

DR. LEONIE H. MATTISON, MBA

Lean Certified
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PRESIDENT & CEO | COO | CHIEF OF ORGANIZATIONAL & TALENT DEVELOPMENT | MAJOR GIFTS OFFICER

Student Success ■ Regional Economic Mobility ■ Workforce Pathways ■ Fiscal Stewardship ■ Shared Governance
\$5M–\$1B+ Portfolios | 6,000+ Employees Impacted | Multi-Sector Enterprise Leadership | 40% Enrollment Growth

Engaging, student-centered President, CEO, and growth strategist recognized for harnessing people, processes, and technology to drive sustainable institutional performance. Positive, strategic, and deeply student-centered leader, communicates vision with clarity and unites boards, faculty, staff, employers, and community partners around a shared mission and measurable impact. Aligns education, workforce, and employment systems with evolving employer and worker needs, strengthening regional talent pipelines and economic mobility. Builds high-trust, people-first cultures grounded in accountability and servant leadership, developing high-performing teams and partnerships that expand access, accelerate credential attainment, and fuel long-term institutional vitality.

Board Member, Chamber of Commerce Board Member | Served on Workforce Investment Boards | Appointed Behavioral Health Commissioner | Panelist, Author, Thought Leader, & Podcast Host

EXECUTIVE COMPETENCIES

Student Success & Wraparound Support | Employer Partnerships & Workforce Pipelines | Shared Governance & Board Relations | Public-Sector / Union Environments | Accreditation & Compliance | Revenue Growth | Operational Excellence & Lean | Technology Modernization & Data/Analytics | Online/Hybrid Learning | Team Leadership & Development | Public Speaking/Advocate | Fundraiser & Stewardship | Culture Builder

SELECTED LEADERSHIP IMPACT

- Safeguarded cross-sector organizational mission by **generating and stewarding \$330M through diversified revenue strategies**, expanding unrestricted capacity, and strengthening institutional resilience.
- Built employer-aligned regional talent pipelines by directing the **\$5.1M U.S. Department of Labor WIRED 2-year initiative**, resulting in 942 completions, 476 industry-recognized credentials, and 212 job placements.
- **Drove 40% enrollment growth** through a new SEO/SEM plan, new MA/PhD degrees, **emerging employer-aligned certificates, Pacifica Extension and International Studies**, a retreat center, and expanded access to 15 new states.
- **Improved financial performance** by reducing Pacifica's expenses by **\$5M over three years**, right-sizing low-enrolled courses, planning campus consolidation, and **projecting additional savings of \$3M–\$6M**.
- **Expanded scholarships and earned revenue** at Sansum, including a **\$1M endowed scholarship gift**; owned fundraising, multi-year business plans, grant writing, and program development with the Development Officer.
- Infused \$8M in new revenue by launching a 5-year integrated strategy and governance redesign, driving 20% program growth, **6-year accreditation** reaffirmation, 10+ new alliances, and **consecutive balanced budgets**.
- Improved the student experience by championing the implementation of Pacifica's first fully **integrated Student Success Hub**, resulting in 96% first-year doctoral retention and **100% MA completion within 3 years**.
- Launched the **Pacifica Promise Program** through 40+ public-private partnerships, a **\$10M philanthropic fundraising campaign strategy** expanding licensure-aligned pathways for 1,500 underserved learners.
- Transformed the **County Employees' University into the region's open-access, accredited workforce and civic development engine**, anchored in a no-cost learning model, profit centers, and credit-bearing partnerships.
- **Removed barriers for 300 adult learners to enter and advance in public service careers** by launching Passport to Public Service programs with SBCC, funded by CAEP/AEBG, and delivering 40+ credential-to-career pathways.
- Advanced diabetes innovation and health equity by securing **\$80M in industry-sponsored clinical research** with Abbott, Lilly, and Sanofi, accelerating CGM adoption, device validation, and next-generation digital therapies.
- Co-led enterprise **technology modernization** across D2L, Slate, Jenzabar One, Workday, Salesforce, and NeoGov to streamline operations, strengthen analytics, and align institutional performance with the **future of work**.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

President & Chief Executive Officer | PACIFICA GRADUATE INSTITUTE | Santa Barbara, CA | 2022–2025

WSCUC-accredited, multi-campus institution offering 40+ residential, hybrid, and online master's, doctoral, and certificate programs. Scale: \$24M operating budget; 4,500+ learners annually; 300+ employees.

