

Dr. Jennifer Cournoyer is a passionate and results-driven higher education leader dedicated to removing barriers to student success and fostering inclusive, high-impact learning environments. With over 12 years of experience in two-year colleges across New England, she currently serves as Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs at River Valley Community College in New Hampshire.

A collaborative and steady leader during times of change, Dr. Cournoyer is known for aligning institutional strategy with measurable outcomes. Her expertise spans accreditation, shared governance, workforce development, and ethical resource allocation. She has also championed open access and open pedagogy to ensure education remains affordable and culturally relevant to diverse student populations.

A strong advocate for workforce-focused education, Dr. Cournoyer has led the expansion of high-demand academic programs—most notably scaling Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) programs across multiple locations, significantly increasing the number of graduates entering the healthcare workforce. She has also advanced early college initiatives, non-credit to credit pathways, and industry-aligned programming that broaden access and create clear routes to economic mobility.

Her leadership is grounded in a deep commitment to equity and access. She has led institution-wide equity audits, expanded accessibility services, and implemented comprehensive supports to address food insecurity, transportation barriers, and student mental health. Through these efforts, she has advanced culturally responsive practices and data-informed strategies to improve retention and completion for historically underserved students.

Dr. Cournoyer has extensive experience working within unionized environments and public higher education systems, including active participation in collective bargaining, policy development, and system-level initiatives. She is recognized for fostering strong relationships with faculty, staff, students, and community partners. Her success in building these relationships has resulted in institutional culture rooted in trust, transparency, and shared purpose.

She holds a doctorate in Higher Education Administration from Northeastern University, a Master of Library and Information Science from the University of Rhode Island, and a Bachelor of Arts in English and Spanish from Stonehill College. Dr. Cournoyer was selected as a 2025–2026 Aspen Rising Presidents Fellow, reflecting national recognition of her leadership in advancing community college student success.