

Michael Jacobs, D.Arts

April 14, 2024

Dear Search Committee:

Please accept this letter as my application to the position of Provost and Vice President, Academic & Student Affairs (ASA), at Monroe Community College (MCC). I am confident that I possess the knowledge, experience, and leadership qualities to succeed in this role.

I currently serve as MCC's Acting Provost and Vice President, ASA, and though I have only been in this position for a few weeks, I am certain that my work and institutional knowledge—marked by academic expertise and extensive experience in the realm of student affairs—have contributed to a seamless transition in ASA leadership. In my (nearly) seven years as Dean, Liberal Arts & Business (formerly Humanities & Social Sciences), at MCC, I engaged in impactful, cross-disciplinary, and cross-divisional work in the service of our students. This experience afforded me the opportunity to lead a range of initiatives at the intersection of academic and student affairs, many of which are listed on my CV. I am therefore keenly interested in serving as MCC's Provost and VP, ASA, for it is an opportunity to further the College's mission and values, particularly in their emphasis on equity, academic excellence, diversity, and lifelong learning. As my CV reveals, my time at MCC has been spent interpreting and implementing the institution's vision and strategic plan both within and beyond the boundaries of my vast division—always in adherence to the policies and processes set forth by SUNY, the Board of Trustees, the College's collective bargaining agreements, and shared governance. This work includes achievements ranging from the College's adoption of a multiple-measures placement model for English and co-development of our Diversity in Teaching and Learning initiative, to the founding of MCC's Institute for the Humanities and development of our new Liberal Arts programs. It should be noted that the latter required a deep understanding of curriculum, particularly the revised SUNY General Education framework, as well as accreditation standards, state education department policies and processes, and transfer pathways. Thankfully, in my experiences developing courses and degree programs, serving on accreditation and strategic planning committees, and working directly with SUNY administrators, I have gained the requisite skills and knowledge to succeed as the College's chief academic officer.

Of course, this work and the transformations it has engendered could not have been accomplished alone. With each project, I convened and led (or co-led) a cross-functional team of talented faculty, professional staff, and administrators, from conceptualization through implementation. Such an approach is indicative of my collaborative leadership style, which aims to foster a sense of agency, appreciation, and value among faculty, staff, and administrators—as well as equip me with varied points of view to understand and negotiate the many challenges and opportunities I encounter. All the student success initiatives listed on my CV reflect this kind of collaborative and decisive leadership. Often times, the projects and programs I have overseen were assigned to me by the Provost or President, and it was therefore my responsibility to interpret their directives and translate them into action. In other instances, I proactively developed initiatives based on my own observations and the feedback I received from various stakeholders, i.e., students, faculty, staff, administrators, and community partners. Having worked closely with executive leadership for most of my career in higher education, I know that both approaches to institutional enhancement are central to the work of a Provost/VP. Moreover, this knowledge has served me well as a core team member of MCC's Unlocking Opportunity initiative, which strives to increase students' post-completion success through, among other endeavors, the assessment and development of high-quality transfer and workforce degree programs.

Establishing collegial and productive working relationships with a leadership team is also fundamental to the function of my current position. Throughout my career, I have labored in earnest to understand more deeply all facets of college operations. Consequently, I have routinely been appointed to college-wide committees, often as chair or co-chair. Over the last few years, these appointments positioned me to lead institutional, data-informed efforts to improve student outcomes in gateway English and math courses, enhance our math and English placement models and processes, assess the College's integrated advising model, and more. Given the scope of this work—and my administrative oversight (which has grown exponentially since I

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joined MCC in 2017)—I have played an integral role in various facets of campus operations, student services, community outreach, scheduling, and budget management. Such engagement is essential to my work as it affords me, among other things, the ability to understand both the academic and non-cognitive barriers faced by so many of our students, and therefore develop holistic supports to improve their chances for success. It also bolsters my capacity for championing essential scholarship and professional development for faculty and staff through sustainable resource management. I am confident that the experience and knowledge cultivated from my cross-divisional undertakings and accomplishments, along with my collaborative approach to college leadership, will serve the President’s Executive Leadership Team well.

