

RICHARD A. CARVAJAL

Higher Education Professional Experience:

PRESIDENT

01/2017-Present

Valdosta State University, Valdosta, Georgia

- * Serve as the chief executive officer for a highly diverse doctoral-granting regional comprehensive institution serving 10,000+ traditional and non-traditional learners
- * Provide leadership in the areas of academic, strategic, fiscal, and facility planning, institutional effectiveness, enrollment management, alumni and community relations, fundraising and donor relations, intercollegiate athletics, and board relations
- * Provide direct oversight to the university's executive leadership team and other senior leaders, and indirect oversight to the institution's 900+ full-time faculty and staff

INTERIM PRESIDENT

12/2015-12/2016

Darton State College, Albany, Georgia

- * Asked by the University System of Georgia's Chancellor to take leave from the presidency at Bainbridge State to lead a 4,500-student state college during its historic consolidation process, ultimately creating a new masters-granting university
- * Provided direct oversight to the college's executive leadership team and indirect oversight to the institution's 300+ full-time faculty and staff
- * Led the efforts to create a new mission/vision & apply for initial accreditation

PRESIDENT

11/2010-12/2015

Bainbridge State College, Bainbridge, Georgia

- * Served as the chief executive officer for a 2,500-student access institution offering general education, technical certificates, and high-demand bachelor's degrees
- * Provided direct oversight to the college's executive leadership team and indirect oversight to the institution's 200+ full-time faculty and staff
- * Led the effort to write a SACSCOC self-study in just five weeks & was re-affirmed

VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT SUCCESS SERVICES

07/2006-11/2010

Cascadia College, Bothell, Washington

- * Reporting to the president, oversaw all aspects of the Student Success Services division, including enrollment management, international education, and the bursar
- * Taught leadership and first-year experience courses & oversaw faculty in those areas
- * Served as the President in his absence

DEAN OF STUDENT SERVICES (Chief Student Affairs Officer)

07/2003-06/2006

Independence Community College, Independence, Kansas

- * Reporting to the president, oversaw all aspects of the Student Services division, including athletics, admissions, student life, residence life, and a childcare center
- * Taught courses in speech communications and leadership
- * Served as the president in her absence, then advised Board members as the lone campus representative on the search committee for a new president

Higher Education Experience (continued):

ASSOCIATE DEAN OF STUDENT SERVICES

07/1997-06/2003

Coker University, Hartsville, South Carolina

- * Oversaw all aspects of this residential liberal arts institution's student development program, including student life, related facilities, and student support services
- * Taught courses in speech communications

DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND RESIDENCE LIFE

07/1995-06/1997

Eureka College, Eureka, Illinois

- * Served as the chief housing officer for a residential liberal arts college
- * Created the first campus master plan in 20+ years at the request of the Board Chair

GRADUATE COORDINATOR

08/1993-05/1995

Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Carbondale, Illinois

- * Completed graduate assistantships in multicultural affairs & first-year programs

Education:

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA, Columbia, South Carolina

Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Administration, Higher Ed. - 3.97 G.P.A.

- * Dissertation Topic - *Students of Surprise: An Examination of Unusual Growth in Social Competency*

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY AT CARBONDALE, Carbondale, Illinois

Master of Science in College Student Personnel Administration - 4.00 G.P.A.

EAST CENTRAL UNIVERSITY, Ada, Oklahoma

Bachelor of Science in Mass Communications/Sociology - 3.98 G.P.A.

Government & Public Affairs Experience:

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Lyndon B. Johnson Congressional Fellow - Oklahoma's 3rd District

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON D.C. COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Public Relations Assistant

Professional Publications & Presentations:

"From Poverty to Purpose," Chapter in *Transformational Encounters: Shaping Diverse College and University Leaders*, A. Gonzalez, D. M. Ching, L. S. White, and R. D. Kelly, Editors, NASPA Press, Washington, D.C., 2018.

Have repeatedly served as a keynote speaker, facilitated professional presentations and workshops, and contributed as a panelist at local, state, regional, and national conferences and meetings on a wide variety of topics including:

- * Perseverance in the face of significant obstacles
- * Community/regional re-envisioning and partnerships
- * Personal and professional mentoring
- * Strategic Enrollment Management
- * Mental health care in a college/university setting
- * Generational studies
- * Personal & professional ethics

Honors and Awards:

GeorgiaTrend Magazine 500 Most Influential Leaders of Georgia – 2022, '23, '24, '25
James Magazine Most Influential Georgians list – 2024, 2025
“Changing Student Lives” Recognition, 2023 University System of Georgia Student Advisory Council Spring Meeting
2016 Leadership Georgia Graduate (state’s premier leadership certification program)
2011 Above & Beyond Award – given in honor of “a commitment to excellence”
Honored by a donor in 2011 with the formation of the Dr. Richard Carvajal Scholarship, given annually to a student who hopes to use education, as I did, to rise out of poverty
2008-2009 World Affairs Council Fellow
2005 Leadership Kansas Graduate (state’s premier leadership certification program)
2004 Independence Community College Most Inspiring Faculty/Staff (student body vote)
National Association of Student Personnel Administrators Minority Fellow
Washington Center Fellow - one of 65 selected nationally
George Nigh Award for East Central University – outstanding university graduate

Professional and Community Involvement (examples of):

Co-Chair/Founding Member, One Valdosta-Lowndes Community Re-Envisioning Effort
President, Gulf South Conference Executive Committee (NCAA Division II athletics)
Chair, University System of Georgia Mental Health Taskforce
Commencement Address, The University of Belize (the nation’s national university)
Co-Chair, University System of Georgia Online Learning Task Force
Chief Facilitator, Bainbridge/Decatur County Dispute Resolution (avoided litigation)
SACSCOC On-Site Review Committee Presidential Participant
Rotary International – Paul Harris Fellow

Professional Accomplishments (examples of):

- * Successfully managed Valdosta State’s recovery from two Category-4 hurricanes (i.e., Idalia and Helene) that damaged buildings and toppled 1,200+ trees, and a cyber-attack from a bad foreign actor that forced a 3-week closure of the institution
- * Secured University System of Georgia Regents’ approval in 2021 to launch eDegree – an innovative online college for non-traditional learners to compete head-to-head with established national providers; exceeded enrollment targets by over 400%
- * Led the Valdosta State University Foundation to complete its first-ever capital campaign and exceeded the initial \$42 million goal by 48%
- * Launched the Center for South Georgia Regional Impact in 2018, which has completed 300+ economic development & community enrichment projects
- * Successfully co-led an effort to consolidate a masters-granting HBCU and a predominantly white two-year college in just 12 months in the same community where an MLK-led desegregation effort (i.e., the Albany Movement) had failed
- * Convinced former President Jimmy Carter to give a public lecture at Bainbridge State College, before launching the Jimmy Carter Arts & Lecture Series with his support
- * Successfully led an institution-wide transition to Strategic Enrollment Management at Cascadia College that enabled a 57% increase in enrollment in just four years
- * Following a decade of consistent enrollment declines, developed a plan that made Independence the 7th fastest growing college of its kind in the country