Served as CEO of a multi-campus higher education institution and affiliated enterprises, recruited to transform a founder-led model into a stable, high-performing, growth-ready institution. Held enterprise-wide accountability for academic quality and compliance, the end-to-end student experience, and administrative operations across two campuses, Extension and International Studies, a retreat center, Archives, and Research Center. In close partnership with a nine-member Board of Trustees and campus constituencies, strengthened governance and execution, advanced a student-first agenda, rebuilt credibility, expanded employer and community partnerships, and modernized technology, including initiating responsible AI and data modernization to improve program delivery and student outcomes. Drove market growth through expanded program reach, including 15+ new state authorizations, and led a 10-member executive cabinet, including a faculty representative, while chairing a regional workforce development committee and representing the institution on countywide boards.

SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Unified the institution around a 2030 direction by commissioning a 100-day listening tour that culminated in a 5-year strategic plan aligned with enrollment, fiscal, and facilities priorities and accountability measures.
- Elevated credibility, compliance, and academic quality by securing 5-year Title IV recertification and sustaining above-benchmark licensure outcomes, including LMFT 87% and CPLEE 89%, for three consecutive years.
- Strengthened consensus-building and shared governance by empowering a provost-led, cross-constituency team to develop and implement an ADRI shared governance structure with a comprehensive decision-rights matrix.
- Improved morale and pay equity by modernizing policies and launching an employee learning platform and a transparent rank-and-pay framework, delivering first-ever pay increases backed by a \$1.25M investment.
- Aligned academics and operations through a provost-led partnership that delivered new MA/PhD degrees, faculty handbooks reconstituted senate, and \$2M in projected annual savings through campus consolidation.
- Diversified and stabilized revenue with consecutive balanced budgets, 40% enrollment growth, a \$10M philanthropy strategy, a new extension division, expanded partnerships, and 15+ new state authorizations.
- Strengthened service quality and student access through a \$5M investment to implement AI strategy, Slate, Jenzabar One, and D2L platforms, strengthening digital governance, analytics, and hybrid/online delivery.
- Deepened regional trust and relevance by chairing a 40+ cross-sector collaboration to align employer needs with education-to-career pathways, expanding internships, research, and quality employment outcomes at scale.

Chief Operating Officer | COMMUNIFY | Santa Barbara County, CA | 2021–2022

One of Santa Barbara County's oldest and largest nonprofit human services organizations. Scale: \$26M operating budget; 360+ employees; 55,000 clients; 24 sites; 9 learning hubs.

Appointed Chief Operating Officer to stabilize service continuity, fiscal discipline, and public trust across 24 centers and 9 hubs delivering 16 core programs in highly regulated, publicly funded environments. Partnered with the CEO and Board to standardize wraparound delivery, reinforce governance and compliance, diversify revenue, and embed a Lean, data-driven operating model supported by decision-ready performance reporting.

SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Sustained, uninterrupted delivery of essential services across 24 centers, reaching 8K+ individuals monthly, by deploying automated daily reporting and strengthening controlled entry for real-time operational visibility.
- Led listening tours and a Community Needs Assessment, translating 800+ community voices into performance reports that validated 79% service effectiveness and supported continuation of \$25.6M in grant funding.

- Launched a Learning Academy in partnership with Santa Barbara City College, including leadership pathways and a train-the-trainer model, achieving 80% completion of ROMA outcomes framework training within eight months.
- Advanced wraparound service delivery by championing the development of the Genesis Universal Screening and Intake System, integrating access across programs for faster connections and measurable accountability.
- Co-developed and executed a statewide virtual Community Action onboarding platform that strengthened full-cycle employee and resident onboarding, development, and advancement standards across 1K+ agencies.
- Partnered with Smartsheet to institutionalize digital decision-ready reporting with transparent visibility into funding performance, compliance, and service outcomes across 250+ contracts and 700+ measures.
- Served as Principal Investigator for a \$398K ACF FSSDD grant, partnering with national experts and empowering key program leaders to strengthen evaluation capacity and measurable economic mobility outcomes.
- Rebuilt crisis readiness and public trust by working closely with the workforce to overhaul the Continuity of Operations Plan, investing \$5M in safety/capital upgrades, and standardizing training and controls across centers.

Chief of Organizational Transformation & Leadership | Santa Barbara County Employees' University | 2017–2021

One of the largest and most complex unionized employers in Santa Barbara County, operating under civil service rules and multiple collective bargaining agreements, delivering essential services across North and South County. Scale: ~\$1B+ annual budget; 4,600+ employees across 23 departments; 2 learning centers; 700+ job classifications.

