

# CURRICULUM VITAE

**Robert M. Pignatello**



## **LEADERSHIP SUMMARY**

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For the past 26 years, I have provided effective and innovative leadership in my capacity as a senior executive in higher education. Applying my financial and resource management expertise and strong interpersonal and communication skills to all aspects of my work, I have prioritized institutional change efforts designed to advance academic vision and student success; enhanced an array of teaching and learning environments; built or strengthened stakeholder relationships; fostered professional communities of shared governance; implemented strategic planning initiatives; and advocated for evidence-based decision making among faculty and staff. In addition, my extensive experience as a local elected official and government-relations representative has informed my sense of civic purpose and democratic engagement, which I continually draw upon as a thought leader within higher education.

While president of Lock Haven University, I had the rewarding opportunity to apply and build upon my leadership experience through efforts to: accentuate and streamline the university's profile, and highlight its vital role and impact in the region; improve cross-campus communication and implement trust-building initiatives; establish strong campus-community partnerships around economic development; strengthen relationships among employee bargaining units, alumni, students, faculty, and community groups; improve access and increase enrollment for students through strategic recruitment, retention, and talent management; increase student engagement and inclusion; enhance system-level collaboration around shared programs and services, and strategic planning; increase the involvement of trustees and board members in brand development and other university-wide initiatives.

As an experienced crisis management leader, I mobilized staff and community to combat the COVID-19 pandemic by protecting health and safety and maintaining institutional viability.

With smaller institutions now merging in the Pennsylvania State System, I have taken on the new role of Senior Advisor to the Chancellor on Integration Strategy focusing on creating a new capacity for work force/career oriented short term credentials, both credit and non – credit, to meet the needs of employers and citizens in the region.

## EDUCATION

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- 2019 Ed.D., Higher Education Leadership and Management  
Saint Peter's University, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey
- 1994 Master of Public Administration  
Rutgers University Graduate School, Newark, New Jersey
- 1983 B.A., Political Science and Public Administration  
Montclair State University, Montclair, New Jersey

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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**February 5, 2021- Senior Advisor to the Chancellor of the Pennsylvania System of Higher Education for Integration Strategy**

Lead role to create a new capacity for the delivery of career and work force oriented credit and non-credit credentials as part of PASSHE's University integration plan

**July 1, 2018 – President**  
**February, 2021** Lock Haven University, Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education

Direct reports included: Provost and VP for Academic Affairs, VP for Finance and Administration, VP for Enrollment and Student Affairs, VP for University Advancement. Dotted-line direct oversight of Human Resources and Athletics.

Notable accomplishments include:

*Enrollment Management*

- Upon taking office immediately focused on longstanding enrollment decline and improving recruitment and retention efforts
- Made necessary personnel changes in enrollment management to provide new leadership and created marketing office.
- Retained Ruffalo Noel Levitz to create a strategic marketing enrollment plan and initiated steeper tuition discounting to improve access and grow enrollment through both needs-based and merit-based aid
- Invested in and deployed new customer relations management tool to improve communications with prospective students

- Made earlier financial aid awards and forgave modest account balances to retain students
- Launched and began fundraising for new student retention fund
- In Fall 2020 stopped enrollment plunge, increased first time freshmen, transfers, and graduate enrollment
- Raised retention rate by 8% in two years

### *Campus Climate, Culture, and Shared Governance*

- Improved shared governance by establishing the University Leadership Council that established broader consultation with faculty and students
- Established regular meetings with Union Leadership
- Established a task force on inclusion, civility, freedom of expression and diversity to improve campus climate and better operationalized and practice institutional values.
- Established University's first Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion reporting to the President
- Developed and deepened relationships with employee bargaining units, alumni, students, faculty and community groups
- Improved campus culture which included taking more pride in the University's accomplishments, its vital role in the region, and impact by inspiring optimism and willingness to try new approaches through improving communications, consultation, transparency and building greater trust
- Initiated review of faculty promotion process in cooperation with faculty promotions committee and other faculty leaders to reconcile outcome expectations
- Conducted employee shadow day program to better understand the work employees do and how it contributes to the institution

