

# Margaret Rose McDonnell

## LEADERSHIP PROFILE

- ❖ Over twenty-five years working in multicultural environments as an administrator, educator, speaker, and community liaison.
- ❖ Developed two distinct offices (the Learning Center and Disability Services) from being a small Center for remedial tutoring and disability support into being a fundamental facility for all students (with faculty involvement), and at all ability levels, across all programs, and in all stages of the curriculum (including graduate students).
- ❖ Integrated the Center’s academic services more fully into the curriculum through required writing workshops, classroom visits, professional and peer tutoring, syllabus statements, handouts, and online resources, and participation in orientations.
- ❖ Spearheaded and instituted practices for collecting the usage and academic data in support of university retention goals and documenting the role of the Center to the Faculty Senate and to the Board of Directors.
- ❖ Designed an Advisory Board and Faculty Liaison Program for the Learning Center and Disability Services offices (in partnership with internal and external stakeholders) to identify and to institute a strategic plan to provide the highest quality of supports and services to the faculty, staff, and students within and beyond the University setting.
- ❖ Promote cultural competency and a climate of equity and inclusion, by partnering with several University units to enhance recruitment and retention of diverse faculty and staff.
- ❖ Create and implement best practices, benchmarking, and current trends in diversity and inclusion; ensuring that research is used to bring up-to-date excellence in programming, policies, and procedures.
- ❖ Presented at the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Illinois Statewide Transition Conference on October 29, 2015, entitled “Navigating Student Success: Self-Determination and Advocacy Skills in Higher Education.”
- ❖ Awarded Outstanding Post-Secondary Program by Illinois Statewide Transition Conference, in October 2013. This award is given to a college or vocational program that has done an outstanding job of educating and providing services to help students with disabilities achieve their success in higher education.
- ❖ Member of the South Metropolitan Higher Education Consortium.
- ❖ Advisor and member of the ADA 25 Advancing Leadership Program with the Chicago Community Trust (now known as Disability Lead).
- ❖ Recipient of the 2022 Teaching Excellence Award at Saint Xavier University.

### MULTI-FACETED TEAM LEADER WITH EXPERTISE IN

❖ Strategic Planning	❖ Program Management	❖ Neurodiversity
❖ Effective Communication	❖ Conflict Resolution	❖ Intersectionality
❖ Community Outreach	❖ Culture of Social Responsibility	❖ Strong Advocacy Strategies

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

Director, Center for Accessibility Resources (formerly the Learning Center and Disability Services)

2008 – Present

Saint Xavier University, Chicago, Illinois

- ❖ Demonstrated experience implementing a variety of civil rights, equal opportunity, diversity and inclusion initiatives, programs, and policies.
- ❖ In collaboration with faculty, staff, and students, the Center for Accessibility Resources' primary goal is to engage the University community to empower all individuals, enhance equity, and to respect and value the diversity of everyone by being inclusive to their human dignity.
- ❖ Facilitate dialogue about diversity, inclusion, and equity by ensuring formal and informal open lines of communication within the University community.
- ❖ A results-driven leader with proficient project management skills who has a proven track-record of improving the retention, persistence, and graduation rates of all students.
- ❖ Develop and design policies and procedures related to all aspects of disability as diversity; collaborate on initiatives and educational strategies with governmental and outside agencies designed around health and well-being for students, faculty, and staff, such as the Illinois Department of Human Services, the Division of Rehabilitation Services, and Thresholds.
- ❖ More than fifteen years of supervisory and budget experience with a solid focus on the individual needs of first-generation students and families, especially as it relates to the personal and academic resources to succeed in their educational pursuits.
- ❖ Extensive experience of the needs of people with disabilities with an in-depth knowledge of disability rights and policies as set forth by state and federal regulations in Special Education, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (as amended), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (as amended), and Title IX.
- ❖ Instruct and educate faculty and staff members on the educational techniques and strategies to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of all students.
- ❖ Design workshops and presentations for Faculty Development Day, Mental Health Awareness Day, and various Disability Awareness Week strategies that addresses key initiatives and educational policies centered on disability as diversity.
- ❖ Advise faculty and administration on compliance issues and policies, such as barriers to physical accessibility, emotional support and service animals, and food policies for the school's cafeteria.
- ❖ Serve on various committees and groups, such as Care Team and Safety Net that are committed to the health and well-being of students.

