

Dr. Joshua D. Baker

People Focused | Vision Driven

Joshua D. Baker, Ph.D. currently serves as president of Mountwest Community and Technical College (Huntington, WV). Dr. Baker was previously the Vice President of Instruction at Pikes Peak Community College (Colorado Springs, CO). He started his career 20 years ago as a faculty member at Highline Community College (Seattle, WA). Dr. Baker holds a Ph.D. in Community College Leadership and researched the actions of community college presidents that increased organizational trust. He is also an alum of the Aspen Presidential Fellowship.



Dr. Baker has been a leader in increasing student success and closing attainment gaps. He is recognized as an innovator in workforce development, and a champion of the college in the community. These efforts have led to consistent enrollment growth, outpacing like institutions. Dr. Baker believes innovation is facilitated by developing a strong culture of inclusive leadership, focused on serving students in a culture of trust.

His community service includes board membership with Red Cross, Reach Services for Youth, National Council of Instructional Administrators, Chamber of Commerce, multiple development authorities, Community Colleges of Appalachia, and serving on the Workforce Commission for the Community Colleges of Appalachia.

He and his wife, Toni, have three children, two of whom are in college. They are hiking enthusiasts and enjoy exploring our national parks.

Dear Hiring Committee,

I am writing to express my interest in serving as the next President of The College of Southern Nevada. I have long admired CSN, and even sent a team to learn from your medical programs several years ago. I am confident that CSN will continue to play a vital role in building pathways to careers, especially for underserved communities. I want to be part of fulfilling this mission and ensure the sustained success of the county, the college, and our future students. On a personal note, I lived in Las Vegas several years ago and have long desired to return. My wife and I love the community and I would be thrilled to serve in this role.

As you review my resume, you will find that my credentials and experience exceed the desired criteria. Additionally, the following is a concise list of my most relevant qualifications:

- President at Mountwest Community and Technical College in Huntington, WV. A rapidly growing college in both size and influence.
- Former Vice President of Instruction at Pikes Peak State College (formerly Pikes Peak Community College), a 20,000-student college with four campuses. The dynamics of Pikes Peak and Colorado Springs are remarkably similar to CSN.
- Aspen Institute Presidential Fellow for Community College Excellence, 2019-2020.
- PhD in Community College Leadership from Oregon State University. Researched actions of community college presidents that increased organizational trust.
- Successful legislative work, including state funding for dual credit in West Virginia.
- Worked with multiple institutions to build state wide initiatives around dual credit, workforce, and transfer in Washington, Colorado, and West Virginia.
- Faculty member at Highline Community College, the most diverse college in the state of Washington.

For the remainder of this letter I will address how my experience and skillset will support my success as the President of The College of Southern Nevada. For ease of review, I will address the six "Expectations for the President" from the position profile and then discuss the strengths that have guided me throughout my career.

Student Success and Retention

I am a champion for student success, and I have led impactful efforts as President of Mountwest, and as the VP of Academic Affairs at Pikes Peak. Mountwest is increasing success rates, rejecting a long-standing norm of having the lowest rates in the state. Student success is the first priority of our strategic plan, and we are seeing positive results. DFW rates have decreased 10%, and our success rates in science classes have increased 30+%. We have accomplished this by investing in faculty development, enhanced tutoring, improved study spaces, and providing supports that include mental health.

At Pikes Peak we were able to be more direct in our efforts to close equity gaps. Not only did we refine our new faculty training, but we created release opportunities for veteran faculty to engage in development. Emphasis included high impact practices, and a program we called The

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Equity Project. In my five years at Pikes Peak we achieved the highest retention rates in the state. Most importantly, the fantastic training efforts were organized and led by faculty.

As the CSN president, student success and addressing equity gaps will be my top priority. I will invest in faculty development to ensure we have the best teaching and similarly invest in staff development across the college. We will dive deep into disaggregated data to ensure that we not only have equitable representation in the college and programs, but also in attainment, and career success. As a workforce champion, I will continue to promote the value of short-term trainings as a pathway to economic mobility.

Community-Centric Leadership

When I arrived in West Virginia, I was appalled by the lack of awareness regarding community colleges. After I was hired, my board chair lovingly told me the college was irrelevant. I am proud to say we are now present and prominent. We made it our goal to be the “partner of choice”. I have met with scores of companies, school leaders, and community groups. Early meetings with the Black Pastors Association, for example, helped me understand a truly underserved community. They opened the door for lasting relationships and purpose driven activities, as well as meaningful service learning.

