
ROBERT A. MANZER, Ph.D.

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PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Liberal-arts-oriented academic executive with 30 years of experience in leading complex regulatory and academic organizations, and developing and operating innovative, high-quality, faculty-supported, student-focused programs and pathways in multiple modalities and environments.

KEY EXPERTISE AREAS

- Student outcomes
- New program development
- Civic and liberal education
- Online education and adaptive learning
- Regional and programmatic accreditation
- Faculty
- Process improvement
- Stakeholder relations
- Innovative pedagogy
- Fundraising
- Student affairs

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- Authored multiple reports and studies on higher education accreditation challenges and opportunities as president of historic liberal education accreditor.
- Co-founded and built 9-year-old, \$10mil annual revenue, *Lumina*-backed company with a 500-institution network and extensive professional association (e.g., *Council of Independent Colleges* [CIC], *Complete College America*, etc.) backing.
- Developed new course sharing category by evolving a full playbook for improving student retention and a model consortium agreement (430+ agreements, including world largest 300+ member CIC consortium).
- Operationalized leading adaptive learning technology across Business, IT, CJ and Education curricula that significantly increased course and student retention (7-14%).
- Founded 16-year-old University College at 115+ year old institution to house non-traditional programming, enhance innovation and generate revenue.
- Founded 24-year-old Washington DC-based Capitol Hill Internship Program (CHIP) and 10-college United Methodist College Washington Consortium to support the program.
- Built Nebraska's largest concurrent enrollment program – Wesleyan Honors Academy – that generates \$1mil in profit annually.
- Published articles in top two Political Science journals.

EDUCATION

Ph.D., University of Chicago, Political Science, 1993.
M.A., University of Chicago, Political Science, 1988.
B.A., Carleton College, Political Science, 1985

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

President, American Academy for Liberal Education, July 2023-President.

- *Broad responsibility for finding new markets for accreditation product with a focus on opportunities with accreditation reform, Classical Education, program accreditation and international.*
- *Authored multiple studies and reports on American higher education accreditation, including “Depoliticizing the University: Reprioritizing Academic Excellence in Faculty Governance and Accreditation” (American Enterprise Institute), and “Higher Education’s Path to Illiberalism: A Report on Accreditation” (American Enterprise Institute).*

Chief Academic Officer and Co-Founder, Acadeum, Inc., June 2016-September 2024.

- *Co-Founder with broad responsibility for building business with focus on strategy, product development, evangelizing, institutional sales, and creating national (e.g., Council of Independent Colleges), regional, and state channel partners. Served as main public spokesman for company.*
- *Chief Academic Officer responsible for developing product solutions, and providing direction on all academic and higher education matters, including regulatory and accreditation affairs, faculty, quality assessment and institutional effectiveness, curriculum, online classroom elements, and educational technology.*
- *Founded and oversaw Center of Excellence that worked directly with institutions to develop best course sharing practices, digital strategic and compliance resources, and support active communities of practice.*

Provost/Chief Academic Officer, American Intercontinental University, Dec 2013-May 2016.

- *Responsible for curriculum, faculty, accreditation, student affairs, institutional effectiveness and academic support services for an online and on-ground university (90% online) of 12,500 students, 500 faculty, and four major programs.*
- *Operationalized new adaptive learning pathway. Presented on new pathway at Illinois Board of Higher Education, Higher Learning Commission, and Educause conferences.*
- *Re-organized faculty management system and instituted robust faculty development capability, leading to improved retention and revenue above forecast.*
- *Led efforts to improve curriculum (outcomes focus, transferability and core skill development) while building faculty culture around goal of student success.*
- *Spearheaded consolidation and re-organization of university Registrar function of two universities, resulting in \$2.5M in cost reductions.*
- *Student Affairs (including Career Services) added to portfolio after first year.*

Regional Vice President, Synergis Education, Nov 2012-Nov 2013.

- *Responsible for managing three university partner accounts to profitability, focusing on increasing high-quality revenue streams and improving programs, modalities, and student support systems.*
- *Managed relationships with all levels of partner institutions, including senior leadership and faculty. Invited to address faculty, staff and board of trustees.*
- *Oversaw enrollment and accounting staffs.*
- *Managed 7-month partner launch process, utilizing leading project management system.*
- *Oversaw successful implementation of online programs for two universities.*

Chief Operating Officer, Texas Association of Nonprofit Organizations, Sept 2010-Nov 2012.