**Key achievements:** Wrote the Title III grant (for the Center for Creating Engaged Learning Environments) to purchase, strategize, and incorporate assistive technology into the curricula for students with disabilities, which received full funding; increased services and resources for students with disabilities in the Learning Center and Disability Services office by **550%** within first three years as an administrator (from 2008-2011); designed, instituted, and implemented the Advisory Board and Faculty Liaisons to provide guidance and feedback on organizational direction, including policies and procedures, operations, services, staffing, funding, and marketing.

*Nominated for the Women of Distinction Award and the Sister Isidore Perrigo, R.S.M. Staff Mission Award.*

Director, Learning Center and Disability Services

2008 – July of 2017

Saint Xavier University, Chicago, Illinois

- ❖ Oversaw all aspects of the Office of Disability Services.
- ❖ Selected, hired, and supervised two full-time professional staff.

- ❖ Developed and trained Faculty Liaisons for the LCDS, selected from all academic units throughout the University, so that they could communicate the mission and services of the Learning Center to the entire University community.
- ❖ Identified agenda items and facilitated regular meetings of the LCDS Advisory Board, comprised of faculty, staff, students, and community organizations.
- ❖ Designed the Resident Peer Academic Leaders (RPALs) Program with Residence Life, which consists of three upper- class student staff members who reside in the first-year halls, that provides first-year students with additional academic resources (study groups, academic workshops, team building activities) to develop the necessary skills and educational confidence to handle advanced learning in collegiate and community life.
- ❖ Recruited, hired, trained, and supervised the work of undergraduate and graduate peer tutors from a variety of academic disciplines; this consisted of 40 to 45 peer tutors on average each academic semester with a graduate student to offer additional support.
- ❖ Composed the tutor training manual and various workshops for prospective tutors.
- ❖ Developed and coordinated workshops pertaining to study skills, including time management, reading for meaning, test anxiety, and grammar and writing skills.
- ❖ Assisted in the implementation of the Summer Bridge Program (Academic Advantage), designed to prepare at-risk students for college life prior to the Fall semester.
- ❖ Wrote the Title III Grant for assistive technology in order to provide much-needed support for students with disabilities.
- ❖ Collaborated with the English Department in developing and offering writing tutors for the English 100/120 Writing Fellows Program (funded by a Title III Grant), both in the classroom and within the Learning Center.
- ❖ Created and designed the Online Writing Lab, for submission of writing assignments for those students unable to attend one-on- one tutorials.
- ❖ Served on assigned committees within the University community, including LEAD and Student Affairs Leadership Team (SALT).
- ❖ Managed the Learning Center and Disability Services budget; always being fiscally responsible to address yearly needs.
- ❖ Developed, tracked, and recorded our tutorial and testing services of students' sessions using a swipe system and software program (WOnline).
- ❖ Maintained accurate and readily available student data on the Learning Center services for retention, persistence, and academic alerts.
- ❖ Provided high quality management and statistical data for the administration and to the Higher Learning Commission.
- ❖ Created and identified materials presented on the Learning Center Website and for the Online Writing Lab.
- ❖ Introduced and implemented the software programs WOnline and Smarthinking into the Learning Center to increase data collection and to incorporate new initiatives that would improve persistence and retention for students.

**Key achievements:** Heavily involved in the development of new University initiatives to enhance and solidify student support and success, such as the Summer Bridge Program, R-PALS Program (Resident Peer Academic Leaders), and the Peer Academic Tutoring Program; outlined and wrote all of the content for the Online Writing Lab; led a team of professionals each year (predominately peer tutors) to meet and exceed the objectives and learning outcomes of these two distinct departments which included an increase in services: **1,274% for peer tutoring.**

**Nominated for the *Sister Isidore Perrigo R.S.M. Staff Mission Award***

Leader of the First Grade Curriculum  
Saint Terrence Catholic Church, Alsip, Illinois

1996 – 2010

- ❖ Prepared objectives and outlines for courses of study and developed the curriculum.
- ❖ Provided the services and support for all of the students with disabilities enrolled in the curriculum.
- ❖ Designed challenging, enriching, and innovative activities that addresses the diverse interests and needs of students.
- ❖ Oversaw the supervisory needs of 7 teachers and over 100 students.
- ❖ Liaised with the Director of Religious Education to discuss and implement strategies to actively engage students.
- ❖ Instructed religious education classes for grades 1 and 7, consisting of 12 – 22 students.

**Peer Counselor and “ThinkFirst” Prevention Speaker**

1985 – 2008

Spinal Cord Injury Association of Illinois, LaGrange, Illinois

- ❖ Presented the “ThinkFirst” Prevention Program to school-aged children throughout the southwest suburbs of Illinois.
- ❖ Acted as an ambassador, mentor, and liaison on behalf of the association.
- ❖ Reinforced the importance of public policy makers continuing their commitment to legislation in favor of public health issues and disability rights.
- ❖ Encouraged health professionals to assist in spreading the prevention message in their communities, especially to young people.

