

Dr. James Walter Ross

RESUME EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Served 25 years as a President or Vice President at colleges in three of America's most-respected community college systems. Most of this executive leadership, totaling 14 years, has been in the Florida College System. These positions included Vice President for Advancement and Public Affairs at Eastern Florida State College in Florida; Vice President for Institutional Advancement and Development at Piedmont Virginia Community College in Virginia; and President at Pamlico Community College in North Carolina.
- Gained extensive leadership experience in overseeing all aspects of community colleges, including instruction; student services; financial management; facilities; external funding; and community relations. Excelled in collaborative leadership that inspired outstanding team-oriented success that increased morale, enrollment, student success, instructional and workforce programs, community partnerships and service, private donations, governmental appropriations, positive media coverage, and national recognition for elite excellence.
- Served as Vice President of Advancement and Public Affairs at Eastern Florida State College, a large college with 25,000 students and four campuses on Florida's Space Coast. In addition to initially overseeing communications, the foundation, external funding, and legislative affairs, responsibilities were expanded dramatically to oversee more than half of all college departments. These additions included human resources; enrollment management; student services; athletics; registrar; IT; workforce development; the King Center for the Performing Arts; five child-care centers; international education; and dual enrollment/early admissions.
- Raised \$55 million in all types of fundraising. Gained exceptional success in capital campaigns, major gifts, planned giving, and annual campaigns. This includes leading three successful capital campaigns; making the ask that gained six gifts of one million dollars or more; planned giving successes that include receiving a \$20 million planned gift; leading record-setting annual campaigns; and establishing two colleges' alumni associations.
- As a former U.S. Congress Staff Member, have since excelled in developing extremely strong relationships with elected officials and utilizing expertise gained in legislative funding to secure \$40 million in special state governmental appropriations. With that and \$55 million in fundraising, I have raised nearly \$100 million in external funding that has been used to significantly benefit students and strengthen communities.
- Most recently served for seven years as President of Pamlico Community College (PCC), earning numerous national recognitions for elite excellence. Ranked number 1 for student success among all community colleges in the U.S. in 2021 and 2023 by WalletHub as it determined top educational outcomes of students throughout the U.S. In addition, PCC was ranked the number 2 best overall community college in the U.S. in 2019 and 2021 by SmartAsset. U.S. Department of Education data was used to establish these rankings.
- Led efforts that dramatically improved morale of PCC faculty and staff by more than 55%. By 2021, a remarkable 95% of PCC employees had high morale. At least 90% of employees had high morale as per accreditation surveys throughout the past four years.
- Owned successful publishing business. Gained extensive business and marketing skills.

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SERVICE

President

Pamlico Community College // Grantsboro, NC // 2016 – 2024

Oversaw all aspects of college including instruction; student services; financial management; facilities; and community relations with student-centered, optimistic, and inspirational leadership. I led an ambitious effort to help students achieve better lives by PCC increasing overall excellence. I met with every employee one-on-one for an hour apiece to develop a shared vision of becoming the best college anywhere and later had numerous collegewide thank you/ recognition events. Employees responded magnificently with extraordinary team-oriented dedication. The uplifting results:

PCC earned the ranking of the number 1 community college in the United States in student success for 2021 and again in 2023 by WalletHub. PCC is ranked number 6 nationwide in 2024. WalletHub analyzes federal data on student education outcomes for community colleges across America in doing so. It analyzes graduation rates; first-year retention rate; transfer-out rate; student faculty ratio; and other federal data.

PCC also earned elite rankings for overall excellence from SmartAsset. PCC was ranked twice during my presidency as the second-best overall community college in America. The number 2 ranking was gained in 2019 and again in 2021. SmartAsset analyzed federal data on more than 800 community colleges in the U.S. PCC is currently nationally-ranked number 12 in *America's Best Community Colleges-2023*.