My experience with initiatives dedicated to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)—and expertise in teaching to diverse student populations—would continue to be assets to MCC were I appointed to this position. As a faculty member who taught for fifteen years at an access-oriented institution of higher education in New York City, I worked closely with a broad, multicultural range of students and consistently strived to understand and effectively address the unique challenges and needs they faced in and out of the classroom. My success in engaging so many disparate learning styles, literacies, and identities helped me become an adept administrator. To this end, it played a prominent role in the successful oversight of my division’s transition to virtual learning during the early days of the pandemic. Partnering with chairs, faculty, and staff to convert the format of nearly six hundred class sections required a firm appreciation of the inequities with which so many of our students contend, which range from limited access to technological resources to food and housing insecurity. In the years that followed, my team and I developed more equity-conscious and effective pedagogies in numerous modalities, all while maximizing the thoughtful implementation of learning technologies. Together, we acted to center DEI within the framework of our division’s priorities. Thus, all the aforementioned initiatives and accomplishments connect strongly to DEI principles. Moreover, in co-leading MCC’s participation in the American Association of Colleges and Universities’ (AAC&U) *Strengthening Guided Pathways and Career Success by Ensuring Students are Learning* grant project, I played a pivotal role in infusing equity into the institution’s curricular development and academic assessment processes. This also figured prominently in my work as a core team member for the AAC&U *Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation (TRHT) Campus Climate Assessment Toolkit* and *TRHT Campus Center* grants—both of which I co-authored.

The collaborative ethos that defines my approach to leadership transcends the borders of MCC’s campuses and reaches into the community. Over the years, I have consistently worked with external stakeholders, from transfer colleges and cultural institutions to nonprofit agencies, media outlets, and legislative offices—establishing key partnerships to strengthen the College’s capacity to support its students. From a regional standpoint, I am perhaps proudest of founding MCC’s Institute for the Humanities, an equity-minded, public humanities program that partners with Rochester-based cultural, educational, and civic institutions (as well as artists and scholars) to provide high-quality educational experiences for the greater community. In a national context, I have developed meaningful partnerships with academic and professional organizations, including the Modern Language Association, American Council of Learned Societies, AAC&U, and Community College Humanities Association.

Monroe Community College’s importance to its students, employees, transfer partners, employment sector, and service region is both undeniable and immeasurable. I am therefore eager to further its mission, help realize its vision, and embody its values as its next Provost and Vice President, Academic & Student Affairs.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Dr. Michael Jacobs
Acting Provost and Vice President, Academic and Student Affairs
Monroe Community College—SUNY

MICHAEL JACOBS, D.Arts

EDUCATION

Doctor of Arts (D.Arts) , English	St. John's University
M.A. Humanities , Documentary Film & English	State University of New York at Buffalo
B.A. Media Studies , Documentary Film	State University of New York at Buffalo

EXPERIENCE

MONROE COMMUNITY COLLEGE (SUNY) – Rochester, NY

Acting Provost and Vice President, Academic & Student Affairs **2024 – Present**

- Serve as Acting Chief Academic Officer and executive administrator for student services with oversight of all functions, areas, and personnel within the College's largest division, Academic & Student Affairs
- Work directly with President and College Officers as a member of the Executive Leadership Council
- Function as President's primary liaison to Faculty Senate
- Oversee and direct completion/implementation of various strategic initiatives, including the Academic & Student Affairs Master Plan, Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, and Aspen/CCRC Unlocking Opportunity project
- Directly engage with collective bargaining groups in labor management processes
- Direct reports include five associate vice presidents, three academic deans, two directors, a budget specialist, a business analyst, and two executive assistants

Dean, Liberal Arts & Business (formerly Humanities & Social Sciences)

2017 – 2024

Oversaw all academic and administrative operations for the School of Arts & Humanities, School of Social Sciences & Global Studies, and School of Business & Entrepreneurial Studies—which comprise six academic departments, twenty-one degree programs, two certificate programs, and approximately 200 faculty and staff members. Responsible for the academic schools' personnel, hiring, retention/tenure/promotion processes, curricula, budgets, course schedules, program and general education assessments, academic advising, and adherence to collective bargaining contracts and institutional policies. Represented the division in matters of strategic planning and accreditation. Worked collaboratively and cross-functionally across departments and divisions on initiatives central to the goals of Academic and Student Affairs. Oversaw Liberal Arts: General Studies, the highest-enrolled program at the College. Supervised the Liberal Arts Council and Institute for the Humanities. Direct reports included six department chairs, a Program Lead, and a Management Assistant.