- Established employee recognition program to include professional and personal development retreat and selection of an employee of the year
- Worked with Council of Trustees to engage them more in the consultation process by establishing a workshop component for trustees meetings where issues and topics receive more and deeper discussion

### *Student Engagement and Success*

Developing Student Success Center to consolidate service and better coordinate services

- Worked with student affairs and student groups to establish a food pantry to address food insecurity
- Working with Athletic Department to create a better bridge between student athletic recruitment and admissions office, greater school spirit, engage alumni and sell sponsorships for scholarship support. Athletic teams are invited to the president's residence at the end of season to celebrate their success
- Provided additional support to the counseling center to address case load and wait time and created a working group to study how we can better address student well-being and emotional issues that also affect retention and academic progress
- Expanded use of predictive analytics to identify vulnerable students who are struggling
- Built upon an important aspect of the University mission which is service to the community by working with community groups and initiating a service day program where students faculty and staff work on service projects

- Converted to virtual textbook store to reduce cost of textbooks for students
- Partnered with local transportation company to expand shuttle services around the campus

### *Advancement*

- Created an Office of Advancement to integrate communications, marketing, fundraising, alumni, and community relations under a new vice president
- Established new Marketing office
- Improved relationships with all local, state, and federal officials
- Initiated new branding initiative that focuses on market profile, messaging values and image. Developed new tagline “soar higher”
- Organized full-day retreat for trustees, alumni board, foundation board, student Association board to create better understanding of the integrated role they play and solicit input on brand development and our fundraising capacity toward the launch of a major campaign.
- Dramatically upgraded media relations efforts and increased University profile and print media through new marketing campaign on billboards, social media, television and radio, website
- Launched 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary effort including dedication of outdoor commemorative eagle statue
- Created a spotlight on success series to highlight the success of our students in the classroom, when they graduate and the research and work of our faculty

- Established community health fair to promote wellness, prevention and showcase our health care programs
- Established faculty lecture series to bring faculty expertise into the community
- Expanded community and cultural offerings by establishing a new art gallery and hosting cultural events
- Partnered with local health care provider to launch expanded nursing program at main campus and solicited and received \$250,000 earmarked from the state budget to finance the required simulation lab for the program
- Worked to regionalize the University Small Business Development Office in cooperation with Penn State reducing cost share of the University funds while maintaining services to local businesses
- Established better relationships with local school district including dual enrollment, promotion of STEM programs, teacher education and hosted the first ever joint homecoming parade between the University and school district on Main Street
- Initiated discussion with local representatives to spur economic development that would both support new enrollment growth and programs that could attract local tourism.

### *Planning & Budget*

- Undertook new planning effort to align local strategic planning with system goals and annual financial plans
- Working with middle state steering committee to produce self-study for 2021 re-accreditation
- Using key indicators such as expenditures per FTE, student to faculty ratios, program

viability, and others to help develop financial plans and make strategic investments in growth and strategic objectives

- Working with system office and other universities on creating savings and improving student affordability and access through collaboration, sharing, and integration in both academic and administrative areas

### *Academic Affairs*

- Directed development of new programs including a cooperative online MBA, social media and entrepreneurship minors and healthcare related programs.
- Degree awards in STEM and Allied Health areas exceeded performance metrics and degree programs in these areas continue to be developed
- Hosted discussions with employers, local economic partnership with businesses to evaluate how the University can close the skills gap to provide programs for adult learners and by offering customize programs at employer locations
- Working with faculty leadership on revision of policies for promotions and sabbaticals
- Organized Middle States Self Study effort in preparation for re-accreditation
- Engaged Deans as part of the leadership team

February 2016 –  
May 2018

### **Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration, and Chief Operating Officer**

Hunter College (City University of New York)

Oversaw the following offices/departments: Financial Planning & Budget, Business Services, Human Resources, Technology Services, Facilities, Public Safety, Space Planning & Capital Projects, Theater, and Continuing Education, as well as non-degree enrollment.