**Executive Assistant**

2004 – 2006

Dealer Technologies/Automotive Development Corporation, Lombard, Illinois

- ❖ Performed all duties related to records and reception with precision and attention to detail.
- ❖ Designed, developed, and managed office administration systems.
- ❖ Completed and handled multiple assignments often under extreme time constraints and deadlines.
- ❖ Administered sensitive and confidential situations with absolute discretion.

**Administrative Assistant**

1997 – 2004

Spinal Cord Injury Association of Illinois, LaGrange, Illinois

- ❖ Demonstrated administrative expertise in the processing of membership files, file management and storage, personal reception, and maintenance of computer software.
- ❖ Coordinated and completed the quarterly newsletter “SCI Illinois” for publication.
- ❖ Actively served as a resource and referral agent to community groups, hospitals, and universities.

**Private Tutor and Parent Advocate**

1991 – 1999

Educational Consultant/Speaker, Southwest Suburbs of Illinois

- ❖ Prepared objectives and outlines for courses of study and developed the curriculum.
- ❖ Collaborated with cooperating teachers to design the lesson plans.
- ❖ Established and maintained positive relationships with students, parents, and colleagues, fostering an environment of open communication and support.
- ❖ Created a stable learning environment and inspired students to do their best while they learned to adapt to their disabilities.
- ❖ Counseled students when adjustment and academic problems arose and met with parents to discuss positive learning opportunities.
- ❖ Committed to the success of all students with sensitivity to their unique needs.

## EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

Work Place Certification in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion  
from the University of South Florida Muma College of Business

February of 2022

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- ❖ An executive leadership certificate with the goal “to help companies become more inclusive by imparting knowledge and developing tools to perform organizational self-assessment and plans for inclusive change.”
- ❖ The program is modeled on, “building and growing a workforce that includes differing races, religions, ages, genders and sexual orientations, and persons with disabilities can not only improve broad society issues but can also help companies develop novel business practices, increase revenue, and improve performance.”

**Executive Leadership Certificate in Diversity and Inclusion from Cornell University**

**August of 2019**

Cornell University, Ithaca, New York

- ❖ An executive leadership certificate that promotes an all-encompassing climate in diversity, equity, and inclusion; fostering policies and procedures that impact culture and engagement
- ❖ Identifying initiatives and strategies for creating better working relationships in teams

**Graduate Endorsement in Special Education**

**December of 2017**

Saint Xavier University, Chicago, Illinois

- ❖ A NCATE-approved graduate program that is also certified by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)
- ❖ This program focuses on courses in diagnostic assessment, language, curriculum adaptations and modifications, behavior management, learning strategies, and an inclusive classroom
- ❖ Endorsed as a Learning Behavior Specialist 1
- ❖ Advanced with a *Summa Cum Laude* GPA

**Master of Arts in Education**

**May of 1997**

Saint Xavier University, Chicago, Illinois

- ❖ Thesis Project: "Recognizing Individual Differences While Counseling the Physically Disabled and Health Impaired"
- ❖ Major emphasis in Counseling Psychology and Students with Special Needs
- ❖ Advanced with a *Summa Cum Laude* GPA

**Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education**

**December of 1992**

Saint Xavier College, Chicago, Illinois

- ❖ Major in Elementary Education, with a Double Minor in Psychology and Religion
- ❖ Advanced with a *Summa Cum Laude* GPA

**Certifications**

- ❖ Illinois Department of Education Professional Educator License (ID Number): 1795153
- ❖ Chicago Board of Education, Elementary Education, Illinois State Board, K-9, Type 3 with endorsements in Language Arts and Social Science for junior high school
- ❖ Learning Behavior Specialist 1

## COMPUTER & SOFTWARE SKILLS

Experience in implementing major software programs. Proficient in WOnline, Banner, Blackboard, Colleague, and Canvas. Extensive knowledge of various assistive technology programs: Dragon Speaking, Jaws, Kurzweil, Learning Ally, Natural Reader, and ZoomText.

**Software:** Adobe Acrobat Reader, Adobe PageMaker, AppleWorks, Creative Cloud, Print Explosion, Print Shop Deluxe, and Publisher.

**Productivity Software:** Microsoft Office Suite including Access, Entourage, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint, and Word.