Select Accomplishments and Activities

- Serve as Core Team Member for MCC's Aspen/CCRC Unlocking Opportunity initiative (continued)
- Co-Chaired Committee on Improving Outcomes in Gateway English and Math—and authored its proposal
- Led development of MCC's new liberal arts programs—and authored foundational proposal
- Founded (and directed) Monroe Community College's Institute for the Humanities
- Led development and implementation of Multiple Measure placement model for English
- Served as member of Strategic Enrollment Management Committee
- Brought Accelerated Learning Program (ALP)/English co-requisite model to scale, improving ENG-101 success rates
- Led successful proposal to offer Psychology A.S. for SUNY Online
- Oversaw significant expansion of Honors program enrollment
- Oversaw expansion of dual credit offerings and enrollment for division courses at regional high schools
- Developed the college's Program Advisory Board Guidelines
- Co-developed the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Teaching and Learning initiative
- Co-led AAC&U *Strengthening Guided Pathways and Career Success by Ensuring Students are Learning* grant project

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- Co-chaired Student Success Committee for Learning, Progress, Completions, and Transition—and authored Integrated Advising Model Assessment report
- Conceptualized and led reorganization of Global Education and International Services office, effecting greater programmatic stability
- Created Arts & Humanities Advisory board comprising faculty and external partners
- Developed HyFlex pilot and co-developed SUNY-wide virtual forum on HyFlex teaching and learning
- Facilitated and/or oversaw numerous program revisions and assessments
- Developed/oversaw numerous Institute for the Humanities events
- Led Milestone Courses Initiative
- Co-led General Education Assessment revision
- Served as SUNY Online Program Liaison for Psychology and Business Administration
- Successfully lobbied on Capitol Hill for increased funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities (2018 and 2019)
- Hired multiple tenure-track faculty members and two coordinators—and onboarded four new department chairs

BERKELEY COLLEGE – New York, NY

Chair, English, New York Campus

2009 – 2017

Supervised and led the New York English faculty (Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Westchester Campus locations) in all academic areas, from course conception and delivery to pedagogy, curriculum development, classroom management, and assessment. Managed faculty recruitment, evaluations, course scheduling, grade appeals/student complaints, professional development, and administrative compliance for more than 30 full-time and adjunct professors teaching 50 to 80 course sections each term. Served on various institutional committees, including those for Middle States reaccreditation and strategic planning. Founded and directed the Consortium for Critical Reading, Writing, and Thinking—a cross-institutional collaboration comprised of faculty from Berkeley College, Iona College, Central Connecticut State University, and Queensboro Community College.

Professor, English and Humanities

2003 – 2017

Developed and taught undergraduate courses in writing, literature, oral communication, media, and film in traditional, online, and hybrid modalities.

- Courses taught: Expository Writing, Advanced Writing (created course), Writing Through Literature, Multicultural Voices in American Literature, Fiction, World Literature, Humanities in the Media, The Art of Film, Public Speaking, Writing Through Literature for Honors, Writing in the Workplace (created course)
- Faculty Senate President, Westchester Campus 2005 – 2006
- Faculty Senate Vice President, NY Campus System 2006 – 2008

Adjunct Faculty, English and Humanities

2002 – 2003

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY – New York, NY

Adjunct Assistant Professor, Liberal Studies

2014-2016

Developed and taught Cultural Foundations I, a survey of ancient literary texts from various global regions; works included *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, Homer's *The Odyssey*, Aristotle's *Poetics*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, The Old Testament, Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, and Kalidasha's *The Recognition of Sakuntala*.

