

Dr. Monty Sullivan
Louisiana Community & Technical College System (LCTCS)
ACCT Regional Awards 2021
Chief Executive Officer Award

What has the CEO initiated or helped to develop in the area of innovative programs used in two-year postsecondary institutions?

Dr. Sullivan championed the creation of the first Adult Promise Program in Louisiana, entitled ‘MJ Foster Promise Program’, and secured state funding of \$10.5 million for a Louisiana Adult Promise Program. The Program will provide financial support for students 21 years or older to earn credentials that align to high-demand jobs in growing industry sectors, such as construction, healthcare, information technology, manufacturing, and transportation and logistics. The Louisiana Legislature passed the bill into law in June 2021 and the program will be effective beginning July 2022.

Years prior to the summer of 2020 and at the direction of Dr. Sullivan, the LCTCS and its member colleges began reviewing all human resource practices with a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) focus. This ongoing work includes working with an independent third-party organization to help thoroughly review hiring and promotion practices to ensure any encountered biases are removed. There is also an ongoing intense effort placed on diversifying faculty across the state to ensure they are representative of the populations LCTCS colleges serve. An equity analysis is also being done on all student data (credit, workforce, and adult education) to better understand who our colleges are serving and who they are not serving well. This analysis is helping to drive more informed decisions on program and institutional improvements.

The tragic circumstances of George Floyd's death have since led Dr. Sullivan to double down on his and the Board of Supervisors’ commitment to do more and to continue working to establish an environment in which there are equitable opportunities to achieve individually defined successes. In July 2020, Dr. Sullivan commissioned the establishment of a statewide DEI Task Force to meet and generate actionable recommendations focused on DEI within LCTCS workplaces. The task force has six sub-committees focused on Community Engagement, Curriculum Review, Education & Professional Development, Employee Access & Success, Institutional Infrastructure & Culture, and Student Access & Success. Among other responsibilities, the task force was charged with reviewing all majors, adult education courses, and general education courses to ensure issues of race and equity are embedded in the curriculum and discussed in a healthy and culturally changing manner. They were also charged with developing strategies to enhance services and training for underserved populations by measuring and evaluating areas of the state where there is room to increase the educational attainment of underserved populations while also improving services currently offered to students. To date, the task force has made 35 recommendations. The task force recommended that seven recommendations be implemented each year for five years. The seven recommendations that are currently being implemented are:

- implementing enrollment management plans with an emphasis on Black, Hispanic, and White Males from rural communities (LCTCS Policy 1.033),
- implementing a re-envisioned comprehensive Student Services model that addresses student challenges and barriers that are impactful in such a way that will influence and support minority and first-generation students to complete programs of study,
- redesigning scheduling and opening of registration processes and timelines which will allow for consistency in tracking enrollment, assist with enrollment management of minority students, etc.,
- adopting a common academic calendar statewide,
- reviewing and adopting uniform HR onboarding processes,
- prioritizing recruiting more diverse instructors, and

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- implementing Safe Spaces Ally training and locations for LGBTQ+ students, employees.

Dr. Sullivan also led Louisiana in the Reboot Your Career initiative. On July 31, 2020, federal CARES Act funds that support the expanded unemployment insurance payments (\$600 per week) totaling about \$180 million per week for Louisiana, statewide, were set to expire leaving about 300,000 of Louisiana's people with the task of finding gainful employment in an economy decimated by COVID-19. Many of Louisianans currently on unemployment lack the skills to compete in today's economy. Louisiana's community and technical colleges remained focused on educating and skilling the people of the state, through the pandemic, and developed an initiative referred to as Reboot Louisiana. Under Dr. Sullivan's leadership, \$10 million of the Louisiana Governor's GEERs funds was directed to the Reboot Louisiana initiative for the Louisiana Community & Technical College to train 5,000 adults from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. The colleges are on track to train 5,000 or more Louisianans in high-demand, high-wage credentials allowing them to enter back into the workforce.

In October 2014, Dr. Sullivan engaged business and industry leaders, economic and workforce experts, local K-12 partners and higher education partners, students, and college leadership in a planning process focused on the workforce challenges and opportunities in the state of Louisiana. The outcome of this process, which the LCTCS Board of Supervisors approved, was a bold plan with six comprehensive goals to be accomplished by 2020: Our Louisiana 2020 Building the Workforce of Tomorrow. Those goals are outlined below.

1. Double Graduates to 40,000 Annually
2. Double the Annual Earnings of Our Graduates to \$1.5 Billion
3. Quadruple Student Transfers to Four-Year Universities to 10,000 Annually
4. Double the Number of Students Served to 325,000 Annually
5. Quadruple Partnerships with Business and Industry to 1,000 Annually
6. Double Foundation Assets to \$50 Million

At the close of the Our Louisiana 2020 plan, the Louisiana Community and Technical Colleges reached four of the six goals amidst the effects of the global pandemic. The Louisiana Community and Technical Colleges graduated 33,428 students, graduates earned \$1.58 billion in annual salaries, colleges collectively transferred 12,586 students to four-year universities, served 148,206 students, acquired 1,949 unique business and industry partnerships, and raised \$56.7 million in foundation assets. Without Dr. Sullivan's leadership and passion, these audacious goals would not have been reached.

How has the CEO served on technical or special committees serving two-year postsecondary education, and how did this effort affect the college program in the community, state or nation?

Dr. Sullivan is the Chair of the National Council of State Directors of Community Colleges (NCSDDCC) which is an affiliated council of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). The NCSDDCC advocates on a national level for community colleges.