- *Stepped down from TANO Board of Directors to help President build a sustainable membership association.*
- *Developed and executed broad-based growth strategy to capitalize on the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) Task Forces on strengthening the nonprofit sector and its relationship with government agencies.*
- *Spoke on the state of the nonprofit sector at events across the state.*
- *Developed relationships with businesses and foundations, resulting in new nonprofit benefit options for health insurance, retirement support, on-line-giving, donor-research, and grant-management, as well as foundation-supported professional development programming.*
- *Directed communications strategy that included weekly e-newsletter, social media, e-mail marketing and instructional webinars.*
- *Doubled nonprofit members from under 500 to over 1000 and added 40 additional business members.*

Vice President for Academic Affairs, St. Edward's University (Austin), July 2008-Sept 2010.

- *Reporting to Executive Vice President, shared responsibility for academic programming, budgets, and personnel affairs of university of 200 full-time faculty, 260 staff, and 5400 students. Supervised ten direct reports, including 7 deans of the schools, the Center for Teaching Excellence and the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP).*
- *Oversaw staff and affairs of newly acquired 225-acre Wild Basin Wilderness Preserve.*

Major initiatives and accomplishments

- *Adult programs enrollment. Stopped 5-year, 10% enrollment decline in adult-degree completion and graduate programs resulting in an \$800K budget surplus for FY2010. Steps taken included restructuring dean's position, hiring enrollment management specialist, and revising and enhancing recruitment and advising methods.*
- *General education. Inherited faculty divided over general education program and a recently developed unit (University Programs) that was created to support the program. Worked with deans and faculty to recover the history and theory of the unique general education program. Chaired newly created university-wide General Education Advisory Committee and led two-year review of all general education courses. Review issued in a set of recommendations that helped clarify general education learning goals and overall curricular transparency.*
- *Retention. Worked to put in place first-ever campus-wide, comprehensive retention committee with subcommittees focused on psychosocial, academic, and financial retention challenges. Worked with faculty and staff to re-orient retention-thinking to achieving graduation-rate goal of 70% and put in place practices for achieving this goal, including a new program of gateway-course interventions.*
- *Fundraising. Grant activities focused on seeking funds to support first-generation college students, teacher preparation and developing new Wild Basin Wilderness Preserve as an educational resource. Successful efforts included funding for CAMP (\$2M, Department of Education), CAMP bridge program (\$150K, Wal-Mart Foundation), Noyce Scholarship Program for science and math teacher preparation (\$757K, National Science Foundation), and Wild Afternoons program (\$5K, Moody Foundation). Worked with Advancement Office to implement President's Council of Advisors program to engage donors in the activities of the university.*

Dean, Getty College of Arts and Sciences, Ohio Northern University, Ada, Ohio, July 2004-July 2008.

- *Oversaw programming, planning, evaluation, budgets, development and personnel affairs of college of 140 full-time faculty, 1400 students, 15 departments, 50 major programs, 20-member College Advisory Board and \$25 million budget.*
- *Promoted college and university by speaking to prospective students, parents, high school guidance counselors, alumni and other groups.*

Major initiatives and accomplishments

- *Enrollment. Engineered steady 4-year enrollment increase (5%) within highly competitive, declining demographic environment through innovative faculty-based recruiting and retention practices and developing three new off-site degree and non-degree programs.*
- *Planning. Initiated faculty-centered process to develop a college strategic plan. Sponsored and led faculty lunch discussions on liberal and professional education.*
- *Development. Hired college's first ever development officer. Raised funds to support this position. Assisted with fundraising for new \$21M science center. Successfully accomplished a six-figure ask.*
- *Retention and academic assistance. Launched initiative to institute First-Year Experience program based on "best practices" in academic assistance and student advising. Initiated mid-term progress checks and extensive collaboration between the dean's office and student affairs to monitor student progress. Initiated program of sending e-mails to parents of freshmen students.*
- *Assessment of student learning. Led college committee on assessment. Wrote annual college report on assessment and spearheaded development of college strategy for improving program assessment.*
- *Faculty evaluation. Led faculty effort to revise college's plan for faculty evaluation.*
- *Student achievement. Focused efforts on enhancing student achievement, including establishing position of Assistant to the Dean for Student Success, establishing a faculty committee to study the issue of placement, setting up a bulletin board to advertise student achievements, and holding two Dean's Scholars' meetings annually for students. Results included college's first three Goldwater scholarship winners and first Fulbright scholarship winner.*
- *New programs. Developed new bachelor's programs in Nursing and Forensic Biology. Developed new RN to BSN Nursing completion program to be offered at two off-site hospital locations. Sought and received approval from the Ohio Board of Regents, the Ohio Board of Nursing and the Higher Learning Commission for new Nursing programs.*
- *Initiated partnership with Lima Senior High to develop MI Ready program that encouraged at-risk students to attend college.*
- *Won grant from Ohio Department of Education to offer Summer Honors Institutes for gifted and talented high school students. Institutes included programs in Philosophy, Forensic Science, Chemistry, Theater, Mock Trial and Technological Studies.*

Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Nebraska Wesleyan University, Lincoln, Nebraska, June 2000–August 2004.