We are now recognized for our partnership in solving community challenges. For example, we recently partnered on a grant with Hope Nation, an organization building a comprehensive addiction recovery plan. We provide on-the-job training, and they provide wrap around support for three years. The grant benefits the partner more than us but ensures Mountwest is intertwined with the great work in our community. Organizations know that we say yes, and that we ensure win-win results.

Creative workforce programming is one of our most valuable contributions to our community. Mountwest is becoming one of the most innovative workforce institutions in the country. We are launching multiple programs each year. All new programs include some of the following: flexible scheduling, stackable short term (micro) credentials, accelerated, Learn and Earn, and housed in the workplace. Embedded general education for the 30-credit certificate opens the door for students that are terrified of traditional academics. We are making college achievable for students that have never considered college an option.

CSN is perhaps the most important partner in solving local challenges. My first year is a valuable opportunity to present to community leaders. However, the one-on-one meetings are even more important. I need to meet with our legislators, donors, industry, and community leaders in my first 6 months. I cannot wait to engage with our various constituencies, to listen, learn, and build relationships.

Shared Governance and Inclusivity

I was fortunate to be a faculty member at Highline, a college that lived shared governance. As a result of inclusive leadership, the institution was innovative and collaborative. It inspired my dissertation on organizational trust and prepared me to be an overly transparent leader.

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I meet with shared governance groups monthly, and hold open forums. I also visit offices and ask for feedback, concerns, and ideas. One faculty member commented that my arrival sparked a reborn purpose at the college, and that we finally became a “real college” under my leadership. Not only are we performing at a high level, we are doing it together. Instead of squabbling, we take care of each other, and we take care of students. I embrace that the best ideas come from the people doing the work, and as leaders, we need to empower innovators.

Pikes Peak was an institution with a strong academic history, but faculty complained about being left out of the decision-making process. Staff expressed concerns about being ignored. Upon my arrival, I purposefully invited both to the table as collaborators in building solutions. In partnership, we elevated both groups as problem solvers. My leadership was verified via survey, which happened to be conducted right before I arrived, and after my second year. There was a 20-25% increase in the following categories:

- Belief that the college was innovative.
- Trust and confidence in leadership.
- Informed about what is going on.

At CSN, I will actively promote transparency, listening, and inclusive leadership. You will see me at college events. I will be present. Also, I value frequent input from the faculty, staff, and students. I will host forums at each campus and enthusiastically engage with shared governance groups. I want to create stability in a transition year, and lay the foundation for inclusive leadership, trust, and innovation.

Fiscal Responsibility and Sustainability

I am a disciplined and experienced fiscal leader. I have led through the good times, and the bad. Structured planning and budgeting ensure that we are able to budget responsibly, and invest wisely in our future. In my first year at Mountwest, we had to reduce force by 10%. After a thoughtful process, which involved complete board support, we began to rebuild. Today we are sitting on three straight years of 10-20% growth in enrollment. We have added strategic faculty and staff positions, and continue to build towards a bright future.

Serving in different states has given me valuable perspective. An annual planning process ensures we are investing in the right priorities. Having managed a multitude of initiatives, I have a good sense about programs, pilots, and effectively analyze risks. I quickly learned to strategically navigate the funding models in WA, IN, CO, and WV, and I will do the same in Nevada.

I will ensure that CSN uses a systemic and thorough planning process. We will educate our employees with transparent budget presentations. Our purposeful and conservative approach will allow us to invest in our strategic plan, which includes expanding services throughout our service area. I will aggressively pursue additional funding sources, including fundraising, grants, non-credit trainings, and state and federal support.

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Strategic and Visionary Leadership

The strategic plan at Mountwest was established in a collaborative process between our college, the board, community, and industry. The strategic pillars include student success, workforce development, community connections, and professional development. The strategic plan is executed by implementing an annual planning process so that we can verify our progress and identify opportunities to improve. The results are clear, we have increased student attainment, enrollment, industry partnerships, fundraising, reserves, and achieved funding increases from the legislature.

After a year at Pikes Peak, I identified an opportunity to build an emphasis that would serve our students, hospitals, and boost our reputation. After three years of planning and preparation we opened a new Medical Simulation campus. We enhanced existing programs, started four new AAS degrees, and three BAS degrees. Colorado Springs, like Las Vegas/Clark County, has a booming economy with strong population growth. We have a responsibility to think boldly, and act with confidence to create big solutions.