NEW YORK COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES – New York, NY

Speaker, Speakers in the Humanities Series

2011-2013

Delivered “The Language of Crisis: Documenting the Depression” at numerous schools, libraries, and community centers, including the FDR Presidential Library and Museum in Hyde Park, NY

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PROFESSIONAL SERVICE and AFFILIATION

THE JACK, JOSEPH AND MORTON MANDEL HUMANITIES CENTER

National Advisory Board Member 2023 – Present

MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION

Committee for Community Colleges (Chair) 2021 – Present

Summer Teaching Institute Steering Committee 2018

COMMUNITY COLLEGE HUMANITIES ASSOCIATION

Deputy Director, National Conferences 2019 – Present

Vice President, Deans Committee 2018 – 2023

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

Peer Reviewer, Humanities Connection Program 2022

AMERICAN COUNCIL OF LEARNED SOCIETIES

Design Workshop for the New Academy 2021

PUBLICATIONS

SCHOLARLY

“The Case Against Language: Agee, Dos Passos, and Modernist Amalgamation.” *Agee in Context: New Literary, Cultural, and Historical Essays*. Michael Lofaro, ed., U of Tennessee Press: 2022. Print.

Cronmiller, James, et al. "Writing Intensive High Impact Practice along with Transparency in Learning and Teaching Promote Critical Thinking in Writing Assignments in Two Community College Science Courses." *HAPS Educator* 26.1 (2022).

“Strength through Collaboration: Institutionalizing Equity Consciousness at Monroe Community College.” *Paths to Success: How Community Colleges are Strengthening Guided Pathways to Ensure Students Are Learning*. Kimberley Collins, co-author, AAC&U: 2021. Print.

“Unbeaten Paths.” *Humanities Review* 4.2 (2020). Print.

“From Cotton Pickin’ to Acid Droppin’: James Agee and the New Journalism.” *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men at 75: Anniversary Essays*. Michael Lofaro, ed., U of Tennessee Press: 2016. Print.

Confronting the (Un)Reality of Pranksterdom: Tom Wolfe and *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*.” *Literary Journalism Studies* 7.2 (2015). Print.

“A Place in the Classroom.” *American Lives, American Issues*. Robert Newman, ed., Prentice Hall: 2002. Print.

JOURNALISTIC

“Looking for Career Preparation? Try the Liberal Arts.” *Rochester Beacon*: April 5, 2019.

“My Resolution: A Suburbanite’s Love Letter to the City He’s Neglected.” *Resident*: Jan. 2010. Print.

“A Sporting Guy: Dennis Williams.” *Blue Dog Press*: Feb. 14-20, 2002. Print.

“A Sense of Ourselves: UB Professor Robert Newman.” *Blue Dog Press*: Feb. 7-13, 2002. Print.

“On Guard in Washington: Congressman John LaFalce.” *Blue Dog Press*: Jan. 31-Feb. 6, 2002. Print.

“Withering Heights: A Neighborhood on the Cusp” (Part 2). *Blue Dog Press*: Nov. 28-Dec. 5, 2001. Print.

“Withering Heights: A Neighborhood on the Cusp” (Part 1). *Blue Dog Press*: Nov. 21-27, 2001. Print.

