

# **SHELDON ROBERT WALCHER, PhD, MS, MFA**

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## **HIGHLIGHTS OF QUALIFICATIONS**

- Chief academic and student affairs executive with over 25 years of experience spanning teaching, academic leadership, and student services across a diverse range of institutions.
- Proven record of integrating academic programs, student services, and workforce partnerships to improve student outcomes, strengthen enrollment, and enhance institutional performance.
- Demonstrated success leading complex institutional transformation, including accreditation recovery, organizational restructuring, enterprise system modernization, and governance reform.
- Experienced in aligning strategy, planning, and resource allocation through data-informed decision-making and cross-functional leadership.
- Accomplished external-facing leader with experience in legislative relations, grant development, and building community and industry partnerships.
- Builds high-performing, values-centered teams by fostering trust, shared ownership, and a culture of inquiry, innovation, and continuous improvement grounded in shared governance and collaborative decision-making.

## **EDUCATION**

- MS Higher Education Administration and Policy, School of Education and Social Policy, Northwestern University, 2017.
- PhD English (Rhetoric and Composition), The University of Utah, 2007.
- MFA English (Fiction Writing), The Pennsylvania State University, 1998.
- BA Literature and Philosophy, The University of California at Santa Cruz, 1991.

## **TEACHING AND PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS**

Professor of Practice, Department of Education, Kansas State University (2024–Present)  
Facilitator, NISOD Professional Development Series, University of Texas at Austin (2020–2022)  
Adjunct Instructor, English Department, College of Lake County (2022–2023)  
Assistant Professor, English Department, Roosevelt University (2010–2014)  
Assistant Professor, English Department, University of Southern Mississippi (2007–2010)  
Visiting Professor, Rhetoric, Writing & Linguistics Program, University of Tennessee (2006–2007)  
Adjunct Instructor, Department of Rhetoric and Writing, University of Utah (2001–2005)  
Adjunct Faculty, Humanities Division, Salt Lake Community College (2000–2005)

## **ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- Leading at the Speed of Trust, FranklinCovey, Morton College, 2024
- Race, Equity, and Diversity Training for Leaders, America and Moore, LLC, 2023–24
- Lancer Leadership Academy, College of Lake County, 2023–24
- Crucial Conversations, College of Lake County, 2020
- Wisconsin Leadership Development Institute, The Chair Academy, 2017–18

## ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

### PROVOST AND VICE PRESIDENT OF STUDENT AND ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Morton College — Cicero, IL

2024–Present

Reporting to the President, I serve as the chief academic and student affairs officer and senior academic leader at a comprehensive community college serving one of the most diverse student populations in Illinois. With over 85% of students identifying as Latinx, Morton College is one of the highest Hispanic Serving Institutions outside of Texas and California. I provide executive leadership for five academic divisions encompassing 25 departments, three academic support units and all student services operations, including advising, financial aid, registrar, enrollment management, student life, and workforce partnerships. With a college operating budget of approximately \$36 million, I supervise 15 senior leaders and work closely with the President and Board of Trustees to align academic programs, student success strategies, and institutional planning. As the President’s principal deputy, I serve as the senior executive in the President’s absence.

During my tenure, Morton College has experienced renewed institutional momentum, including 14% enrollment growth, improved operational efficiency, and strengthened financial stability.

#### Selected Accomplishments

- **Drove institutional turnaround**, contributing to sustained enrollment growth and renewed operational and financial stability through coordinated reforms in enrollment management, academic pathways, and strategic scheduling.
- **Led comprehensive institutional reorganization**, establishing five academic divisions aligned with Illinois Pathways and integrating academic, student services, and workforce functions to improve coordination and outcomes.
- **Launched Panther Pathways**, a cohort-based academic model with integrated student supports; inaugural cohort achieved 95% fall-to-spring persistence.
- **Improved instructional efficiency and financial performance**, reducing the total number of course sections 5.4% while increasing average class size 10.4%, resulting in \$1.1 million in financial savings annually.
- **Expanded workforce and adult education pathways**, increasing adult education enrollment 35% and instructional activity 52%, strengthening transitions into credit programs.
- **Advanced long-range institutional planning and strategic alignment**, directing development of a \$150M campus redevelopment vision and leading institutional planning processes aligned with college values and workforce priorities.
- **Strengthened institutional effectiveness and accreditation readiness**, contributing to the college’s successful removal from HLC Notice and leading cross-functional planning, governance reforms, and data integrity initiatives in preparation for 2027 reaffirmation.
- **Modernized enterprise systems and enrollment infrastructure**, including implementation of Element451 CRM and partnership with CampusWorks to improve ERP integration, data reliability, and cross-functional service delivery.