Short term trainings are the current emphasis, and it will only expand. It is only a matter of time before Short Term Pell is approved. I anticipate a race to the market by proprietary colleges, and even universities. Community Colleges will win this race because of our previous success in short term credentials, and our understanding of non-traditional students. This will be impactful on enrollment and completion and will emphasize the pathways model. Increasing integration between the non-credit and credit world will strengthen our role in workforce development and closing attainment gaps.

As the President of CSN I will enthusiastically engage in an inclusive strategic planning process. The integrated voices of the community, college, and students will help us identify the right plan. I will work with my team to ensure we fulfill our commitments. We will create annual work plans each year, and review our progress regularly. We will report our progress to our campus, board, and community. Our community needs us to think and act boldly.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

I love DEI work. I have an emotional commitment to ensure that all communities and individuals feel welcomed, supported, and included on our campus. Our students need to feel loved. Having worked in four different states, I have learned that the vernacular and approaches are heavily impacted by the local and state context. I have learned to adjust my approach to match the local needs, but my values remain the same. All students deserve our love and care. They deserve happiness and success. It is a privilege to implement equity strategies to ensure the representation and success of all communities and students.

At Mountwest, this work focuses on celebratory events, club participation, and community engagement. Student representation in leadership and activities is particularly strong with members of our Pride community, and first-generation students. We continue to expand our efforts with students of color and veterans, but are making significant progress. At Pikes Peak we were able to be much more open and aggressively attack success rates with The Equity

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Project, pursue HSI status with bi-lingual and inclusion strategies, and create stronger affinity groups like The Men of Color.

I have been enjoying the Coyote Conversations Podcasts, and it seems you are already doing fantastic and meaningful DEI work. I will be a cheerleader, and a participant. As evidenced by my work in West Virginia, I am very capable of adjusting strategies to ensure progress regardless of the challenges. The data drives our efforts and helps us to identify representation, success rates, and employment. The voices on campus and in the community help us identify where we can improve and create a true culture of belonging.

Final Thoughts

I'd like to emphasize the key strengths (with some repetition) that will ensure my successful leadership at CSN.

I lead innovation by building a culture of trust. I practice transparency and value direct input. Building an amazing internal culture is my commitment, and it requires continual effort. This has been an emphasis of my career.

I solve community challenges. My work as President of Mountwest has been driven by an intense commitment to address community issues. Our state has painfully low college completion rates, and a lack of skilled workers. Additionally, I am increasingly compelled to address student mental health challenges. Community colleges have a unique opportunity to proactively address mental health, and it should permeate throughout the college experience.

I am strategic in navigating politics and fundraising. I build friendships, listen, and help legislators and donors identify projects that align with their values. Our current legislators are passionate about work-based learning and increasing degree attainment. We just passed legislation to support apprenticeship work. Meanwhile, most of our donors are passionate about students overcoming barriers. It is so rewarding to align these key stakeholders with opportunities to support the college.

Being a community college president is so fun. I love my students, the college team, and the community we serve. It would be my honor to serve as the President of The College of Southern Nevada. It is an ideal professional and personal fit. I would hope to serve in this role for a minimum of ten years, and very likely longer. I look forward to discussing my candidacy.

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DR. JOSHUA D. BAKER

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EDUCATION

PhD in Community College Leadership Oregon State University Dissertation - Creation of organizational trust in community colleges	2014
Masters of Science Brigham Young University	2005
Bachelor of Arts Brigham Young University	2003
Community College Transfer Bellevue Community College	1999

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

President, Mountwest Community and Technical College, *Huntington, WV* | 2021-Current

CEO serving an economically and socially challenged community in transition. 60 full-time faculty, serving 3,000 students annually. \$20 million budget.

- Institutional leadership
 - Developed new strategic plan focused on student success and workforce development.
 - Guided college through successful accreditation process.
 - Improved culture by implementing communication and shared governance practices.
 - Extensive development of leadership team.
 - Right sized staffing to align with budgets. 10% RIF required in 1st year.
 - Led enrollment growth 10%-20+% for three consecutive years, after 10 years of decrease.
 - Developed systematic planning and budgeting processes, utilizing data with accountability process.
 - Reduced D/F/W rates 10%.
 - Built new Learning Commons and enhanced study areas to address CCSSE results.
- Government and Community Relations
 - Successfully lobbied for state-wide funding for dual credit. Funding allowed us to offer dual credit for free, increasing access for 1st generation students. Statewide allocation of \$4M.
 - Received two federal earmarks. \$1+ million, Cyber Security, and Skilled Trades pipeline.
 - Led efforts for legislators to build and fund pathway from apprenticeship to AAS degree.
 - Effectively changing the perception of community college by meeting with legislators and via presentations, including State Chamber Conference.
 - Led college from being “irrelevant”, to being a “preferred partner” with industry.
 - Extensive work with the Department of Ed, obtained permission for innovative workforce practices.

