

LORI E. VARLOTTA, Ph.D.

Academic CEO, Institutional Repositioning Expert
Educational Thought Leader, Change Management

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Academic CEO with demonstrable success in change management, repositioning work, strategic and financial planning, organizational branding, assessment and quality control, consensus building, and diversity and inclusion. Looking to share these skills and experiences with colleagues who are moving their institutions forward in the mid-21st century's new normal.

ACADEMIC CEO EXPERIENCE

2014 - Present

President, California Lutheran Univ., Thousand Oaks, CA | September 2020 – June 2024

Scope: Serve as the President and CEO whose responsibilities (per Corporate Bylaws) are to supervise, direct, and control all business and activities, affairs and Officers of the Corporation.

- Operating budget = \$110M; Endowment = \$140M; Employees ~500 FT and ~400 PT; Total Enrollment ~3400 undergraduate and graduate students.

Context: Arrived to Cal Lutheran at the height of a global pandemic and led the university through a multi-year change management process that included a focus on the following:

- **Financial Oversight and Viability** — Mitigated (within three weeks of arrival) a \$23M pandemic-related budgetary shortfall. Orchestrated and administered the institution's first-ever furlough and layoff program with no litigation repercussions.
- **Revenue Diversification** —
 - [Salvaged](#), from revocation, the university's largest single gift.
 - Secured millions of dollars in government and corporate funding to support an extraordinarily diverse student body in making timely progress to the degree.
 - Monetized the university's facilities to reflect market value and fuel extramural support during Covid years when tuition revenues were falling sharply.
 - Negotiated new leases or extensions with the L.A. Rams Football Team, L.A. Angel City Soccer Team, and the Ventura County Football Club.
 - In some of the above, increased rental and licensing fees by ten-fold compared to the period that preceded me.
- **Strategic Planning** — Led inclusive and transparent processes that brought a [Strategic](#) and [Campus/Facilities Plan](#)—complete with SMART goals, measurable metrics, and deliverables—to life.
- **Service Innovation, Development, and Launch** — Expanded the delivery mode of classes offered to adult students (formerly, all F2F) to include synchronous, asynchronous, and hybrid modalities.
- **Internal Governance** — Reconfigured the institution's entire governance system and led the process to completely revise and amend the organization's Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation.

EXECUTIVE WORK EXPERIENCE (continued)

President, California Lutheran University (continued) | September 2020 – May 2024

- **Consensus Building, Leadership Development, and Participatory Decision-Making** — Created a Task Force on Shared Governance ([TFSG](#)) and empowered members to help formulate a comprehensive decision-making matrix, the [ADRI](#) chart.
- **Institutionalization of [DEI](#)** — Created and resourced a new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Division that was aimed at studying, understanding, and respecting differences and facilitating difficult and civil conversations. This DEI structure differed from those elsewhere that institutionalized and promoted uniform ideologies that lead to echo chambers.

President, Hiram College, Hiram, OH | July 2014 – September 2020

Scope: Per the Corporate Bylaws, the President is delegated, by the Board of Trustees, the authority necessary to fully lead, manage, and operate the College.

Operating budget = \$30M; Endowment = \$75M; Employees ~200 FT and ~100 PT;
Enrollment ~900 undergraduate and graduate students.

Context: Arrived at Hiram in time to lead a [complete turnaround process](#). The institution's long-term debt had just entered an adjustment period that made it impossible for the College to keep up with its debt-service payments. With a declining enrollment and a physical plant in need of maintenance and repair, my priorities included the following:

- **Financial Oversight, Viability, and Stewardship** — Successfully refinanced the College's \$30M long-term debt by convincing the two banks that held the initial bond to write off 28% of it.
 - Initiated and closed the resulting smaller bond via a tax-exempt public offering; engaged Standard and Poor's to get an official bond rating.
 - Increased operating revenues and reversed a pattern of unchecked budget deficits to get the College off of the Federal Department of Education's "Heightened Cash Monitoring List."
- **Rebranding and Repositioning** — Led the inclusive and transparent process that rebranded Hiram College as the [New Liberal Arts™](#). This rebrand emphasized 21st-century skills, competency-based outcomes, hands-on-learning, and the innovative use of mobile technology.
 - Conceptualized, vetted, and implemented Hiram's most [comprehensive academic reform](#); earned faculty and staff support; secured millions in gifts to launch; [received industry acclaim](#).
 - Launched, funded, and trademarked Ohio's first 1:1 baccalaureate mobile technology program, [Tech and Trek™](#), receiving national recognition for teaching "mindful" technology.

EXECUTIVE WORK EXPERIENCE (continued)

President, Hiram College (continued) | July 2014 – September 2020

- **Facilities and Maintenance** — With the VP of Development, raised millions of dollars to renovate and repair dozens of academic and residential buildings whose deferred maintenance had been put on hold for years.
- **Technology Enhancements** — With a lean IT department, overhauled and updated the institution's technological infrastructure and the [teaching and learning technologies](#) and equipment.
- **Fundraising** — With a small development team, logged in five [consecutive record-breaking](#) fundraising years. During my presidency, Hiram's yearly fundraising totals were 100% higher than those achieved in the years prior to my leadership. The average annual [Trustee](#) gift doubled during my tenure to >\$50K.

MID-CAREER

1994-2014

California State University, Sacramento

2003-2014

Promoted three times during decade plus tenure at large (30K students) public university

- Associate Vice President for Student Affairs
- Vice President for Student Affairs
- Senior Vice President for Planning, Enrollment Management and Student Affairs

University of Wisconsin, Whitewater

2000-2003

Dean of Students at mid-size (~11,000 students) state university

University of San Francisco

1998-2000

Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs at large private (~11K students) Jesuit university

Miami University (OH)

1994-1998

Director, Leadership and Service-Learning at large (~20K students) "public ivy" school

EARLY CAREER

1985- 1999

Progressively responsible positions at several public and private colleges and universities throughout Pennsylvania and New York.

INDUSTRY SCHOLARSHIP AND LEADERSHIP

Authored 25+ published articles on topics such as these:

Organizational Culture and Accountability
Systemic and Disruptive Change
Strategic Planning and Financial Management
Community Service and Impactful Volunteerism

Diversity and Inclusion
Educational Innovation
Mindful Technology
Citizenship and Civility

Presented at 50+ conferences on above topics and those such as these:

Leadership and Mentoring
Recruiting, Retaining, and Training US Veterans
Developing Female and Underrepresented Leaders
Data-driven Decision Making and Reporting

Invited to give 30+ keynote addresses on topics related to issues delineated above

Served on 10 higher education-related boards

EDUCATION

PhD.	Educational Leadership, Miami University (OH)	1997
MS.	Cultural Foundations of Education, Syracuse University (NY)	1990
BA.	Philosophy and Arts and Letters Program for Administrators (ALPA) Cum laude, University of Notre Dame (IN)	1985

HOBBIES AND INTERESTS

Mountain Hiking and Trail Running	Cooking and Eating Spicy Ethnic Dishes
Cross-country Skiing and Snowshoeing	Listening to Music — Outdoor Concerts
Reading and Writing	Traveling

Full curriculum vita available upon request