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Dr. Sullivan currently serves as the Chair of the National Student Clearinghouse Board. During his time on the board, Dr. Sullivan negotiated revenue from the Student Clearinghouse's degree verify and transcript services that was allocated to LCTCS college foundations. To date, more than \$500,000 has been deposited into college foundations. These funds have been used to provide scholarships to students as well as capital improvement projects.

Dr. Sullivan was also appointed by the Governor to represent Louisiana as a member of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). The SREB board works with states to improve public education at every level, from early childhood through doctoral education. They help policymakers make informed decisions by providing independent, accurate data and recommendations. They also help educators strengthen student learning with professional development, proven practices and curricula, as well as helping policymakers, institutions and educators share scarce resources to accomplish more together than they could alone.

How has the CEO demonstrated a “caring attitude” toward the board of trustees, administrators, faculty and students?

Dr. Sullivan's caring attitude is evident in his interactions with the board of supervisors, administrators, faculty, and students. In his initial address to the faculty and staff of LCTCS, the State of the System, he provide an empathetic reminder that “People Matter” in all that the faculty and staff do for students and their colleges. In all he does, the echoing notion of his intent to keep people at the forefront of what we do is evident.

Dr. Sullivan empathizes to the needs of our board of supervisors by conducting weekly calls to keep them informed of system activities and in order to keep an open line of communication with the board not only with system business but also things going on in their professional and personal lives. That empathy extends not only to the board of supervisors but also to the board office and each campus chancellor, faculty, staff and students. It is not unlike him to make a phone call in support or condolence of any member of the system if he hears of a need or a loss in their personal lives.

Dr. Sullivan makes it a point to personally text each board member on their birthday.

Twice a year Dr. Sullivan meets with the faculty senate in person to hear the needs and concerns that each college's faculty has.

With Dr. Sullivan's lead, the board supervisors approved employee tuition reimbursement for employees seeking degrees, employee spouse and dependent tuition waivers, and direct cash payments to support faculty who are pursuing doctoral degrees.

Dr. Sullivan has established the Student Leadership Conference as well as the board office foundation student scholarships in order to support student development and professional growth. We also have two students every year that serve on our LCTCS Board of Supervisors and have voting privileges. Dr. Sullivan meets with our student board members individually to counsel them on their future plans.

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How has the CEO been active in developing, organizing, or supporting state and/or national two-year postsecondary education associations?

At the behest of Dr. Sullivan, the LCTCS board office as well as each of the systems' twelve colleges are active members of both American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT). Oftentimes Dr. Sullivan, board members and college chancellors present at both associations' national conferences.

Dr. Sullivan is an active member of the Rebuilding America's Middle Class (RAMC) board which advocates to rebuild America's middle class by enhancing student success and by promoting the vital role of community colleges. RAMC is specifically focused on providing a strong national voice for community colleges; communicating and demonstrating the vital role community colleges play in spurring economic development in local communities; and educating policy makers on how to develop and implement laws that will best support America's community colleges.

Dr. Sullivan supports college chancellors and other system leaders to participate in organizations and boards that impact community colleges such as Community Based (COMBASE), National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), Coalition of Adult Basic Education (COABE), Louisiana Association of Public, Community and Adult Education (LAPCAE), National Association of State Directors of Adult Education (NASDAE), Adult Numeracy Network (ANN), National Career Pathways Network (NCPN), Higher Education Research and Development Institute (HERDI), Lumina Foundation, and others.

What has the CEO published in the area of two-year postsecondary educational concepts?

Adapting to Change: Creating a Pathway to the American Dream article in Ferris State University Perspectives Magazine. www.ferris.edu/alliance

Publication of *Occasional Papers on Issues in Rural Development* from the Louisiana Tech University Center for Rural Development

Co-authored "Virginia Community College System" Chapter in *Fifty States Systems of Community Colleges: Mission, Governance, Funding and Accountability*, by Terrence A. Tollefson, et al. (Johnson City, TN: Overmountain Press, 2008)

Published "Analysis of Student Field Dependent Status, Student Attitude Toward the Technology Medium, and Student Perception of Interaction in a Distance Education Setting." Published as ERIC Document No. 419532

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What awards or honors has this CEO received in recognition of leadership in the college, community, or nation?

Louisiana Governor's Advisory Council on Rural Revitalization, 2020

Old Dominion University Darden College of Education, DuBois Leadership Award, 2018

New Orleans Magazine, People to Watch, 2012

Louisiana Governor's Office of Rural Development Small Towns Community Assessment Team, 2000

What outstanding characteristics motivated you to nominate this CEO?

Monty Sullivan has a passion for doing the right thing, and never turning back from a challenge. He can connect dots with a passion that I have not had the chance to see in many people and in the style of an incredible leader, never loses his cool when everyone around him is losing theirs. Wrap this in a blanket of unquestioned integrity and you have the entire man.

I really don't think there is one, or even a set of characteristics, that led to this nomination – rather an entire man who has left an incredible mark on generations of this state and the entire gulf coast that may never know why they all succeeded. Most will wonder how the roadmap was laid out for them to accomplish what they did and only a quiet few of us will know why. I hope that this recognition will shed light on Dr. Sullivan for all to know. He can be a role model for the new young leaders in Higher Education across the nation to see what we can make the community colleges become. They are all looking at a new and challenging future for education. Monty Sullivan has the passion and vision to see what is coming and prepare his colleges for it. He does not get distracted from what is right!