (TAP), which affords students a transfer opportunity to a 4-year CSCU institution.

Interim Dean of Academic Affairs

January 2018-July 2019

Oversee faculty and academic affairs staff, hire employees, support curriculum development, implement and revise academic policy, and maintain the division budget. Supervise Department Chairs, Director of Library, Director of Educational Technology, Director of Center of Advising and Student Achievement, and Coordinator of Student Accessibility/Disability Services.

- Collaborate with CSCU Academic Deans to develop and revise Higher Education policies and academic programming.
- Participating Dean on multiple system-wide committees: Guided Pathways Task Force, Academic Council, Choice Architecture Committee, Accessibility Committee, and other major committees representing and strengthening ACC’s academic and related interests.
- Develop student-centered course schedules, which align with collective bargaining agreements for faculty workload and assignment.
- Ensure academic program quality through use of the Academic Programs Review process.

- Guide a non-credit program and several certificates to credit status, enabling students to earn academic credits and be eligible for financial aid.
- Work with faculty and staff to oversee the initial TAP offering and implementation.
- Passionate supporter of professional development for faculty and staff. Collaborate with faculty on relevant topics and invite speakers.
- Observe and evaluate over 50% of the full-time faculty to provide constructive, supportive feedback and ensure faculty professional files had updated evaluation for promotion and/or tenure.
- Oversee and evaluate dual enrollment programs for curriculum rigor and teacher qualification. Provide professional development opportunities to high school teachers as needed.
- Successfully implement a pilot Second Chance Pell program and assist in the writing of a Substantive Change Report to NECHE. As a result, ACC's SCP program was accredited by NECHE with a site visit (2018).

Department Chair, Natural, Social, and Behavioral Sciences  
Science Coordinator

July 2016-January 2018  
July 2011-June 2016

- Co-chair the committee overseeing the NECHE standard addressing integrity transparency and public disclosure during ACC comprehensive self-studies (2015).
- Publish an affordable Microbiology Laboratory manual to provide students real life, hands-on exercises. Five dollars from every manual sold goes funds a scholarship for a Microbiology student.
- Hire adjunct faculty members. Evaluate adjunct faculty members on a regular basis to provide constructive and encouraging feedback about their classroom styles and teaching.
- Coordinate all personnel within the laboratory according to Biosafety Level 2 standards. Maintain policy and procedure to achieve a safe laboratory at Biosafety Level 2 standards. Includes training all laboratory personnel, assistants and faculty, on multiple procedures.
- Generate a new chemical Hygiene Plan according to current standards and replace a 20-year-old outdated plan.
- Install an autoclave and water system to achieve a higher level of safety and quality in the laboratory.
- Streamline the Science schedule to have a decreased number of classroom set-ups and breakdowns in order to achieve financial efficiency in lab preparation and assistant hours, while allowing for additional classes to be added to the schedule.
- Revise the curriculum and update textbooks and lab exercises for General Biology I, Anatomy and Physiology I, Anatomy and Physiology II, Environmental Science, and Human Biology.
- Co-chair Curriculum and Standards, General Education, and other committees.
- Partner with local business to receive equipment donations (incubators) for the laboratory, which allows for enhanced educational experiences for students.
- Provide a prototype, biotechnology experiment through coordination with Amino Labs, granting students cutting-edge genetic engineering experiences.

**New England Regional Coordinator****March 2015-present**

Phi Theta Kappa, Jackson, MS

*Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) is the largest two-year honors society in the world. The organization is celebrating 102 years of existence with more than 3.5 million members. PTK focus on the hallmarks of scholarship, service, fellowship, and membership with their members. The New England Region inducts approximately 4,000 members per year.*

- Coordinate the PTK chapters of more than 50 institutions in New England, and reengage a region that did not have a local regional coordinator for seven years. Increased volume of attendees and number of chapters to events by over 100%. As the result, the region was awarded a Regional Milestone Award for superior achievements in 2016 and a Distinguished Region Award for high quality programming and leadership in 2017.
- Plan and preside over 15 different regional events, each hosting 50-150 attendees from the six New England states including: Spring regional conventions celebrating accomplishments, Regional Officer elections, Fall conferences every October, Leadership conferences, and Advisor Institutes.
- Conducted two virtual conferences (Fall 2020) notably attracting 50% of New England PTK chapters.
- Extensively train regional officers to perform chapter outreach, hold educational forums, speak at inductions and ceremonies, and gain confidence in public speaking.
- Expand the regional budget from about \$5,000 to almost \$60,000 through initiatives, fundraising, grants, and cost-savings measures. In 2020, New England was one of the few chapters that received a \$5,000 grant. An endowment fund will be created in 2021 to provide scholarships to PTK community college students for continuing education and entering the workforce.
- Coordinate and bring student delegates to more than 10 international events.
- Regular presenter at regional and international events as a Regional Coordinator, Division I Elected Advisor Representative, and Faculty Scholar.

**Adjunct Faculty Member****2007-2010**

Springfield Technical Community College, Springfield, MA

2008-2010

Holyoke Community College, Holyoke, MA

2008-2009

Westfield State University, Westfield, MA

2007-2009

- Teach a variety of courses: Biology Today, Environmental Biology, General Biology, Human Biology, and Microbiology.
- Work with Full-time faculty members to develop curriculum for courses.

**Microbiology Laboratory Manager and Microbiologist****1998-2007**

MicroTest Laboratories, Inc.

- Oversaw the contract testing laboratory, media preparation, specialized Microbiology testing, and receiving areas. Included hiring, evaluating (including creating an updated



evaluation process for employees), and training personnel within the laboratory. Created a training plan for all lab employees upon hire.

- Approved testing reports that were frequently inspected by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).
- Performed client visits, represented the company at audits, and conducted client correspondence regularly.
- Generated Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and approved all necessary SOPs. Many procedures are still in use today.
- Inspected and approved all media preparations to ensure they were made per procedure and aseptically.
- Performed investigations on all out of specification results and provided input to the clients of appropriate actions to correct situations.
- Maintained laboratory budget.

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### **CERTIFICATIONS**

Registered Microbiologist with the National Registry of Microbiology

Leadership Development Course Certification with Phi Theta Kappa

iTeach certified to teach online for CSCU

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### **AWARDS**

CSCU 2014 Excellence in Teaching Award- System-wide and Campus

Phi Theta Kappa Regional and International Paragon Advisor Award 2016

Phi Theta Kappa Regional Milestone Award 2016 (International Award)

Phi Theta Kappa Distinguished Region Award 2017 (International Award)

Phi Theta Kappa Regional and International Distinguished Advisor Award 2018

Phi Theta Kappa Regional Continued Excellence Award 2019

Phi Theta Kappa Distinguished Regional Coordinator 2020 (International Award)

Phi Theta Kappa Regional Awards in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020

Member of Kappa Delta Pi, International Honors Society in Education