

Dr. Irene Rios



EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Transformational, student-centered, and mission-driven higher education leader with 29 years of progressive executive experience across community colleges, technical colleges, and four-year institutions. Demonstrated success leading large, complex, multi-campus systems; strengthening workforce and economic development partnerships; advancing academic excellence; and improving student success, retention, and completion. Recognized for servant leadership, transparent communication, and a deep commitment to the mission, values, and equity-driven purpose of comprehensive community and technical colleges.

HIGHLIGHTS OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Proven commitment to shared governance, transparency, and collaborative decision-making.
 - Record of strategic planning, implementation, and assessment that aligns institutional priorities with regional workforce needs.
 - Extensive experience securing and administering federal, state, and philanthropic grants, and supporting Foundation fundraising efforts.
 - High-energy, ethical, visionary leader with a servant leadership approach and strong relationship-building skills.
 - Experienced in crisis management, including leadership of institutional response and continuity planning.
 - Successful record of cultivating partnerships with K–12 districts, universities, business and industry, boards, and community organizations.
 - Deep experience in industrial and economic workforce development, expanding classroom-to-career pathways, and aligning programs with labor market demand.
 - Executive leadership within a large, unionized, multi-campus system, maintaining strong labor-management relationships and adherence to collective bargaining agreements.
 - Proven ability to foster a culture of care, belonging, and student-centered service for all learners and employees.
 - Strong fiscal leadership, including oversight of a \$43M+ campus operational budget, long-range planning, and resource optimization.
 - Skilled in building and reconfiguring academic advising systems to improve retention and persistence.
 - Teaching experience at the associate, baccalaureate, master’s, and doctoral levels.
 - Strong understanding of the role of technology in supporting academic quality, student success, and institutional effectiveness.
 - Recognized spokesperson for academic excellence, program relevance, and community engagement.
 - Demonstrates resilience, integrity, inclusivity, and a commitment to innovation and accountability.
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EDUCATION

Doctor of Education (Ed.D.), 2007

University of Hartford, Hartford, CT

Dissertation: Perceptions of Practice: An Examination of the Extent to Which Faculty Advisors Perceive Delivery of Their Undergraduate Advising as Developmental or Prescriptive.

Recipient, National Academic Advising Association Doctoral Student Research Award

Master of Science, 1989
Curriculum Design and Instructional Strategies
Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), Rochester, NY

Bachelor of Science, 1984
Business Administration and Management
Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), Rochester, NY

EXECUTIVE EXPERIENCE

SUNY Suffolk County Community College – Selden, NY Campus Chief Executive Officer, Ammerman Campus

2018 – Present

Chief Executive Officer for SUNY Suffolk’s flagship campus, serving 10,000+ students annually with 250+ faculty and staff across 17 buildings on 156 acres. Provide strategic, academic, operational, and fiscal leadership to advance the College’s mission, vision, and strategic plan. Lead academic affairs, student affairs, enrollment management, advising, tutoring, registrar, plant operations, community engagement, and budget planning. Ensure compliance with accreditation standards, state and federal regulations, and collective bargaining agreements.

Selected Achievements

- Expanded Practical Nursing Certificate enrollment capacity by 150% to meet regional workforce needs.
- Designed and launched a First Stop Student Service Center to streamline onboarding and support.
- Led a comprehensive academic division reorganization to improve financial efficiency and academic effectiveness.
- Strengthened tutoring and mentoring systems using asset-based educational approaches.
- Led successful reaccreditation of multiple programs, including Automotive Technology, Paramedic, Cybersecurity, Business, Paralegal, Physical Therapy Assistant, and Surgical Technology.
- Expanded credit-bearing program offerings at the Westhampton Beach Air Guard facility.
- Strengthened community partnerships through regular engagement with town leaders, chambers of commerce, and regional workforce organizations.
- Led the system-wide Safe Start Task Force during COVID-19, ensuring continuity of instruction and services.
- Developed micro-credential pathways and approved numerous short-term workforce programs in culinary arts, STEM, construction, and health sciences.
- Partnered with Stony Brook University and the Aspen Institute’s American Talent Initiative to expand transfer opportunities.

SUNY Suffolk County Community College Vice President for Academic Affairs (Systemwide)

2023 – Present

Provide leadership for academic programs, accreditation, faculty development, teaching and learning, workforce development, School of Nursing, continuing education, libraries, and school district partnerships across the SUNY Suffolk system.