- Workforce Development
 - Mountwest emerging as a leader in innovative workforce design.
 - Built many programs that utilize flexible structures to create access for working adults.
 - Secured multiple grants each year, many of which involve key community partners.
 - Enhanced degree portfolio by partnering with Marshall University, high school tech center, industry, and non-profits to offer collaborative degrees.
- Foundation
 - Rebuilt foundation from the ground up.
 - Increased scholarships 100%.
 - Largest scholarship donation - \$400,000.
 - Started Emergency Fund for students.

Vice President of Instruction, Pikes Peak Community College, Colorado Springs, CO | 2016-2021

Chief Academic Officer for large, multi-campus institution in a diverse community. 200 full-time faculty, 800 adjuncts, 9,000 FTE, and 20,000 student head count. \$45 million budget for academics.

- Executive Leadership
 - Critical role in developing and executing strategic plan.
 - Focus Goal Committee member, increasing faculty diversity.
- Statewide Leadership
 - Served on multiple committees, including Analytics Committee, redesigning state plan and development metrics.
 - Visited China as state delegate to explore student recruitment.
 - One of two community college reps on Academic Council, a statewide collaboration between two-year and four-year schools.
- Academic Leadership
 - Developed annual work plan that aligned with state and college goals.
 - Fostered culture of shared governance and innovation.
 - In bi-annual survey, faculty communicated:
 - 24% increase in belief that college was innovative
 - 24% increase in trust and confidence in leadership
 - 21% in “informed about what is goin on”
 - Used CCSSE results (student engagement) to drive investment in High Impact Processes.
 - Went from below national average to above average in two years.
 - Developed annual program snapshots (program review) to identify opportunities and inform budgeting.
 - Grew OER exponentially across the college.
 - Recipient of three grants from CDHE, led the state in return on OER investment.
 - Regular use of disaggregated data to drive student success initiatives.
- Workforce Development
 - Created new degree programs, including Cyber Security, and multiple healthcare programs, including two bachelor’s degrees.
 - Converted construction program to competency based.
 - Developed apprenticeship programs, including Medical Assisting.

- Accreditation
 - Leadership in two successful visits (BAS and multi-location).
 - Contributor and leadership for successful 2019 virtual visit.
- Budget
 - Developed effective and efficient planning and budgeting process.
- Facilities
 - Acquired 70,000 sq. ft. building for Allied Health and Simulation.
 - Developed Learning Commons (combines library and tutoring).
 - New dance, theater, and art gallery building.
- Foundation
 - Made kick-off pitch to foundation board for \$4 million campaign.

Campus Dean/Academic Dean, Bates Technical College, Tacoma, WA | 2013-2016

Campus dean at new STEM campus. Leadership in General Education, Adult Basic Education, English as a Second Language, Allied Health programs, Business and Office Programs, and the Tutoring Center. Oversaw more than 90 faculty (union), staff, and administrators with responsibility for more than \$5 million budget. Programs spread over three campuses and many other locations in and urban setting. 3,500+ FTE, 8,000 head count.

- Adult Basic Education
 - Launched HS21+ (competency based high school diploma for adults).
 - Obtained Innovation Grant to contextualize ABE curriculum for career clusters, preparing students for workforce programs.
 - Started seven I-BEST programs (academic and life skills support in program), increasing FTE, student success, retention, and achievement points.
- Academic Programs
 - Started online Accounting program.
 - Created data driven process plan course offerings.
 - Developed transfer agreement with University of Washington-Tacoma.
 - First ever of this type for the technical college.
 - Dean representative on committees, including curriculum, assessment, tenure, and e-learning compensation.
- Statewide Leadership
 - Representative on Council for Basic Skills, Articulation and Transfer Council, Intercollege Relations Committee, and Allied Health Deans and Directors.