- *Supervised seven direct reports, including Managing Director of Graduate and Extended Programs, and Directors of the Capitol Hill Internship Program, the Wesleyan Advantage*

adult-student program, Pre-College programs, summer programs, and the Forensic Science and Nursing programs.

- *Served as first Dean of University College. Developed infrastructure for new college to house new programs, resulting in increased earned revenue of \$700K and additional enrollment of 300 students.*

Major initiatives and accomplishments

- *Initiated and developed Capitol Hill Internship Program, a Washington, D.C. internship program that runs two semester, summer and January term programs beginning in Fall 2002. Hired Director and secured housing and office space for program on Capitol Hill.*
- *Initiated and developed the United Methodist College Washington Consortium, Inc. to support the Capitol Hill Internship Program. Consortium consists of 10 schools, each of which pays an annual membership fee to belong to the Consortium. Engineered the incorporation of the Consortium. Elected President of the Consortium in January 2002.*
- *Awarded 2004 President's Award for Outstanding Administration by the Adult and Continuing Education Association of Nebraska.*
- *Initiated and developed Professional Development Program for Pre-K through 12 Teachers and Paraprofessionals in partnership with Nebraska and other state school districts. Program sought to increase teacher understanding of "content" areas such as History, Government and Literature.*
- *Oversaw development of "Teaching History at Historical Sites," a Graduate Certificate Program for K-12 teachers. Program supported by \$800K U.S. National Endowment for the Humanities grant.*
- *Oversaw development of "Bringing American History Scholarship into the Classroom," a Graduate Certificate Program for Lincoln Public Schools teachers. Program supported by \$970K U.S. Department of Education grant.*
- *Oversaw development of "Citizen and the Constitution" Summer Civic Education program for high school teachers.*
- *Initiated and developed "Reflective Philanthropy Project." Supported by a grant, this venture encouraged reflecting on philanthropy and giving through a combination of directed reading, discussion and structured reflection.*
- *Operationalized new Masters of Science programs in Nursing and Forensic Science.*
- *Developed new concurrent enrollment program – Wesleyan Honors Academy -- with 30 Nebraska high schools and 60 high school teachers.*
- *Sponsored visit of John Morgridge, Chairman of the Board, Cisco Systems, for day of activities involving the Nebraska Information Technology Commission, Nebraska's Lieutenant Governor, the Mayor of Lincoln and other political, educational, and community leaders.*
- *Nebraska Information Technology Commission, Education Council. One of two state-appointed independent college representatives. Council recommended to state legislature spending priorities for all educational technology for K-12 and higher education.*
- *Nebraska Network Policy Work Group. Sole independent colleges' representative.*

Associate Dean of Constantin College of the Liberal Arts/Interim Assistant Provost, University of Dallas, December 1997-May 2000.

- *Developed and oversaw all student development and placement activities in the areas of scholarships, internships, graduate and professional school, and careers. Results included five*

Fulbright winners, a Rotary winner, a Javits winner, four Rhodes state finalists, and a 50% increase in the total number of students going on to graduate and professional school.

- *Appointed to six-person committee charged with developing a strategic plan for the undergraduate college. Plan reviewed all aspects of the college, including admissions, curriculum, finances, retention, and academic assessment activities.*
- *Managed library of 302,000 volumes, 13 staff members, and \$300K budget. Reviewed and reformed acquisitions, circulation and cataloguing functions. Conducted reviews of all staff members. Addressed Board of Trustees on state of the library.*

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Full Professor, St. Edward's University, 2008-2010.

Full Professor, Ohio Northern University, 2004-2008.

Associate Professor, Nebraska Wesleyan University, 2001-2004.

Visiting Assistant Professor, University of Dallas, 1994-1999.

Awarded Haggard Presidential Award for outstanding teaching

Lecturer, University of Chicago, 1992-1994.