- 2006 – 2016      **Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration, and Chief Operating Officer**  
John Jay College of Criminal Justice (City University of New York)
- Oversaw the following offices/departments: Financial & Business Services, Facilities, Capital Planning, Information Technology, Public Safety, Human Resources, and Theater Services. The position comprised a broad portfolio of leadership duties that had institution-wide impact and cut across multiple facets of campus operations.
- 2014              **Adjunct Instructor, Policy Analysis, Master of Public Administration Program**  
John Jay College of Criminal Justice
- 2000 – 2006      **Vice President for Administration and Finance**  
John Jay College of Criminal Justice
- 1998 – 2000      **Vice President for Administrative Affairs**  
John Jay College of Criminal Justice
- 1994 – 1998      **Director of Government, Alumni Affairs, and Communications, and Senior Advisor to the President**  
John Jay College of Criminal Justice

## **SELECTED PAST ACCOMPLISHMENTS (CUNY)**

### ***Institutional Leadership***

Served as an effective steward of resources, advancing campus goals through shared governance. Maintained and enhanced cooperative and productive relationships with faculty leaders, collaborating on task forces, committees, and governing boards to implement academic vision and strategic plans:

- Founder, Public Safety Advisory Committee (John Jay College)
- Member, College Council (John Jay College and Hunter College)
- Co-Chair, Finance and Planning Governance Committee (John Jay College)
- Member, Student Association Board of Directors (John Jay College)
- Member, College Senate (John Jay College)
- Chair, Auxiliary Enterprise Corporation (John Jay College)
- Co-Chair, Middle States Resource Allocation (John Jay College)

Provided critical strategic oversight and steered financial support in the transformation of John Jay to a senior college focused on baccalaureate degrees, graduate studies, and research while improving overall student engagement and outcomes after the phasing out of the



college's associate degree program. Collaborated on the development of a joint-degree program with CUNY community colleges.

At the president's request, led executive-level analyses and problem-solving efforts across multiple divisions (e.g., enrollment management, marketing, student affairs, and academic affairs), resulting in broad institutional impact:

- Chaired task force on the role of academic department chairs that made recommendations to support and clarify the responsibilities of chairpersons.
- Worked with Student Affairs to create a more student-centered campus environment and improve student services.
- Provided planning and financial support to create a student wellness center and improve dorm conditions.
- Improved services for populations of students with special needs.

Oversaw Human Resources and worked successfully with bargaining units on labor-management issues involving contract provisions, health and safety, policies, and procedures:

- Participated with president in regular labor-management meetings with union leadership to address ongoing issues and maintain good relations.
- Fostered and advanced the value of diversity; increased college contracts with women- and minority-owned businesses.

Improved internal communications and transparency regarding decisions impacting the campus community:

- Created newsletters and oversaw distribution of critical announcements.
- Conducted briefings to various faculty, staff, and student groups.

Worked effectively with system administrators to comply with CUNY policies and performance targets, and advocated for the institution. Developed proposals for Board consideration involving differential tuition or special fees:

- Testified at CUNY Board of Trustees meetings on policy proposals.
- Participated in CUNY's "system review," with a focus on the relationship of the Central Office to the individual campuses.
- Served on committee created by the CUNY Board of Trustees that developed recommendations for campuses to reduce administrative costs.
- Served on University Technology Steering Committee.
- Member of CUNY Administrative Council.

### ***Effective Resource Management***

Reorganized financial planning process and established an effective partnership with Academic Affairs to collaborate on resource allocation and support the academic mission.