## DEAN OF COMMUNICATION ARTS, HUMANITIES, AND FINE ARTS

College of Lake County — Grayslake, IL

2019–2024

Provided strategic and operational leadership for the college's largest academic division, overseeing 15 departments, 52 full-time faculty, approximately 250 adjuncts, and 10 staff, with an annual budget exceeding \$12 million. Served more than 10,000 students annually in transfer and career programs and an additional 1,200 students in integrated reading and writing. Also oversaw the Robert T. Wright Community Gallery and a permanent art collection of more than 800 works.

### Selected Accomplishments

- **Expanded career and transfer pathways**, increasing CTE enrollment 60% and transfer enrollment 8.3%, while growing dual credit participation by 230% to serve more than 1,200 high school students.
- **Scaled equity-focused student success initiatives**, expanding the Accelerated Learning Program to serve over 1,000 students annually and significantly improving completion rates across historically underserved student populations.
- **Led college-wide assessment redesign**, increasing faculty participation by 250% and aligning assessment, program review, and faculty development to support institutional effectiveness and accreditation.
- **Strengthened workforce and community partnerships**, launching new career programs and delivering more than 40 community-based arts and engagement initiatives across Lake County.
- **Provided interim executive leadership for Adult Education and ESL**, maintaining compliance and continuity across federally and state-funded programs while advancing pathways into credit programs.

## DEAN OF HUMANITIES, SOCIAL SCIENCE, AND THE MINER MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Kankakee Community College — Kankakee, IL

2016–2019

Provided academic, strategic, and operational leadership for a comprehensive division spanning humanities, social sciences, and library services, overseeing approximately 50 faculty and staff across instructional programs, the library, tutoring, and multicultural student services.

### Selected Accomplishments

- **Strengthened dual credit and early college pathways**, aligning programs with the Dual Credit Quality Act and launching “College Now,” enabling high school students to complete an associate degree in lieu of their high school courses.
- **Led institution-wide strategic planning initiative**, engaging more than 300 faculty and staff and translating campus input into five strategic goals with measurable performance indicators.
- **Advanced student success through pathway redesign**, launching the “Fast Path” blended-learning program supporting degree completion for underserved students, with more than 150 graduates.
- **Improved institutional effectiveness and data use**, co-leading the “Data for Success” initiative to strengthen planning, budgeting, and data literacy across the college.
- **Expanded equity-focused partnerships**, securing grant funding and implementing bridge programs to support student transitions from high school into college-level coursework.

## **ASSOCIATE DEAN OF ENGLISH AND ACADEMIC ESL**

College of DuPage — Glen Ellyn, IL

2014–2016

Provided leadership for the college's largest academic subdivision, overseeing a \$7.1 million budget and supervising 33 full-time and more than 120 adjunct faculty. Collaborated on institution-wide student success and faculty development initiatives during a period of presidential transition.

### Selected Accomplishments

- **Redesigned developmental education pathways**, reducing course sequences and improving student progression and completion in English, reading, and ESL.
- **Launched and scaled accelerated learning initiatives**, including ALP English sections that improved persistence and success rates for underprepared students.
- **Strengthened transfer and career pathways**, developing new articulation agreements, including an AA-to-BA-to-JD pathway with regional university partners.
- **Contributed to institutional leadership during transition**, serving on shared governance council and supporting executive decision-making during a presidential transition.

## **EARLIER ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE**

Director of the Writing Program, Roosevelt University — Chicago, IL

Director of Composition, University of Southern Mississippi — Hattiesburg, MS

Additional faculty and instructional appointments at multiple institutions

- Led large-scale curriculum redesign, faculty development, and assessment initiatives to improve student progression, retention, and learning outcomes across writing and general education programs.
- Secured external grant funding and implemented program innovations, including blended and accelerated learning models, resulting in improved student success and instructional efficiency.

## **SELECTED PRESENTATIONS**

“Panther Pathways: Strengthening Outcomes Through Structure and Support,” NISOD Conference, Austin, TX (2026)

“Creating Equity in the Live Entertainment Industry,” ACCT Conference, Seattle, WA (2024)

“Scheduling for Student Success: Engaging Faculty in Redesigning Courses,” NISOD Conference, Austin, TX (2019)

“Student Retention in Foundational Courses: Lessons from KCC,” ICCCA Conference, Springfield, IL (2017)

Additional presentations on writing, pedagogy, and academic leadership at national conferences including CCCC and the WPA Conference.

## REFERENCES

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