

Dr. Kenneth Lawson



Dr. Kenneth Lawson has over 20 years of experience working in community colleges in Washington State. He began as an adjunct faculty in basic education. From that experience, he gained an appreciation for the power of community colleges to make a transformative difference in students' lives. Dr. Lawson's career has focused on ensuring equitable access, achievement, and outcomes for all students, and he is deeply committed to the role higher education plays as an agent of positive social change.

Dr. Lawson joined Shoreline Community College as a full-time faculty in political science in 2001. As dean of the Social Sciences/Equity and Social Justice division at Shoreline, he helped create a Global Affairs Center, an inclusive honor's program, and a Center for Service-Learning. Dr. Lawson also served as dean of Humanities and Social Sciences at Seattle Central College.

In 2013, Dr. Lawson moved to Skagit Valley College as the Vice President for Instruction. In that role, he works with faculty and staff to create equitable learning environments, programs responsive to local economic and social needs, and educational pathways to serve diverse communities. Dr. Lawson has helped lead Skagit Valley College's strategy to improve student learning and success through the implementation of a comprehensive guided pathways approach, placing equity at the center of the effort. As a result, the percentage of students completing their degree or certificate (within 4 years) has increased by 11 percentage points for transfer students (31%), and 9 percentage points for workforce students (35%). Equity gaps between completion rates for Latinx and non-Latinx students has dropped from a gap of 7 percent to 2 percent since 2016.

In 2019, he was selected as one of 40 leaders from across the country to serve as an Aspen Presidential Fellow. He recently completed the Aspen/USC Racial Equity Leadership Series, and currently participates in National Center for Inquiry and Improvement's Rural Community College Leaders Learning Community.

Dr. Lawson has a doctorate in political science from the University of Washington, and a Master of Arts and Bachelor of Science in political science from the University of Utah.

Please note: My vitae is aligned with the Minimum and Desired Qualifications that Shoreline Community College (SCC) is looking for in its next President. Redundancy is avoided except where necessary to demonstrate how I directly meet the qualifications of the position.

| MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS: | SELECTED PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE: |
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| Master's degree or equivalent education and experience | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ph.D. Political Science, University of Washington, 2000 ● M.A. Political Science, University of Utah, 1990 ● B.S. Political Science, University of Utah, <i>cum laude</i>, 1988 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Certificate of International Relations ● Senior administrator with over 20 years of successful experience across all mission areas of a comprehensive community college at urban, suburban, and semi-rural community colleges in Washington State. |
| A distinguished record of progressive accomplishment and demonstrated leadership skills at a senior management level in a community college or other organization | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Skagit Valley College (SVC) Vice President for Instruction, January 2013-present Key duties include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promote the development of innovative and high-quality instructional programs that meet the educational needs of diverse communities ○ Provide strategic leadership and vision in the planning, development, administration, implementation, and evaluation of instructional programs and services ○ Build and maintain articulation and collaborative activities with other institutions (K12 and higher education), public agencies, and boards, as well as with business and industry; develop partnerships with community organizations that support the College's mission and goals ● Seattle Central Community College (SCCC) Dean, Humanities and Social Sciences, May 2011-January 2013 Key duties include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Oversee instructional programs and faculty in the fields of: Developmental English, Fine and Performing Arts, English, Humanities, Interpreter Training, Social Sciences and World Languages ○ Serve on Executive Leadership Council, Budget Advisory Committee, Learning Communities Committee, and the Global Education Design Team ○ Act as the Student Conduct Officer ● Shoreline Community College (SCC) Dean, Divisions of Equity & Social Justice/Social Sciences and Library, Media, & eLearning, February 2006-April 2011 Key duties include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Oversee instructional programs and faculty in the fields of: Criminal Justice, Education, Library, Multicultural Studies, Social Sciences and World Languages ○ Provide instructional support in the areas of eLearning and Media Services ○ Provide campus-wide leadership in the areas of Budget, Diversity, Global Studies, Governance, Honors, Service-Learning, Student Retention, Technology Initiatives, and Transfer ○ Oversee Parent Child Center and Parent Education Programs. |
| Successful experience that supports the mission of a comprehensive community college dedicated to high-quality teaching and student success | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engaged, active, and enthusiastic leader with a strong commitment to the social justice mission of a comprehensive community college ● Committed to delivering comprehensive, holistic, and transformative learning that improves the lives of students and builds the economic and cultural capital of communities within the district and beyond ● Proven record of creating healthy college culture dedicated to high-quality teaching and equitable student success. Over 97% of respondents on recent SVC employee survey (n = 173) report the college is achieving its vision of being student-centered in teaching and learning, and 98% report that college is committed to equitable student outcomes |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide strategic leadership and vision in the planning, development, administration, implementation and evaluation of SVC’s instructional programs and services • Experience with regional accreditation policies and practices; served on and chaired accreditation visits for the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. |
| <p>Successful experience with operational and strategic management principles and practices with an emphasis on transparency and accountability</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committed to focus resources on institutional priorities through strategic, evidence-based planning and decision-making; practice inclusive planning process informed by assessment of program goals and outcomes • Set high standards to achieve college mission, starting with myself; communicate clear expectations • Collaboratively establish measurable, achievable indicators of college performance • Implemented new Program Review process at SVC to help build a healthy culture of inquiry in which the college community is comfortable sharing and analyzing data to identify equity gaps and guide improvement efforts • Collaborated with SVC’s Office for Institutional Planning and Effectiveness to lead SVC’s Achieving the Dream efforts • Decisions informed by data, evidence, and research that are widely shared and communicated • Served as vice-chair of the Strategic Planning Committee at SCC and in that capacity helped lead the effort to develop and implement SCC’s strategic plan (in 2008) with broad campus participation • Celebrate innovative programs and approaches; encourage institutional change by providing both intrinsic reward as well as extrinsic incentives when appropriate and feasible. |
| <p>Executive level experience leading to measurable increases in diversity, equity, and inclusion.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earned the largest gains in equity points of any college in the Washington CTC system (as reported by SBCTC in 2020). (Note: Equity points are part of Student Achievement Initiative 3.0, which are awarded when Historically Underrepresented, low-income, or BEdA students achieve educational milestones such as earning 15 credits and completing their degrees) • Helped develop and implement SVC’s plan to become a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) by 2025. Enrollment of degree seeking Latinx students has increased from 13% of total student population in 2013 to 21% in 2020. Latinx enrollment in fall 2021 is up to 23% of total, 2 points shy of qualifying for HSI status • Successfully helped to design and implement SVC’s “Student Achievement Strategy” that has moved the college culture forward to become a “student ready” organization that supports equitable aspiration, access, and success of diverse students • Reduced equity gaps between completion rates (within 4 years) for white and Latinx students from a gap of 7 percent to 2 percent since implementing Student Achievement Strategy in 2016 • Played a key role in developing SVC’s “equity framework,” a framework designed to advance equity and social justice by adopting anti-racist policies and practices • Worked with SVC faculty and Human Resources office to rewrite job descriptions, increase training, and revise evaluation instruments in a concerted effort to increase faculty diversity; increased percentage of full-time faculty of color at SVC from 5% to 17% of the total faculty (2013 to the present) • Committed to increasing equitable access by creating and investing in programs responsive to needs of underserved communities, including, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reorganized and increased capacity of Basic Education for Adults to serve growing Latinx population in Skagit County; increased transition rate from 20% to 44%, which is now well over the state average of 25% ○ Supported and approved development of two new programs serving students with disabilities and alternative high school completion ○ Partnered with Swinomish Indian Tribal Community and the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board to develop Dental Therapy program to better serve oral health needs of Northwest tribal communities. |

| DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS: | SELECTED PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS, EXPERIENCE, AND ACHIEVEMENTS: |
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| Significant educational leadership experience that demonstrates knowledge and support for the teaching and learning process | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Began career in community college system as an adjunct faculty teaching Basic Education at Olympic College • Taught full-time as a tenured faculty in Political Science and International Studies at SCC • Deeply enjoy teaching and engagement with students; continue to teach roughly one class a year • Supported and practiced incorporating High Impact Practices—especially learning communities, service-learning, and project-based learning—throughout the college and in my own teaching practice • Collaborated with faculty and staff at SCC to promote “learning-centered” college effort to ensure focus was maintained on learning as our core mission, where learning is comprehensive, holistic, and transformative. |
| Demonstrated ability to serve as spokesperson for Shoreline Community College and higher education, locally, statewide, nationally, and internationally | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong and enthusiastic advocate of the power of education to change lives and improve communities • Recognized and respected community college leader in state and national initiatives to improve student outcomes, including participation in AACC Pathways Project, Aspen Presidential Fellows, Achieving the Dream, Rural Community College Learning Community, SBCTC’s Guided Pathways efforts, and the Aspen/USC Racial Equity Leadership Series • Past chair of the Instruction Commission (the state-wide organization of Chief Academic Officers in Washington) and in that capacity worked with the SBCTC to advance system workplan and legislative priorities • Meet frequently and work together with local community leaders and elected officials at the local, county, state, and national levels • Excited to raise the visibility of SCC and promote community awareness and support in service of the college mission. |
| Experience in institutionalizing diversity and a culture of inclusiveness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Played a key role in developing SVC’s “equity framework,” a framework designed to advance equity and social justice by adopting anti-racist policies and practices • Successfully helped to design and implement SVC’s “Student Achievement Strategy” that has moved the college culture forward to become a “student ready” organization that supports equitable aspiration, access, and success of diverse students • Committed to increasing equitable access by creating and investing in programs responsive to needs of underserved communities (some examples provided above in Minimum Qualifications) • Committed to developing equity mindsets across campus, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supported and funded Inclusive Pedagogy learning community at SVC to promote equity in and out of the classroom; over 90 faculty and staff have participated in this quarter-long, intensive program ○ Launched quarterly “equity series” to promote multicultural competence at SVC in partnership with the Director for Student Life and the Dean for Workforce Education ○ Created Equity and Social Justice workgroup at Seattle Central Community College (SCCC) to advance diversity and multicultural competence across the campus and within the curriculum ○ Organized and participated with faculty at SCCC in a State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) faculty learning community dedicated to critical multiculturalism ○ Supported multicultural training course for employees at SCC; course enrolled over 50 employees over two summers • Developed programs responsive to diverse student needs and which help increase success of underserved students, including: |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased Integrated Basic Education Skills Training (I-BEST) and Career Workforce Preparatory Academy pathways to provide greater instructional support and wrap around services for underserved students ○ Supported and encouraged pathways for incarcerated individuals to enter and succeed in college ○ Supported and contributed to “men of distinction” program at SCCC for African American male students ● Demonstrated experience and commitment to ensure students gain skills and awareness related to equity and inclusion, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Worked with SVC faculty to revise diversity requirement into an “equity requirement” and extended the requirement to all associate degrees ○ Hired multiple faculty members at SVC with expertise in Ethnic and Gender Studies and ensured diverse students can see themselves represented in the curriculum ○ Oversaw multicultural understanding core degree requirement and multicultural awareness general education outcome at SCC ○ Promoted and helped develop academic certificates in the areas of Multicultural Competence and Global Awareness at SCC ● Support holistic approach to student success, including increasing food security, providing mental health services, and fostering a sense of belonging for all students ● Collaborated with SBCTC and small team of Business Officers, VPs for Instruction, VPs for Student Services, and Diversity Officers to revise the scoring for capital projects to include considerations for promoting greater access and equity in terms of space and building design ● Collaborated with SCC faculty to design, develop, and offer Honors Program that allows for inclusive participation and access for diverse students ● Worked with SVC faculty and Human Resources office to rewrite job descriptions, increase training, and revise evaluation instruments in a concerted effort to increase faculty diversity; increased percentage of full-time faculty of color at SVC from 5% to 17% of the total faculty (2013 to the present) ● Helped form and create collaborative workgroup from across WA state—including representatives from Instruction Commission, Diversity and Equity in Hiring and Professional Development (DEHPD), DEOs, and Human Resources managers to develop a resource guide designed to increase diversity in hiring of faculty and staff ● Served on Advisory board for state-wide Faculty of Color mentorship program designed to retain faculty of color ● Helped promote adoption of “Cognitive Errors” training for hiring committees at SCC with a view to diversifying campus workforce. |
| Experience working effectively with a board of trustees and implementing a board’s policies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Experience working closely with Board of Trustees at 3 colleges in Washington State ● Excited to partner with the SCC Board to develop and maintain a shared focus on student success and mission fulfillment ● Worked collaboratively and closely with SVC’s Board of Trustees, including facilitating study and executive sessions ● Experience working collaboratively with SVC Foundation’s Board of Governors ● Currently sit on the Board of Directors for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Anacortes Chamber of Commerce ○ Camelot Society, serving adults with disabilities in King and Snohomish Counties ● Advocate of Carver Model of Governance modified as appropriate to college and Board practice. |
| Respect for and demonstrated effectiveness in working within a culture of participatory governance in which faculty, staff, and student organizations contribute | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Committed to meaningful shared governance; understand and practice the importance of empowering diverse voices and perspectives to yield creative, lasting solutions to complex problems ● Elected by faculty peers at SCC to serve as division dean (with over 75% vote-of-confidence threshold), re-elected in 2009 despite difficult climate in which several of the division’s full-time faculty were part of a college-wide reduction in force. |