Increased process transparency, consultation and collaboration, guided investment to support the core goals and mission of the institution and aligned resource allocation with planning:

- Created process around effective faculty consultation.
- Aligned budget decisions with strategic objectives.
- Posted financial information online and created an intranet for the Central Office.
- Distributed and shared financial reports with governance groups.

Oversaw development of balanced budgets and during the economic downturn created cost-reduction plans, which strategically preserved academic and student services while maintaining high levels of service and achieving master plan goals.

Creatively increased alternative revenues and brought an “all funds” approach to budget planning to better mobilize resources to support goals and priorities:

- Worked to steer revenue from other sources (i.e., Foundation, Auxiliary Enterprise Corporation, Student Association, Research Foundation) to create an all-funds budget.

Created successful investment plan proposals for the CUNY Central Office, leading to increased funding for full-time faculty, student and academic support services, and operational needs.

- Worked with Academic Affairs to develop narratives for justification; negotiated with central office officials and consulted with faculty.

Supported and guided major faculty hiring initiative that improved full-time faculty-to-student ratio and helped make investments in academic advisement and other key support services to improve student success:

- Reduced administrative costs.
- Increased new revenues.
- Made faculty hiring a priority in college financial plans.

### ***Strategic Planning***

Helped to develop effective master plan implementation process that included annual targets, strategies, and accountability for outcomes.

Integrated office, unit, and management goals with performance evaluation process.

Served on the Master Plan Advisory Committee, which developed the college’s strategic plan.

Conducted annual survey to assess faculty and staff satisfaction with services provided by the Office of Finance and Administration and used survey results to initiate corrective action and establish staff performance goals and evaluations.

Introduced key performance indicators to measure faculty and staff needs and demands, and to determine actions to improve services and meet strategic goals.

Developed enrollment and recruitment strategies with executive team.

Served as co-chair of the working group on resource allocation for the Middle States Accreditation, and participated in the development of self-study, site visit, and follow-up reports

### ***Leadership of Major Projects and Initiatives***

Led the planning and logistics around of a major building expansion—620,000 square feet, \$700 million—completed in 2011:

- Served as an integral part of a successful legislative lobbying effort to acquire the building site and secure funding for the project.

Improved condition of and expanded campus facilities:

- Opened three satellite campuses.
- Renovated major academic building.
- Professionalized facilities staff.
- Improved maintenance.
- Secured and allocated space to meet growing and evolving faculty and student needs.
- Secured funding and initiated major capital improvements to upgrade the pool and library, and expand and improve faculty research and office space.
- Initiated and expanded student dorm program.
- Planned and constructed One Stop Student Service Center.

Moved the human resources function from a tactical activity to a more strategic role:

- Launched an extensive employee engagement program, including annual surveys.
- Launched employee recognition program.
- Focused on improving engagement by increasing professional development and career advancement opportunities—which was recognized as a CUNY model.
- Participated in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*'s “Great Colleges to Work For” program.
- Expanded professional development programs for all college employees in order to improve customer service.

### ***Strategic Use of Technology***

Increased student satisfaction with technology, as reflected in student surveys, and helped the college become one of the top-rated campuses in the CUNY system for student technology services.

Convened stakeholders to discuss and plan the use and strategic direction of campus technology.

Created and chaired the College Technology Advisory Committee.

Guided development of an IT strategic plan to improve teaching and learning, and to support user needs, goals, and objectives.

Led a task force to develop an action plan for better use of academic technology to support teaching and learning.

Supported the establishment and maintenance of state-of-the-art computer labs and smart classrooms.

As the 12-year chair of the Student Technology Fee Planning Council, created and executed plans to invest annually \$3 million in student fees to increase student access to technology.

Created reliable and ubiquitous Wi-Fi and increased network efficiency.

Improved helpdesk support by analyzing response times.

Automated various service processes (e.g., created electronic forms for student transactions).

Provided critical support for the launch of John Jay Online, the college's distance learning initiative:

- Secured City grants, and used various revenue sources to create and support new online office.