Visiting Assistant Professor, Dominican College, 1993.

PUBLICATIONS

Policy and Administration

“Depoliticizing the University: Reprioritizing Academic Excellence in Faculty Governance and Accreditation,” American Enterprise Institute, March 2025.

“Accreditation at the Crossroads,” Position Paper published by the Center for Academic Faithfulness and Flourishing, March 2024.

“Why Don't Accreditors Care about Campus Illiberalism?” Washington Examiner, June 2023.

“Higher Education's Path to Illiberalism: A Report on Accreditation,” American Enterprise Institute, April 2023.

“The Arbitrary Monopoly Crushing Higher Education,” National Review, March 2023.

“How to Take Adaptive Learning to the Next Level,” [eCampus News](#), February, 2015.

“The Future of Graduate Business Education: the Adaptive MBA,” AIU White Paper, June 2014.

Editorials published in the [San Antonio Express-News](#), the [Lincoln Journal Star](#), the [Dallas Morning News](#) and the [Texas Catholic](#), 1999-2010.

Academic Scholarship

“Hume's Constitutionalism and the Identity of Constitutional Democracy,” American Political Science Review, September 1996. *Top-ranked journal in political science.*

“A Science of Politics: Hume, The Federalist, and the Politics of Constitutional Attachment,” American Journal of Political Science, July 2001. *2nd-ranked journal in political science.*

“Hume on Pride and the Love of Fame,” Polity, Spring 1996. *4th-ranked in political science.*

“Tocqueville on Leadership and Moral Character,” Tocqueville Review, January 2001.

“The Promise of Peace? Hume and Smith on the Effects of Commerce on War and Peace,” Hume Studies, November 1996.

Book reviews published in the Review of Politics (1997, 1994).

ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

“Bloom’s *Closing*: Inheritance and the Future of the American University,” Association of Core Texts and Courses annual conference, Memphis, 2023.

“*Daniel Deronda*: The Place of Zionism in George Eliot’s Moral Imagination,” Association of Core Texts and Courses annual conference, Memphis, 2023.

“The Future of Accreditation,” Association of Core Texts and Courses annual conference, Dallas, 2022.

Multiple presentations on *Academeum* Course Sharing Model, Council of Independent Colleges Chief Academic Officers Institutes and Presidents Institutes, 2018-2022.

“Academic Sharing: Boosting Retention and Completion,” SXSWedu, Austin, Texas, March 2020

“Impactful Innovation Driven by Adaptive Learning,” Educause, October 2015.

“The Impact of Personalized Learning Platforms on Institutional Transformation,” Educause, October 2015.

“Disrupting Higher Education?” Transforming Edu panel, International Consumer Electronics Show, Las Vegas, NV, January 2015.

“Personalizing Student Learning Using Adaptive Learning,” College Changes Everything Conference (Illinois Board of Higher Education), Tinley Park, IL, July 2014.

“Adaptive Learning,” Conference of the Higher Learning Commission, Chicago, IL, March 2014.

“St. Edward’s Global General Education Program,” Global Learning Forum, Association of American Colleges and Universities, March 2009.

“Program Assessment and Continuous Improvement,” Student Success Summit, Columbus, Ohio, June 2007.

12 Political Philosophy Conference Presentations, 1992-2008.

17 Political Philosophy Talks, 1995-2009.

SERVICE

President, St. Vincent de Paul Society conference, St. Catherine of Siena parish, Austin, TX, 2010-2013, 2016-2019.

Reviewer, multiple academic journals including the American Political Science Review and American Journal of Political Science, 1999-2012.

Board Member, College Forward (college access and persistence), Austin, TX, 2010-2013.

Board Member, Texas Association of Non-profit Organizations, Austin, TX, 2010-2011.

Mayor’s Task Force on Economic Renewal, Ada, OH, 2007.

Judge, Nebraska and National “We the People” high-school student competition sponsored by the Center for Civic Education, 2002-2004.

Member, 48th Street Renovation Project, Lincoln, NE, 2003.

Research/Information Consulting Team to the Minority and Justice Task Force, Lincoln, NE, 2001-02.

Northeast Family Center, Lincoln, NE, 2001-02.

Leadership Lincoln, Lincoln, NE, 2000-01.

Partnership for Economic Development, Lincoln, NE, 2000-04.

Lincoln Rotary Club, Lincoln, NE, 2000-04.

Irving Rotary Club, Irving, TX, 1999-2000.

REFERENCES

Available upon request.