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| | <p>Maintained support of the division faculty and staff by adopting an open, honest, and collaborative approach to division governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Value and seek to empower student participation in college community and decision-making ● Interact with others based on principles of integrity, open and honest communication, collaboration, and compassion. |
| <p>Evidence of effective communication working successfully with faculty, staff, students, college foundation staff and volunteers, governmental and elected officials, other higher education institutions, business and community leaders, and other external constituents</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engaged and pro-active communicator who values both formal and informal opportunities to share information and build relationships, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Communicate regularly with campus through a variety of modalities including Office for Instruction email updates and informal monthly “coffee with Kenny” meetings ○ Practice an accessible leadership style, maintain an open-door policy, conduct frequent “walk-about” to connect with faculty and staff ● Cultivated partnerships with high schools, universities, and other organizations to enhance student learning and success, including developing funding models and negotiating agreements with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Local school districts to offer programs serving students with intellectual disabilities (INVEST program) and high school completion (Open Doors and Youth Re-engagement programs) ○ Cascade Job Corps to develop an innovative approach to transition youth to college ○ Community Action Network to provide coordinated Basic Education program to the community that leverages strengths of each partner ○ WSU Research Center, Bread Lab, and Viva Farms to provide learning experiences for students in culinary and sustainable agriculture programs ○ The Electricians and Carpenters Trust to provide Apprenticeships throughout SVC’s region ● Developed and/or managed partnerships with broad array of organizations, including (but not limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Swinomish Indian Tribal Community and the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board to develop Dental Therapy program ○ Skagit Head Start to strengthen educational pathways by building social capital and connecting families to college activities and programs ○ The Port of Skagit to locate Craft Brewing Academy at Port facilities ○ Mount Vernon YMCA to develop building design and plan for new childcare center at SVC (which ultimately was not built) ○ Local area school districts, SVC, and Western Washington University to offer the <i>Maestros Para el Pueblo</i> program, an innovative partnership to support Latinx students interested in educational careers ○ Local acting company to utilize SCCC theater facilities. |
| <p>Experience leading and working in a collective bargaining environment and working effectively with unionized employees</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Transitioned SVC to interest-based bargaining environment with the faculty union; serve as one of the lead negotiators ● Serve on Labor-Management Committee at SVC to administer faculty contract, maintain open communication, and resolve issues ● At SCC, served on the Joint Union-Management Committee (JUMC)—both as a faculty member and then later as an administrator—to manage emergent issues and resolve contractual disputes ● Served on Executive Board for the local American Federation of Teachers at SCC ● Responsible to administer and appropriately implement collective bargaining agreements for classified staff and faculty ● Knowledgeable and experienced working within key rules, regulations and legal requirements related to the workplace, including FMLA, Title IX, etc. |