Led the creation of a working group to expand the college's use of social media to increase student engagement and connect with stakeholders.

Directed the Department of Information Technology in the implementation of the University ERP.

Created electronic policy and procedure compendium to improve access to information and institutional effectiveness.

### ***Innovation and Creativity***

As Vice Chair of the Auxiliary Services Corporation, increased outside revenue through innovative business enterprises to support campus activities:

- Raised \$1.3 million in two years from the film and TV industries by creating a program for renting college space to production companies for movies and television programs.

Led establishment of CUNY's first virtual campus bookstore, allowing the college to repurpose valuable space and reduce the cost of textbooks for students:

- Researched and developed justification and cost benefit.

- Helped develop RFP language and worked with vendors, faculty, staff, and the central office on contract implementation and transition from previous contract, and on implementation of new faculty book adoption tool, which was integrated with the student registration system.

### ***Efficiency Improvements***

Implemented innovative and award-winning service delivery and procedures, including cross-college shared printing services to reduce costs, shared payroll service, and sharing of facilities equipment.

Instituted measures to improve work-order processing, space management procedures, and financial reporting:

- Frequently asked to present these initiatives at CUNY conferences.

### ***Community Development and External Relations***

As a trustee member of the college's Foundation Board and treasurer, worked with Development Office on the annual gala, donor cultivation, and capital campaign case statement:

- Participated in retreats; worked with consultants on case statements.
- Developed and cultivated relationships with fellow board members.
- Supported staffing and financial needs of the Development Office.

Actively engaged with local officials to encourage them to support the college:

- Chaired meeting of the Manhattan delegation of elected officials with CUNY Manhattan college presidents to discuss upcoming legislative agendas and campus needs.

Secured funds from the City to: undertake critical technology infrastructure improvements; upgrade classroom technology; support distance learning; undertake improvements in the library; upgrade college TV studio; launch a community concert series.

- Developed funding proposals.
- Discussed and lobbied City Council and collaborated with central system administrators.

Created public art gallery and expanded community theater programming, which increased outreach to city residents:

- Included art gallery in new building plan.
- Consulted with the Art Department to coordinate and fund exhibit schedule.
- Directed Theater Department to create and produce community programming.
- Cultivated relationships with local jazz nonprofit to raise funds for a successful outdoor summer concert series.

Enhanced college integration with the community by allowing local groups to use campus space for their events.

Active with the Lincoln Square Business Improvement District.

Established a recruitment and training program in partnership with J.P. Morgan Chase that helped the company fill security positions with qualified and well-trained personnel, many of whom were John Jay alumni:

- Collaborated with J.P. Morgan representatives to execute the agreement.

Spearheaded establishment of a 9/11 memorial to those connected with the college who lost their lives.

- Worked with Port Authority of NY/NJ to select a beam from the World Trade Center, and worked with architects around the design and placement of the monument on campus.

When the U.S. Secret Service's building collapsed on 9/11, provided space and support in the aftermath of the attack to help quickly reestablish their operations.

Coordinated efforts between the college and the *New York Times* to raise funds for the Port Authority Police victims' families.

Raised funds to start new freshman recruitment scholarship program.

Raised relief funds through a college effort after an earthquake struck southern Italy; funds were used to help restore a local university library:

- Served as the point person for the University of L'Aquila and the Italian Consulate.

### ***Student Engagement***

Used student satisfaction surveys to implement corrective action and improve student satisfaction with services.

Worked with Student Affairs to involve students through consultation in major, student-related decision making.

As member of the Student Association Board, worked with student leaders on areas of interest such as how to invest their funds in both curricular and co-curricular activities:

- Created game room and new "Spirit Shop."
- Worked with Student Government on event planning and improving internal communications.

Oversaw the creation of a virtual campus tour for recruitment and community engagement.