Assistant Academic Dean, Vincennes University, Greenwood, IN | 2012-2013

Head of program/campus located at Center Grove High School that served more than 600 Early College students. Supervised office staff, tutors, and instructors. Obtained Early College Endorsement, achieving the high score for all applicants.

- Transformed floundering program with bad reputation into a well-respected and high performing program. New registrations increased from 90 to 150, with notable increase in quality of students, within one year. The following year enrollment was at capacity, with approximately 200 applicants.
- Partnered with parents, faculty, the high school, and community members to enhance both the experience and the reputation.
- Assistant Director for XMester, a two-week academic camp where rising seniors earned college credit and experienced college. Hired and managed 22 “Fellows” to guide participant experience.

Started as a full-time instructor, transitioned into a variety of administrative assignments. Highline College (dropped community with addition of bachelor's degrees) is an urban/suburban college near Seattle, and identifies as the most diverse college in Washington.

- Faculty Leadership
 - Weekend College Coordinator
 - Prior Learning Assessment Coordinator
 - SkillUP Grant Manager
 - Created weekend option for Chemical Dependency and Human Services.
 - Developed full supports, including managing emergency funds.
 - Personal Fitness Trainer Program Manager
 - Launched and managed new degree program.
- Development and Co-Curricular
 - Institutional Advancement Internship
 - Basketball and Cross-Country Coach

SELECTED RECOGNITION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Aspen Presidential Fellow
 - Aspen Institute for Community College Excellence, 2019-2020
- Diversity Award Honorable Mention
 - Pikes Peak Community College, 2019
- Combined Fund Drive Campaign Manager Training
 - April 2011
- Washington State Leadership Training for Workforce Deans
 - "Dean Academy", 2009-2010

COMMUNITY AND HIGHER ED LEADERSHIP

- Commission on Economic and Workforce Development, AACC
 - Commission Member. 2023-Current
- Community College of Appalachia
 - **Board Member.** 2024-Current
- Community College of Philadelphia Leadership Program
 - Mentor. 2023-2024
- Advantage Valley (Regional Development)
 - **Board Member.** 2023-Current
- Huntington Area Development Council
 - **Board Member.** 2021-Current
- Huntington Chamber of Commerce
 - **Board Member.** 2021-Current
- National Council for Instructional Administrators
 - **Board Member.** 2018-2021
- Red Cross of Southeastern Colorado
 - **Board Member.** 2017-2021
- Pierce County Transitional Services
 - Team Member. 2012-2016

- REACH Tacoma (programming for youth)
 - **Board Member.** 2013-2015
- Centralia College
 - Guided eLearning staff through strategic planning. 2015
- Southern Virginia University
 - Consulted for Summer programming. Fall 2012
- Renton School District
 - Allied Health, advisory committee member. 2007-2011
- Brigham Young University
 - Graduate Teaching Assistant. 2003-2005n
- Orem High School/Brigham Young University, Student Teacher
 - History. 2003
- Nevada Las Vegas Mission
 - Missionary. 1997-1999

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS (AND ARTICLES)

- Academic Leadership
 - National Council for Instructional Administrators. 2022/24
- Increasing Certificate Completion with Embedded Gen Eds
 - National Conference- AACC. 2024
- Addressing Shortages in Workforce Faculty
 - Workforce Development Institute - AACC. 2024
- Future of Higher Ed Panelist
 - WV State Chamber of Commerce Conference. 2023
- Apprenticeship and Work Based Learning Meeting Member.
 - White House. 2023
- Working with Industry to Design Workforce Programs
 - American Association of Community Colleges, 2023
- Academic Leadership
 - National Council for Instructional Administrators. 2022
- Planning and Budgeting (article)
 - National Council for Instructional Administrators. 2020
- Change Philosophy
 - American Association for Women in Community Colleges. 2020
- Organizational Trust
 - Chair Academy, Denver. 2018
- Leadership Styles
 - CCCS Student Leadership Conference, Denver. 2017
- Leadership Panelist
 - CCCS Dean's Academy, Denver. 2017
- Wellness, Re-Entry, and Careers
 - Purdy Women's Correctional Institute. 2013-2015
- Dual Credit- A Win-Win for All
 - ACT Conference, Indianapolis, IN
- Early College and Dual Credit
 - Greenwood Rotary. 2012
- Prior Learning Assessment
 - Statewide PLA meeting, Washington. 2011
- Implementing a College Wide Assessment Plan
 - White Water Institute. 2011