The PCC Board of Trustees has given me extremely high marks for performance. In my 2023 evaluation, I received the highest possible scores—a perfect rounded 4—from each of the 12 Board members for each one of the 32 evaluation criteria. The Board also in 2023 unanimously voted to give me a new four-year contract.

I also met one-on-one with all community leaders to listen to their needs. PCC's community partnerships with schools, businesses, non-profit organizations, churches, civic organizations, media, government, and citizens have been vastly strengthened and expanded. We enjoyed a 300% increase in community residents coming to our campus to enjoy events; built nearly 100 new business and community organization partnerships; and added 40 new educational programs to serve community needs.

We ended all fees for all non-profit organizations in our service area to use our large and beautiful Delamar Center. These groups previously paid \$800 per event and the center was seldom used. Now with free use of this facility for all our community's non-profit organizations, it is almost continuously in use. Churches, civic groups, public safety, health providers, military, governmental entities, chamber of commerce, and all other non-profits use it for free for their fundraisers, celebrations, and public events. Community appreciation for this is remarkable and has created even more goodwill than ever imagined when I made the decision in 2017 to end these fees.

The strong community partnerships helped bring very important results. These include exceptional PCC enrollment growth of 22% from 2016 to 2020 while community colleges nationwide suffered a steep 10% decline; 90% increase in positive media; largest increases in County funding in two decades; and unprecedented success in gaining special state appropriations in all four biennial legislative sessions of my presidency. These four appropriations ranged from \$650,000 to \$20 million gained.

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Vice President for Institutional Advancement and Development Educational Foundation Executive Director

Piedmont Virginia Community College // Charlottesville, VA // 2013 - 2016

Oversaw all fundraising; adult student recruitment; media relations; grants; alumni relations; and community relations. Planned and led record-setting annual campaigns, exceeding previous high by 60%. Planned and led overall fundraising that generated a 40% increase. Oversaw 100% increase in generating grants, gaining \$2 million in new annual revenues. Established the alumni association. Initiated emergency student fund initiative. Expanded Foundation funds gained for faculty stipends for classroom innovation. Made the successful ask for two separate million-dollar donations.

Owner and President

Ross Publishing Company // Slippery Rock, PA // 2011-2012

Authored *The Only Way to Lead*, a 149-page biography on a community college president. Wrote 152-page doctoral dissertation and completed doctorate degree.

Vice President for Advancement and Public Affairs

Eastern Florida State College // Cocoa, FL // 2006-2010

Oversaw 184 employees and became second-in-command to the President in this college with 25,000 students and four campuses. My position expanded dramatically because of the significant success enjoyed with the departments I led. I ultimately oversaw human resources; student services; enrollment management; IT; registrar; international education; early admissions and dual enrollment; business relations; fundraising; marketing; media relations; WBCC-TV; alumni affairs; legislative relations; community relations; two performing arts centers; security; five child-care centers; community relations; and workforce development. I oversaw a budget of approximately \$50 million in supervising more than half of the college operations.

Vice President for Development

Crosswinds Youth Services // Cocoa, FL // 1998- 2006

Responsible for all fundraising, marketing, media relations, and community relations. Initiated a development department from its infancy, making it highly-successful in all aspects of fundraising. Planned and led two successful capital campaigns. Provided leadership for successful state legislative initiatives. The Governor called me a state model for establishing and strengthening 500 business partnerships.

Associate Vice President for College Relations

Eastern Florida State College // Cocoa, FL // 1989- 1998

Responsible for all internal and external communications, marketing, and media relations. Assisted the College President in leading effort to be a national model for racial harmony. By providing community outreach encouraging all residents to know the value of education, helped the college earn an ACCT national award as one of the two best community colleges in the nation for equal opportunity for women and minorities. Earned CASE award for best media relations among all colleges and universities in the Southeastern U.S. Was host of an uplifting weekly TV talk show featuring students, employees, alumni, and business leaders. Praised by faculty leaders for “outstanding leadership” in improving faculty and administration relations.

