

JASON O. PARKER

May 15, 2023

Dear Dr. Semmer:

This letter is in response to the posting for the Associate Vice President for Student Development position at Monroe Community College. My work experience includes student support services and diversity and equity program development at two- and four-year institutions, both public and private. With fourteen years of student-focused experience in higher education, I have developed a set of skills that I believe make me an ideal candidate for this position.

In my current role as Director of Learning Support Systems at Monroe Community College (MCC), I have collaborated with all academic departments to significantly expand and enhance the effectiveness of student support services. Shortly after taking this position, I worked with various campus constituents to review the college's learning assistance programs through the completion of a rigorous SWOT analysis. Using this information, I led a campus-wide team in developing a strategic plan with a strong emphasis on evaluating services and improving student outcomes. My responsibilities in implementing this comprehensive plan include managing department budgets and applying for and administering federal and state grants. Under my direction, our department secured a five-year \$1.5 million TRIO Student Support Services grant, for which I am responsible for all reporting and assurance of compliance with applicable federal regulations and requirements. In accordance with our strategic plan, I have also consolidated campus learning centers, implemented MCC's course-based learning assistance and academic coaching programs, and revamped TRIO Student Support Services—all of which have positively impacted student retention.

This work has been particularly critical and challenging for the last several years during the COVID-19 pandemic. In March of 2020, I was charged with converting college-wide learning supports and services to online platforms in just under a week's time. This process included developing and implementing entirely new procedures for hiring and training employees in use of the online system. Aware of the many challenges that Covid posed to our students, I also coordinated measures that provided students with internet access and hardware, and assistance with payment of rent, utilities, and food costs. My efforts ultimately led to an appointment to MCC's Covid-19 Task Force.

None of these accomplishments would have been possible without the dedication of the many members of my team, ranging from administrative and professional staff to the tutors who work directly with the students on their coursework. In all of my positions in higher education, I have been committed to the professional growth and success of those with whom I work. Shortly after arriving at MCC, I instituted performance programs and funding for professional development opportunities including professional coaching, webinars, guest speakers, attendance at annual conferences, and an annual department retreat. This support has resulted in members of my team taking ownership in the department's mission, setting personal professional goals, and an overall improvement in morale.

Shortly after starting at Monroe Community College, I was selected to participate in the New York State Student Success Coaching Academy. After taking part in this training, I was assigned to serve as an Institutional Coach for two community colleges through the SUNY Guided Pathways and Racial Equity for Adult Credentials in Higher Ed (REACH) Initiatives. In this role, I use evidence-based coaching techniques and change-management theory to support campus leaders as they work to implement reform via the Guided Pathways framework. As a professional coach, I have worked with college presidents and other executive-level administrators to implement transformative change across institutions. This exciting opportunity has introduced me to educational leaders throughout the state of New York, has strongly reinforced my belief in the importance of campus collaboration, and has informed the ways in which I approach leadership responsibilities in my job as Director of Learning Support Systems.

In my previous position as Diversity Program Coordinator at SUNY Buffalo State College, I greatly expanded campus-wide diversity programming, and worked to maintain compliance with federal, state, and university laws and policies. Charged with the development and implementation of Buffalo State's Title IX/Sexual Assault Awareness campaign, I worked closely with Residence Life and Campus Athletics to ensure that all residence staff and athletes completed the annual Title IX training required by the state of New York. My work directly contributed to Buffalo State receiving the INSIGHT Into Diversity Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award each year that I served in my role.

As Diversity Program Coordinator, I consistently collaborated with academic units, administrative departments, student clubs and organizations, as well as organizations within the Buffalo community. Through these partnerships, I was able to serve as a resource to my colleagues and helped new staff members and students acclimate to campus. The workshops and course materials that I created helped bring together the members of the Buffalo State community, fostering an inclusive environment that provided support to a richly varied population of students and staff.

Throughout my years of work in higher education, my main objective has always been to assist students in establishing and achieving their academic goals. My positions have given me opportunities to teach, mentor, tutor, advocate, and to be a part of some pivotal moments in the lives of my students. In my experience, students are most likely to succeed if they are able to build reliable and genuine relationships with faculty and staff members. I have demonstrated a unique ability to connect with students as they face a myriad of challenges that impact their education. I also have a proven record of being able to lead a range of initiatives responding to students' needs.

The Associate Vice President for Student Development job description underscores my dedication to highly personalized service, teamwork, and community involvement. My varied professional experience in higher education and my capacity to collaborate with faculty, staff, students, and the community would make me an ideal fit for your student-, team-, and community-centered approach.

Please let me know if you need any additional information. I look forward to discussing how my experience, energy, and passion can help me further advance the goals of Monroe Community College.

Sincerely,

Jason O. Parker