

SHELDON ROBERT WALCHER, PhD, MS, MFA

(312) 350-6837 • <https://www.linkedin.com/in/drsheldonwalcher/>

HIGHLIGHTS OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Senior community college executive with leadership experience spanning academic affairs, student affairs, workforce development, institutional effectiveness, accreditation, and strategic planning.
- Proven institution builder with experience leading organizational restructuring, governance redesign, strategic planning initiatives, accreditation efforts, and long-range institutional development.
- Community and workforce leader with experience cultivating partnerships among employers, schools, government agencies, foundations, and community organizations.
- Resource steward with experience aligning planning, budgeting, enrollment strategy, facilities development, and organizational reinvestment to support institutional priorities.
- Accomplished educator and leadership developer with experience as a faculty member, dean, provost, and Professor of Practice in the Roueche Community College Leadership Program.
- Collaborative leader known for building trust, developing talent, and engaging stakeholders in institutional transformation and continuous improvement.

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, John E. Roueche Community College Leadership Program (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
- Wisconsin Leadership Development Institute, The Chair Academy, 2017-18

LEADERSHIP COMMITMENTS

The following commitments reflect the principles that have guided my work as a teacher, institution builder, community convener, and college leader.

People. Purpose. Process. Performance.

This is my leadership operating system. Every challenge, opportunity, and decision ultimately comes down to four questions. Are all the right stakeholders sitting at the table? Do we know our why? What are the steps that will get us where we want to go? How will we know when we get there? Leadership is the work of bringing those answers into alignment.

Reduce Friction. Eliminate Noise.

When people struggle, it is rarely because they lack talent, commitment, or good intentions. More often, they are navigating systems that are overly complex, poorly designed, or filled with unnecessary barriers. Effective leadership begins by identifying and removing those obstacles. By reducing friction and eliminating noise, people can focus their time, energy, and creativity on what matters most: learning and growth.

Alignment Is the Force Multiplier.

Effort without alignment is confusion. Alignment without effort gets us nowhere. Only effort with alignment moves us forward. Leadership is the work of creating shared purpose and ensuring that people, priorities, processes, and resources all move in the same direction. When alignment is present, individual efforts become collective progress.

Pilot Boldly. Learn Generously.

Teaching and learning are at the heart of everything we do. Progress rarely comes from perfection. It comes from curiosity, experimentation, reflection, and a commitment to continuous improvement. Not every pilot will succeed. Not every decision will be right. What matters most is that we take action. Progress requires the courage to attempt something we've never done before, and the grace to try again when things don't work out exactly as planned.

Honor the Past. Build for the Future.

Growing up across many different countries taught me that place matters. Every community is shaped by its unique history, values, traditions, and culture. Leadership begins with recognizing and honoring those stories and the people who tell them.

But change is inevitable. And our responsibility is not simply to react to it, but to help shape it. We must honor the past without being bound by it. The best communities and institutions are not defined by where they have been. They are defined by what they choose to become.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

PROVOST AND VICE PRESIDENT OF STUDENT AND ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Morton College — Cicero, IL

2024–Present

Currently serving 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 more than 85% of students identifying as Latinx, Morton College is one of the highest Hispanic-Serving Institutions outside of Texas and California.

Provides executive leadership for five academic divisions, three academic support units, and all student services operations, including advising, financial aid, registrar, enrollment management, student life, and workforce partnerships. Supervises 15 senior leaders and oversees the college's entire academic and student success enterprise.

In addition to overseeing academic and student affairs, leads institution-wide strategic planning, organizational development, accreditation readiness, workforce initiatives, technology modernization, facilities planning, and cross-functional efforts supporting enrollment growth and long-term institutional sustainability. Works closely with the President and Board of Trustees to align strategy, policy, resources, and institutional priorities. Serves as the senior executive in the President's absence.

Morton College is experiencing renewed institutional momentum, including 14% enrollment growth, improved operational efficiency, and strengthened financial stability.

Selected Accomplishments

- **Drove development of the college's strategic planning framework**, revising institutional values, aligning organizational priorities, resource allocation, and performance expectations around a shared vision for student success.
- **Led comprehensive institutional reorganization**, establishing five academic divisions and new leadership structures in workforce innovation, institutional effectiveness, teaching and learning resources to strengthen alignment, accountability, and student success.
- **Launched Panther Pathways**, a cohort-based academic model with integrated student supports; inaugural cohort achieved 95% fall-to-spring and 87% fall-to-fall 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 institutional growth and resource development efforts** through community engagement, workforce partnerships, and creation of a \$150 million campus redevelopment vision aligned with regional economic priorities and future fundraising opportunities.
- **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 at a nationally recognized, multi-campus community college serving one of Illinois' most economically and demographically diverse regions. Oversaw 15 departments, 52 full-time faculty, approximately 250 adjunct faculty, 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.

In addition to divisional leadership, led and contributed to major institution-wide initiatives related to workforce pathway development, developmental education reform, strategic scheduling, assessment, internationalization, and community engagement. Also provided interim executive leadership for Adult Education and ESL, overseeing federally and state-funded programs while strengthening pathways between adult education and college-level coursework. Oversaw the Robert T. Wright Community Gallery and a permanent art collection of more than 800 works.

Selected Accomplishments

- **Created first-of-their-kind workforce programs** in Live Entertainment Production, Audio Video Integration Technician, and Digital Media & Design, expanding workforce pathways and positioning the college to serve emerging industries.
- **Expanded equity-focused student success initiatives**, scaling the Accelerated Learning Program to serve more than 1,000 students annually and advancing developmental education reforms recognized through Achieving the Dream Leader College designation.
- **Implemented strategic scheduling practices college-wide** and created FlexPath, a hybrid general education model that became the college's primary instructional framework during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Expanded global learning opportunities** through study abroad, international partnerships, and curriculum internationalization efforts, contributing to the college's receipt of the Senator Paul Simon Award for Comprehensive Internationalization.
- **Drove community outreach and engagement initiatives**, through the Voices of Lake County Project and more than 40 arts, cultural, and educational initiatives; recognized as an Honorary Citizen of Waukegan for contributions to the community.
- **Redesigned institutional assessment processes**, increasing faculty participation by 250% and strengthening alignment among assessment, program review, accreditation, and faculty development.
- **Cultivated strategic partnerships with key organizations** including Upstaging, AbbVie, AVIXA, Northern Illinois University, and the All Within My Hands Foundation to expand workforce pathways, internships, scholarships, and experiential learning opportunities for students.

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, library services, tutoring, and multicultural student services at a regional community college serving urban, rural, and agricultural communities across east-central Illinois. Oversaw approximately 50 faculty and staff across instructional and student support functions.

Partnered with a range of educational, workforce, and community stakeholders to advance student success, strengthen regional pathways, and advance the college's convening role as an anchor institution for the communities it serves.

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 at one of the nation's largest community colleges, overseeing a \$7.1 million budget and supervising 33 full-time and more than 120 adjunct faculty. Collaborated on institution-wide student success, developmental education, and faculty development initiatives during a period of presidential transition and organizational change.

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

- Directed writing and composition programs at Roosevelt University and the University of Southern Mississippi, leading large-scale curriculum redesign, assessment, faculty development, and accreditation initiatives while supervising faculty, staff, and graduate instructors.
- Led grant-funded student success and developmental education reforms, including accelerated learning, blended learning, and statewide policy initiatives that later informed institution-wide innovations at College of DuPage, Kankakee Community College, College of Lake County, and Morton College.

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

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

“Applied Learning and the Future of Education” address delivered to the Faculty Advisory Committee of the Illinois Board of Higher Education, Cicero, IL (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.