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Owner and President

Ross Publishing Company // Slippery Rock, PA // 1982-1989

Oversaw all aspects of running the business. Authored nationally-praised book. Interviewed on NBC Today Show and on television shows across America. Developed extremely positive relationships with national media to gain publicity.

Admissions and Financial Aid Officer

Penn State University // Monaca, PA // 1981

This was a temporary position while the incumbent was on leave.

Staff Area Representative

United States Congress, District Office // Butler, PA // 1979-1980

Oversaw all aspects of running the Butler County District Office. Represented Congressman Eugene V. Atkinson with citizens, community organizations, and governmental entities. Interacted extensively with all federal agencies. This led to me authoring book on Social Security to help disabled citizens that received national praise. Prior to being hired for this position, I was a candidate for the United States Congress in the primary election and finished third in a field of 12 candidates.

Education

Building Inner Strengths of Successful Leaders Program

Harvard Graduate School of Education // Cambridge, MA // 2012

This Harvard program on its campus allowed my leadership abilities to soar to elite levels. It emphasized developing listening skills, emotional intelligence, self-confidence, and resiliency in navigating crises with visionary, calm, and optimistic leadership that allows the leader and organization to emerge stronger after a crisis.

Doctor Of Education Degree

Nova Southeastern University // Fort Lauderdale, FL // 2012

Major: Organizational Leadership

GPA: 3.94

Doctoral dissertation examined the impact of state budget reductions on community colleges and entrepreneurial leadership in Florida community colleges that was utilized to effectively manage these reductions through innovation, new revenue sources, cutting unnecessary spending, and visionary organizational management.

Master of Education Degree

Slippery Rock University // Slippery Rock, PA // 1978

Major: Social Studies

GPA: 3.8

Bachelor of Arts Degree

Slippery Rock University // Slippery Rock, PA // 1976

Major: Communications Second Major: Political

Science GPA: 3.4. Elected Student Government President.

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QUOTES FROM COMMUNITY AND COLLEGE LEADERS

From Pamlico Community College (PCC) Board Chair Bob Lyon...

“Dr. Jim Ross is a visionary leader. He is an energetic leader with a passion for the transformative power of higher education. Dr. Ross has done an outstanding job as President of Pamlico Community College for the past seven years. Dr. Ross’ visionary leadership has brought out the very best in our faculty and staff and resulted in PCC being ranked number 1 in the United States for student success among all community colleges on two occasions in the past three years. In receiving national and state honors, Dr. Ross humbly never accepted personal credit but instead joyfully gave total credit to faculty and staff, who he enthusiastically praised every chance he got. This was one of many reasons employees showed very high morale. Dr. Ross did an outstanding job. He worked well with the Board of Trustees and he will be missed.”

From Former Eastern Florida State College Board of Trustees Chair Alberta Wilson...

“He was a highly-successful Vice President overseeing vast parts of the college on all four campuses, second only to the President in scope of responsibility. He constantly displayed remarkable leadership as the second-in-command with exceptional planning abilities, creativity, and decision-making. He assumed leadership over more than half of the college departments because his leadership brought outstanding results in each area he led and resulted in an enormous role he confidently excelled in...He eventually supervised 184 full-time employees who helped serve our 25,000 students well. He is a joyful man of deep faith who continually uplifts and brings out the best in all around him.”

From Former Eastern Florida State College Board of Trustees Chair Jim Handley...

"Jim is an outstanding executive, he is very personable, hard-working, and relates very well with everyone he comes in contact with. As V.P. of Advancement and Public Affairs, Jim was the college contact with the public and media. He did an outstanding job of representing BCC to the outside world. Jim was asked to add numerous other college departments to his duties because his areas exceeded all expectations. Then he was asked to add even more. And again and again. The areas he ultimately oversaw added up to more than half of all college departments and 184 full-time employees. During my Chairmanship, Jim was second in command to the President for our college serving 25,000 students, one of America’s largest colleges. He routinely met with the President and me during all our meetings and was instrumental in achieving many nationally-recognized successes. I believe the exceptionally large role Jim excelled at prepare him extremely well to be an outstanding President at any large college similar to Eastern Florida State College with up to 30,000 students.