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CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- “Public Humanities and the Community College Mission.” Modern Language Association Convention, Philadelphia, PA: January 6, 2024.
- “Humanities Leadership in America’s Community Colleges.” American Council of Learned Societies Leadership for a New Academy: Summer Institute, Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, NY: July 14, 2023.
- “Beyond the Crisis Narrative: Leading with the Humanities.” MLA Academic Program Services Leadership Institute: Humanities in the World, Humanities at Work: June 22, 2023.
- “Transforming Liberal Arts Education at Monroe Community College.” Innovations Conference, League for Innovation in the Community College, Tempe, AZ: March 11, 2023.
- “Leading Monroe Community College through General Education Revision.” AAC&U Conference on General Education, Pedagogy, and Assessment, Virtual: February 15, 2023.
- “Advancing the Humanities through Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration.” Modern Language Association Convention, San Francisco, CA: January, 2023.
- “Self-Placement into English Composition.” Modern Language Association Convention, San Francisco, CA: January, 2023.
- “DEI, Social Justice, and the Changing Landscape of General Education.” Community College Humanities Association National Conference, Cleveland, OH: October 14, 2022.
- “Opening Doors: Engaging the Humanities Professional Organization to align Scholarship and the Community College Mission.” Community College Humanities Association National Conference, Cleveland, OH: October 14, 2022.
- “The Case Against Language: Agee, Dos Passos, and Modernist Documentary.” Scholars’ Day, 2022, Monroe Community College, Rochester, NY: May 10, 2022.
- “Beyond ‘Soft’ Skills: MCC’s Institute for the Humanities.” American Association of Community Colleges Annual Convention, New York, NY: May 2, 2022.
- “The New Post-Pandemic Paradigm at Community Colleges.” Modern Language Association Convention, New York, NY: January 8, 2022.
- “Bridging the Divide: Creating Meaningful Scholarship at the Teaching-Intensive Institution.” Community Conversations, Community College Humanities Association: April 29, 2021.
- “Community College Teaching as Public Humanities Practice.” Modern Language Association Convention: January 9, 2021.
- “The Humanities Responds to COVID-19.” Modern Language Association Convention: January 7, 2021.
- “Community Engagement and the Teaching-Intensive Institution.” Public Hub, University of British Columbia: December 2, 2020.
- “The Humanities in Community Colleges: Disservice to Students?” Innovations Conference, League for Innovation in the Community College, Seattle, WA: February 29, 2020.
- “Strengthening Guided Pathways and Career Success by Ensuring Students Are Learning.” The 106th Annual Meeting

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of the Association of American Colleges and Universities, Washington D.C.: January 23, 2020.

“Geniuses in Limbo: Tom Wolfe’s American Dreamers.” American Literature Association, 26th Annual Conference on American Literature, Boston, MA: May 2015.

“Names, Dates, and Other Things We’ve Forgotten: Confronting History in the Literary Text.” Consortium for Critical Reading, Writing, and Thinking, 2nd Annual Conference, New York, NY: October 25, 2014.

“Upping the Ante: Creating Challenges and Rewards in the Freshman Honors Classroom,” Consortium for Critical Reading, Writing, and Thinking, 2nd Annual Conference, New York, NY: October 25, 2014.

“From Cotton Pickin’ to Acid Droppin’: James Agee and the New Journalism.” American Literature Association, 24th Annual Conference on American Literature, Boston, MA: May 2013.

“Bridging the Ontological Divide: The Documentary Humanism of *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*.” American Literature Association, 23rd Annual Conference on American Literature, San Francisco, CA: May 25, 2012.

“Documentary Humanism: Reinscribing the ‘Other.’” *Subversive Discourse from Bottom to Top: Un-Obscuring Plebian Voices in Spenser, Smollett, and Agee*. Hunter College Graduate Student Conference, New York, NY: May 7, 2011.

“Guerilla Pedagogy: Teaching Writing in Hostile Territory.” *Ripping Up My Syllabus*. Conference on College Composition and Communication, New Orleans, LA: April 5, 2008.

AWARDS, GRANTS, and HONORS

- Distinguished Service Award—Community College Humanities Assoc. 2022
- AAC&U Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation (TRHT) Campus Center Institute (grant co-author and core team member) 2022
- AAC&U Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation (TRHT)—Focused Campus Climate Assessment Toolkit (grant co-author and core team member) 2022
- AAC&U Strengthening Guided Pathways and Career Success by Ensuring Students are Learning Grant (contributing author and project co-lead) 2019
- Bringing Theories to Practice Multi-Institutional Innovations Grant (contributing author and PI) 2019
- Humanities New York Action Grant (author and PI) 2018
- Monroe Community College Foundation Grant (author and PI) 2018
- Faculty of the Year: Excellence in Scholarship and Service—Berkeley College 2012
- Student Speaker, St. John’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Doctoral Hooding Ceremony (4.0 GPA) 2012
- University Doctor of Arts Fellowship—St. John’s University 2006-2011
- Faculty of the Year: Excellence in Teaching—Berkeley College 2004