## HONORS & AWARDS

- ❖ Recipient of the "Impact Award" at the Student Success Excellence Awards, March 2022
- ❖ Recipient of the 2022 Teaching Excellence Award at Saint Xavier University, May 2022
- ❖ Recipient of the *Faith in the Future Award* from the Alumni Association of Saint Xavier University in "recognition of personal and professional accomplishments." (1996)
- ❖ Recipient of the *JCPenney Golden Rule Award* in "recognition of outstanding volunteer service." (1992)
- ❖ Recipient of the *Sister Mary Paulita Morris Award* from the Board of Trustees, Faculty, and Administration of Saint Xavier University (1990)

## PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- ❖ Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD)
- ❖ Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)
- ❖ Disability Rights, Education, Activism, and Mentoring (DREAM)
- ❖ Kappa Gamma Pi, the Catholic College Honor Society
- ❖ National Association for EQUITY, DIVERSITY, & INCLUSION
- ❖ The National Association of Special Education Teachers (NASSET)
- ❖ National Center for College Students with Disabilities (NCCSD)
- ❖ Sigma Theta Chapter, Kappa Delta Pi, an International Honor Society in Education
- ❖ Zeta Chapter, Alpha Upsilon Alpha, the Reading/Language Arts Honor Society of the International Reading Association

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & COURSES

- ❖ Completed course in graduate program abroad that examined mental health issues in Great Britain
- ❖ Participated in and attended symposiums and seminars at the following universities: University of Birmingham, University of London, and Oxford University
- ❖ Disability Awareness Expo (the Office of Disability Rights): "The ADA's Employment Provisions 15 years Later,"

Washington, D.C

- ❖ AHEAD Conference: “Considerations for the Special Needs Child Transitioning to Adulthood,” Louisville, Kentucky
- ❖ AHEAD Conference: “Fitting In: Today’s Educational Experience and Disability,” Louisville, Kentucky
- ❖ Annual Conference of the First-Year Experience: “Teaching and Learning the Brain-Based Way,” Atlanta, Georgia
- ❖ Disability Awareness Expo (the Office of Disability Rights): "Transitions to Postsecondary Education and Careers for Students with Disabilities, " Washington, D.C.
- ❖ Disability Awareness Expo (the Office of Disability Rights): "Working Together: People with Learning Disabilities and Computer Technology, " Washington, D.C
- ❖ Special Education Law in Illinois, Chicago, Illinois
- ❖ Chicago Community Trust: "Disability, Power and Influence: A Symposium to meet leaders, explore issues, and learn how you make a difference," Chicago, Illinois
- ❖ Katy Weseman: “Safe Zone Training,” Chicago, Illinois (November 14, 2014)
- ❖ Naomi Sigg: "Microaggressions, Macroaggressions & Microaffirmations: Lessen the Racial Divide to Create an Inclusive & Civil Campus Community," Chicago, Illinois (March 20, 2019)
- ❖ Ibram X. Kendi: "How to Be an Antiracist," Chicago, Illinois (July 20, 2020)
- ❖ Dr. Chezare Warren: "Virtual Sweeney Family Lecture: A Townhall on Advancing Racial Justice" (April 6, 2021)
- ❖ US Department of Education: "RECOVERY TO THRIVING: Supporting Mental Health and Students with Disabilities" (May 23, 2022)
- ❖ MOGUL: "PRIDE at Work" featuring the Trade Desk (June 1, 2022)
- ❖ Saint Xavier University, "DACA Ally Training" (June 2, 2022)
- ❖ Attended various webinars over the last three years on mental illness, housing accommodations, transportation initiatives within PACE and Metra services, food allergies, assessment practices, procedures for hospitalizations, and testing practices and procedures

## PRESENTATIONS

- ❖ Saint Xavier University, Lunch and Learn, "The Intersectionality Experience: The Importance of Embracing Diversity," January 2024
- ❖ Saint Xavier University, Lunch and Learn, "Neurodiversity, Ableness, and Collaboration," March 2023
- ❖ Saint Xavier University, Leader Training, “Leading with an Equity Lens: Inclusive and Diversity Best Practices,” July 2020
- ❖ Saint Xavier University, FOCUS Leader Training, “Disability Etiquette: Working with Individuals with Differing Abilities,” July 2019
- ❖ Saint Xavier University, RPAL Training, “Support for First Generation College Students with Disabilities,” August 2017
- ❖ Saint Xavier University, Faculty Development Day, “Making the Learning and Writing Centers Faculty Friendly,” February 2017
- ❖ Saint Xavier University, Lunch and Learn, “Working with Students with Mental Illness and PTSD,” March 2016
- ❖ Saint Xavier University, Lunch and Learn, “Universal Design,” April 2015