From Former Piedmont Virginia Community College (PVCC) Board Chair Ava Pippen...

“In addition to Dr. Ross’ knowledge, his communication and interpersonal skills are exceptional. He connects easily with people with his sincerity, warmth, and positive demeanor. He has an excellent sense of humor and is an engaging conversationalist. He has the unique ability to inspire a diverse range of people to pursue and achieve high goals. He is spectacular at making the ask for major gifts. He gained two million-dollar gifts for PVCC, and one was from a retired hairdresser. I introduced him to two business leaders at a luncheon and before we said goodbye, he gained a large gift...”

From Former Piedmont Va. Community College Foundation Board Vice Chair Bob Gest...

“He has a remarkable gift for establishing relationships. I consider him an extraordinary leader who truly cares about people and brings out the best in all he works with, and this is the basis for the tremendous success in fundraising he has achieved.”

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From Former Florida State Senate President Mike Haridopolos...

“Jim Ross represents an ideal higher education President for today’s new era of budget accountability. He has exceptional fundraising, legislative relations, business relations, and enrollment management skills to generate new revenues. Importantly, he also has an entrepreneur’s innovative mindset with an ability to expertly manage budgets to get the most out of every dollar while still achieving excellence. His communication and people skills are extraordinary...”

From North Carolina State Senator Norman Sanderson...

“Few community colleges in NC have an advocate like Jim Ross. He is a man with extraordinary vision and the passion required to make those visions a reality. When others say it can’t be done, Dr. Ross uses his creativity and proves them wrong. He is a most effective communicator, a problem solver, and a man who loves people and wants only the best for them. He has used his extraordinary people gifts to win the hearts and admiration of our citizens. He has become more than my community college President, he has become a trusted friend.”

From Boeing Florida Employees Community Fund Board Past President Paul Cummins...

“He is one of the most effective communicators I have ever seen or heard. His words have the unmistakable glow of honesty and sincerity. He has a very unique ability to persuade people to give extraordinary, and even unprecedented, amounts of money and support...”

From Eastern Florida State College Past Faculty Leader Randy Eastep...

“I deeply admire the outstanding leadership he has demonstrated in improving the faculty and administration relations...As an official of the faculty union, I had many opportunities to meet with Jim. There was never a single moment that I felt he was less than honest and less than interested in bringing successful resolutions to conflicts. I have never met a person with greater compassion or a greater ability to bring two sides together...”

From PVCC Donor Relations Director Simone Alley Who Reported to Dr. Ross...

“Dr. Ross is a visionary and a true servant leader. In a room full of students, faculty, colleagues, staff, board members, and donors, he makes every person feel beloved, respected, and special.”

From Pamlico Community College Acting President Michelle Willis...

“I found Dr. Ross an absolute joy to work with. As my supervisor, he was also my mentor. He believed in me, challenged me to be better than I ever thought possible, respected me tremendously, listened to my opinions and concerns on all issues, truly cared about my family and me, and always treated me and all around me with dignity and respect. He treats employees as treasured professionals. I believe he is a leader that comes around once in a lifetime.”

From Pamlico County Business Owner Gloria Cowell...

“He has made opening the PCC campus to our community a top priority. I view his professionalism and interaction between his staff, faculty, and students to be the best I have ever seen. However, I believe his biggest asset is his compassion and service to our community.”

From Former Florida Today Executive Editor Ken Paulson...

“Jim was constructive and not confrontational, striving always to build a bridge of better understanding and communications. Jim was forthcoming and truthful...We found him to be both responsive and reliable in his relationship with the press and public.”