

Dr. Irene Rios



February 7, 2026

Dear Members of the Presidential Search Committee,

I am pleased to submit my application for the position of President of Springfield Technical Community College (STCC). STCC's mission, service commitments, and institutional priorities reflect a clear and compelling purpose: to prepare the workforce of the Greater Springfield region through high-quality, accessible, and affordable education and training. My leadership experience, values, and long-standing dedication to the comprehensive technical and community college mission align directly with STCC's vision of individualized attention, strong workforce and transfer pathways, and equitable student success.

As the Ammerman Campus Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for Suffolk County Community College—the largest community college in the State University of New York (SUNY) system—I lead a campus of more than 10,000 students, over 250 faculty and staff, and a broad portfolio of academic, workforce, and student support programs. I ensure that our mission is fulfilled, strategic goals are met, and our values are reflected in every aspect of campus operations. My previous service as CEO of Suffolk's Eastern and Brentwood campuses has given me deep experience leading rural, suburban, and urban communities—experience that translates directly to STCC's diverse service region and its broad array of science, technology, engineering, math, arts, and public service industries.

In addition to my CEO role, I serve as Vice President for Academic Affairs for the SUNY Suffolk system. This dual appointment has strengthened my ability to lead complex academic enterprises, support faculty excellence, and design strategies that improve student outcomes across multiple campuses. My 29 years of higher education leadership—including service as Chief Academic Officer at Naugatuck Valley Community College in Connecticut, Academic Dean at Albertus Magnus College in Connecticut, Executive Director at Springfield College in Massachusetts, Registrar at Saint Joseph College in Connecticut, and Director of Academic Advising at Rochester Institute of Technology in New York—have prepared me to lead STCC with vision, integrity, and a deep understanding of the community college mission.

Leadership Aligned with STCC's Mission and Values

I am a high-energy, ethical, visionary, and collaborative leader. My leadership philosophy is grounded in openness, transparency, and shared governance. I am known for being accessible, proactive, and mission-driven, and for building strong relationships with faculty, staff, students, and community partners.

I have a proven record of effective strategic planning and initiative implementation. At SUNY Suffolk, I lead campus-level and system-level planning efforts that align academic programs, student services, and workforce initiatives with regional needs. This experience reflects my commitment to providing occupational, technical,

transfer, basic academic skills, and continuing education programs that meet the needs of individuals, businesses, and industries across our county.

Commitment to Academic Excellence and Student Success

STCC's dedication to fostering a positive environment for teaching and learning resonates deeply with my professional values. I have led SUNY Suffolk's Center for Teaching and Learning and champion high-impact instructional practices, faculty development, and continuous improvement in teaching and learning. I have expanded micro-credentials, online programs, and stackable workforce pathways—initiatives that mirror STCC's commitment to preparing students for employment, transfer, and lifelong learning.

I have built cross-functional advising centers at multiple institutions, recognizing that accessible, proactive advising is foundational to retention and completion. I work closely with faculty to strengthen gateway course success, improve learning outcomes, and ensure that academic programs remain relevant to industry needs.

Workforce Development and Regional Economic Growth

STCC plays a vital role in enhancing the employability of residents in technology, business, health, arts, and sciences. My career has been deeply rooted in workforce development and economic partnerships. I have led the creation of new technical programs, expanded apprenticeships, secured industry-aligned training centers, and built strong advisory committees that ensure curriculum relevance and job placement.

Examples of my work include:

- Expanding non-credit to credit pathways for Pell qualification
- Launching a micro-credential in Integrated Energy Systems with Stony Brook University
- Developing cybersecurity, bioscience, and engineering pathways aligned with regional employers
- Expanding clinical sites and healthcare partnerships to meet workforce shortages
- Collaborating with business and industry leaders to design fast-track, classroom-to-job workforce programs

I understand the importance of engaging political, civic, and community leaders to advance economic development initiatives. I have worked closely with county legislators, state agencies, and local elected officials to secure funding, expand programs, and strengthen regional workforce pipelines.

Fiscal Leadership and Resource Development

STCC seeks a president with strong fiscal management skills. I manage a \$43M campus operational budget and lead reforms that improve fiscal planning, operational efficiency, and long-term sustainability. I have developed academic program sustainability models, implemented cost-saving measures, and ensured responsible stewardship of institutional resources.

I helped secure a \$5M New York State Department of Health Healthcare Education and Life-Skills Program (HELP) grant to support tuition for students in RN, PN, CMA, and CNA programs. I have also secured major gifts for liberal arts, healthcare, and STEM education, as well as numerous grants supporting workforce development, student services, and academic innovation.

Partnerships with K–12, Higher Education, and Community Stakeholders

STCC emphasizes strong partnerships with school districts, universities, business and industry, and community organizations. I have a long record of building these relationships, including:

- Leading and expanding dual enrollment and Early College programs (61 districts)
- Developing P-TECH workforce pathways
- Expanding transfer articulation partnerships with four-year institutions

- Collaborating with chambers of commerce, workforce boards, and regional employers
- Engaging civic and political leaders to support college initiatives

These partnerships have strengthened enrollment pipelines, expanded job opportunities for students, and supported regional economic development.

Commitment to Open Access, Affordability, and Student-Centered Education

STCC's emphasis on accessibility, affordability, individualized attention, and multiple learning formats aligns perfectly with my leadership principles. I believe deeply in the mission of comprehensive technical and community colleges: open access, opportunity, and economic mobility. My career has been intentionally dedicated to this mission. I am energized by the work of helping students earn a living and live a life.

It would be my honor to join and lead the vibrant community at STCC—an institution where student-centered values, high-quality education, and expanded workforce opportunities are paramount to students, faculty, staff, and the residents of the region.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss how my leadership can advance STCC's mission and position the College for continuing success.

Sincerely,