Selected to lead enterprise transformation under Renew '22, Santa Barbara County's multi-year initiative to strengthen organizational resiliency, fiscal sustainability, and operational efficiency by re-visioning the organization, re-balancing resources, redesigning how work is performed, improving service responsiveness within available means, and retaining high-performing employees while preparing the next generation of leaders. Repositioned Employees' University as a credential and career-pathway hub to build the leadership, Lean, technology-enabled, and data-informed capabilities required to execute that mandate at scale. Partnered with Human Resources and labor leaders to modernize governance under shared-governance conditions, strengthen compliance, and expand partnerships that improved service performance and talent pipelines.

SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Brokered a regional education partnership with CSU Northridge, community colleges, and key stakeholders to expand training, certificates, and degree pathways for 4.6K employees supporting services for 440K residents.
- Institutionalized Organizational and Talent Development as a permanent enterprise function and established a sustainable, cost-neutral model that strengthens operations, retention, and succession planning.
- Deployed an integrated Employee Full Lifecycle Management system from hire through development and retirement, achieving 83% new-hire retention and exceeding leadership development goals by 80% within 2 years.
- Partnered with 30+ union representatives and leadership to modernize governance across 700+ classifications, strengthening compliance, transparency, and agility within shared governance.
- Embedded continuous improvement through a countywide Lean Academy offering green and black belt trainings, achieving 90% certification completion and generating \$443K in cost savings with a 143% ROI.
- Expanded instructional and mentoring capacity through a Subject Matter Expert Academy, preparing 200+ employees for teaching and coaching roles and strengthening organizational knowledge transfer.
- Launched the \$200K+ California Adult Education Program-funded Passport to Public Service initiative, serving 300 adult learners and embedding workforce-aligned entry and advancement pathways into civil service careers.

MID-CAREER EXPERIENCE | 1996–2017

William Sansum Diabetes Research Institute | Director of Research & Major Gifts Officer

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene | Grant Administrator

Newark Alliance | Chief Program Officer

Schering Plough / Merck | Business Analyst & Coordinator of Continuing Medical Education

Washington Mutual | Branch Manager

EDUCATION

Edd, Organizational Leadership, Argosy University, Phoenix (2014)
MBA, Executive Leadership, Georgian Court University, New Jersey (2007)
BS, Business Administration, Georgian Court University, New Jersey (2006)

CERTIFICATE & AWARDS

Board Leadership Institute, California Lutheran University (2022)
Lean Six Sigma Black & Green Belt Certification, Peak Academy (2018)
Women In Leadership & Conflict Resolution, Center for Creative Learning (2011)
Mayor Michael Bloomberg Award, Communities Putting Obesity Prevention to Work (2012)
Pacific Coast Business Times, Top 50 Women in Business on the Central Coast (2023-24)

FUNDING & EXTERNAL RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (Selected)

\$300M+ | Diversified funding and revenue strategies influenced/secured across roles
\$20M | Industry-sponsored clinical trial contracts (Abbott Diabetes)
\$1.25M | Mil Familias: Type Two Diabetes Research (Eli Lilly)
\$398K | ACF Family Self-Sufficiency Demonstration Development (FSSDD) (Principal Investigator)

TEACHING & FACILITATION EXPERIENCE

Santa Barbara City College | Adjunct, School of Extended Learning (2015–Present)
Westmont College | Speaker & Mentor Center for Social Entrepreneurship (2017–2022)
Antioch University | Faculty, Integrative Strategic Management (2015–2017)
County of Santa Barbara Employees' University | Trainer (2014–2017)
Middlesex College | Instructor, Lifelong Learning (2000–2013)

COMMUNITY SERVICE & BOARD APPOINTMENTS (Selected)

Commissioner, District 2 | County of Santa Barbara Behavioral Wellness Commission
Board Member | Santa Barbara South Coast Chamber of Commerce
Judge | The Scheinfeld Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation
Mentor | International Network of Asian Pacific Islander Public Administrators
Racial Equity Fund Grant Making Committee | Fund for Santa Barbara
Santa Barbara AEBG Consortium | Santa Barbara City College

PUBLICATIONS & THOUGHT LEADERSHIP (Selected)

Article | Forbes | Why Thinking Deeply Must Be Every Leader's First Move | 2026
Op-Ed | Noozhawk | Standing Steady in Hope and Renewal When the World Shifts | 2025
Op-Ed | Inside Higher Education | Leading Through Moral Injury | 2025
Op-Ed | University Business | The Season of Converging Chaos in Higher Ed Leaders | 2025
Op-Ed | Diverse Issues in Higher Education | Leaders of Color Must Grieve, Rise, and Reimagine | 2025
Keynote Speaker | NAACP: Women's Health Summit | 2024
Author | The Thread Collection/The T.H.R.E.A.D System Intentional Transformation | 2022

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Council on Education (ACE)
 American Society for Quality (ASQ)
 Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB)
 Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)
 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)