Improved food and dining services by expanding menus to include healthy and ethnic choices; expanding vending and adding new cafes and kiosks; creating a new faculty dining room.

Upgraded student email system to increase storage capacity.

Spearheaded creation of an online central portal for student information

Created and maintained student employment opportunities at the college (in which students served as security guards).

Member of Town Meeting Planning Committee, which organized public forums for the college community to discuss concerns and problems, and address them with top-level administrative representatives:

- Represented the president in his absence at the meetings as the lead college official and chaired the forum.
- Developed live video-stream capacity so others who could not attend were able to ask questions and participate online.

### ***Crisis Management and Public Safety Leadership***

Led College through several major crises including 9/11, a blackout, bedbug infestation, and two hurricanes:

- Under my direction, Public Safety managed a hurricane shelter for 300 evacuees for two weeks during Hurricane Sandy as part of the City's coastal flood emergency plan.
- Worked with agencies at local, state, and federal level to coordinate.
- Provided assistance to other CUNY colleges through mutual system.

Developed and implemented active-shooter protocols for emergency preparedness.

Upgraded Public Safety systems and procedures, including emergency alerts, access control, video cameras, and an ID system.

Introduced an award-winning mobile device app (the first of its kind in the CUNY system) for improving awareness of and access to emergency response guidelines.

Secured funding from central administration to use Peace Officers as the primary public safety staff.

Developed mutual assistance agreements with neighborhood organizations in case of emergency.

Oversaw security arrangements and logistics for major dignitary visits.

Developed business continuity plan in the case of an emergency that disrupted business operations.

Created the Campus Safety Advisory Committee to involve stakeholders in policy considerations and procedures for public safety.

## **OTHER COLLEGE ROLES**

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Chair, Student Technology Fee Committee

Chair, Financial Planning Committee

Vice Chair, Auxiliary Services Corporation

Chair, Auxiliary Services Corporation

Member, College Foundation

Member, College Council/Senate

Member, Student Association Board of Directors

## **RECOGNITION**

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Received incentive award for achieving key University Master Plan targets and objectives.

Recipient of CUNY award for creating online student government election process.

“Man of the Year,” awarded by the Italian Language InterCultural Alliance for contributions to higher education in New York City (2013)

Selected one of Pennsylvania Business Central’s Top 100 People for 2021

## **OTHER EXPERIENCE**

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1984 – 1988

**Legislative Assistant and Constituent Services Coordinator**  
New Jersey State Senate, Trenton, New Jersey

Worked for New Jersey Senate President to help prepare and advance legislative agendas, review legislation, draft bills and amendments, publicize initiatives, work with state agencies to resolve constituent problems and conduct community relations.



- 1989 – 1991      **Mayor**, Township of Verona, New Jersey
- 1987 – 1989      **Deputy Mayor**, Township of Verona, New Jersey
- 1985 – 1991      **Councilman**, Township of Verona, New Jersey
- Member, Board of Health**, Township of Verona, New Jersey
- Chairman Buildings and Grounds Committee**, Township of Verona,  
New Jersey
- Vice Chairman, Public Safety Committee**, Township of Verona, New  
Jersey
- Member, Planning Board**, Township of Verona, New Jersey
- Elected twice to the Township of Verona’s governing body. Served as  
youngest Mayor in the Township’s history. Balanced budgets, lowered  
municipal tax rate, improved public infrastructure and services, launched  
mandatory recycling, negotiated salary contracts, reduced service costs,  
revised master plan and local ordinances, worked with Board of  
Education, collaborated with other local, state and federal officials,  
agencies on economic development, to secure grants and other issues.  
Served on various boards cited above.
- 1987 – Present      **Licensed New Jersey Real Estate Associate**

**CURRENT CIVIC MEMBERSHIPS**

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- Member, Kiwanis International**
- Member, Rotary International,**
- Member, Order Sons of Italy in America,**
- Member, Fraternal Order of Eagles,**
- (All Lock Haven,PA)