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| <p>A proven track record for attracting, recruiting, developing, and empowering excellent senior administrators</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recruited and hired racially and gender diverse group of executive deans, deans, and directors who focus collectively and collaboratively on equitable student access and achievement for all SVC's students ● Demonstrated record of retaining diverse team of administrators who have a strong reputation for innovation and commitment to equity ● Advocated to hire and fund two new senior-level positions, including Associate VP of Equity and Inclusion and Associate VP of International Education. Both positions filled with women of color who contributed to the SVC's capacity and expertise to deliver equity in access and achievement for students and employees ● Consistently participated in national community college initiatives—including AACC Pathways Project, Achieving the Dream, Aspen Presidential Fellows, Rural Community College Leaders Learning Community, and the Aspen/USC Racial Equity Leadership Series—resulting in a well-developed and diverse network of peers throughout the country from which to recruit deep and diverse pools to senior level positions ● Built strong connections in the SBCTC system—including serving as chair of the Instruction Commission and on the executive board—to recruit strong candidates from within Washington State; regularly participate as Washington Executive Leadership Academy mentor for aspiring administrators in the SBCTC system ● Consistently provided sabbaticals for administrators to pursue professional development, complete advanced degrees, and enhance SVC's administrative knowledge, skills, and abilities. |
| <p>Demonstrated effectiveness in enhancing and diversifying the institution's funding base working with trustees, foundations, corporations, legislators, and the federal government</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Skilled at leveraging rules governing budget allocation, including performance-based funding, e.g., increased Student Achievement Points for SVC by 15 percentage points to maximize this source of funding ● Meet frequently and work together with local community leaders and elected officials at the local, county, state, and national levels; deep understanding of political and legislative processes and issues ● Strong record of obtaining federal, state, and private grant funding, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ US Department of Education, Title III: Strengthening Institutions (\$5 million over 5 years) ○ US Department of Education, Institutional Resilience and Expanded Postsecondary Opportunity (\$1.3 million over 2 years) ○ US Department of Health and Human Services, HPOG (in partnership with Edmonds CC and Everett CC; SVC funded at \$1.75 million over 5 years) ○ SBCTC: Workforce Development Grant (\$300,000 over 2 years) ○ Arcora Foundation (\$2 million in partnership with the Swinomish Tribe and Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board) ○ College Spark: Program Improvement Grant (2 awards at \$150,000 each over 3 years) ● Cultivated successful partnerships with high schools, universities, and other organizations to create new and/or expand educational opportunities (examples provided above) ● Consistently participated in national community college initiatives resulting in a well-developed professional network throughout the country; committed to leverage this network to keep SCC up-to-date and connected to innovative educational practices and funding opportunities. |
| <p>A positive track record in fundraising, including direct solicitations from private donors and public and private entities, to expand the college's resource base in support of student success.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Served on state-wide Guided Pathways Advisory Committee for the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) in Washington that helped prepare successful \$30 million legislative ask ● Value the role of the foundation in raising the visibility of the college and promoting community awareness and support in service of the college mission ● Contributed to the development of key areas of focus for successful \$3 million campaign at SVC |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work closely with SVC Foundation to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Develop and maintain strong personal relationships within the community○ Identify college needs suitable for donor requests• Developed relationship and successfully made requests from donor to fund Honors Program at SCC• Excited to be an active community member in the Shoreline area and to increase the impact of the SCC Foundation. |
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