Selected Achievements

- Helped secure a \$5M NYS HELP grant supporting allied health programs.
- Supported a major corporate gift for naming the new Technology Building.
- Contributed to successful administrative staff collective bargaining negotiations.
- Achieved 95%+ licensure pass rates in Nursing programs.
- Leading preparations for the Middle States decennial review (2027).

- Expanded mental health services and strengthened developmental education through multiple measures.
 - Redesigned the Honors Program and strengthened First Year Seminar reforms.
 - Co-developed an academic business plan model to support long-term sustainability.
 - Reorganized Academic Affairs staffing to improve accountability and service.
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Naugatuck Valley Community College – Waterbury, CT

Dean of Academic Affairs / Chief Academic Officer

2014 – 2018

Led academic programs across two campuses, overseeing STEM, Liberal Arts, Business, Allied Health, and Fine Arts divisions. Supervised academic support services, advising, libraries, educational technology, early college partnerships, and the Honors Institute.

Selected Achievements

- Developed a five-year Academic Master Plan.
 - Co-led NEASC accreditation Self-Study and authored the decennial report.
 - Expanded early college and GEAR UP partnerships.
 - Co-developed a Cybersecurity A.S. degree aligned with workforce needs.
 - Secured major gifts for allied health programs through Foundation partnerships.
 - Achieved 95%+ licensure pass rates in Nursing and Respiratory Care.
 - Strengthened transfer pathways through the Connecticut Transfer Articulation Program.
 - Improved retention through enhanced onboarding and advising systems.
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Albertus Magnus College – New Haven, CT

Dean, Division of Graduate and Evening Undergraduate Programs

2009 – 2013

Led academic programs, faculty, advising, recruitment, and assessment for graduate and adult undergraduate programs.

Selected Achievements

- Launched new online programs including M.S. in Management & Organizational Leadership, M.S. in Education, and online B.S. and M.B.A. programs.
 - Consolidated two academic divisions, generating \$2M in savings.
 - Expanded community college partnerships and on-site degree delivery.
 - Established a walk-in Academic Advising Center.
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Springfield College – Springfield, MA

Executive Director of Academic Affairs

1998 – 2008

Led academic advising, registrar services, first-year programs, academic scheduling, and tutoring across main and satellite campuses across the country.

Selected Achievements

- Authored the College's strategic plan for academic advising.
 - Strengthened academic mentoring for student athletes.
 - Developed articulation agreement protocols and expanded dual admission pathways.
 - Co-designed the MBA 4+1 program.
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Saint Joseph University – West Hartford, CT

Registrar

1989 – 1998

Selected Achievements

- Chaired the Enrollment Management Committee and authored the Retention and Recruitment Master Plan.
 - Designed and launched an Academic Advising Center for traditional and adult learners.
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Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) – Rochester, NY

Director of Academic Advising

1984 – 1989

Selected Achievements

- Developed faculty advising training across nine colleges.
 - Introduced degree checklists and improved transfer credit evaluation systems.
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TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- University of Hartford – Adjunct Professor, Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership
 - New York University – Guest Lecturer, *The American Community College*
 - Albertus Magnus College – Adjunct Professor, First Year Seminar
 - Springfield College – Adjunct Professor, Business, First Year Seminar, Higher Education Law
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SELECT COMMITTEES & APPOINTMENTS

Includes SUNY System Crisis Response Team, SUNY Chief Academic Officers Sustainability Task Force, Middle States Accreditation Self-Study, Diversity Council, Suffolk County Marine Industry Revitalization Council, CSCU Academic Advising Council, NEASC Self-Study Committee, and numerous strategic planning and enrollment committees across institutions and regions.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- American Association of Community Colleges
 - National Academic Advising Association
 - Consortium for the Advancement of Adult Higher Education (Past President & Board Member)
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RECOGNITIONS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Appointed to Port Jefferson Economic Development Commission and Finance Committee
 - *Who's Who in Education*, Long Island Business News
 - Board Member, Literacy Volunteers of Greater New Haven
 - United Way Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program
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SELECT PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

Includes editorials, academic articles, keynote addresses, and national conference presentations on community college leadership, curriculum development, advising, and student success.