

Wanda I. Colon-Canales, M.Ed

TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912

EXECUTIVE LEADER IN HIGHER ED

Strategic Planning/Under Grad and Graduate Admissions Recruitment/ International and Veteran Services

Accomplished leader in higher education, championing the development, operation, and implementation of comprehensive admissions and recruitment process to better engage students and achieve the mission and vision of an academic institution. Skilled evaluator of a comprehensive strategic enrollment management plan designed to attract, admit, and matriculate a diverse student population. Capable of hiring, training, and mentoring a top-performing team of up to 32 staff and student professionals to provide meaningful solutions to daily challenges and long-term goals. Charismatic verbal and written communicator, facilitating educational programs and reaching different audiences ranging from students to stakeholders. Talent for building and maintaining long-standing business relationships, including students and their families, community partners/organizations, church, and academic leaders.

CORE COMPETENCIES

- Enrollment Management/Recruitment
- Manage Admission Marketing
- Develop Enrollment Strategic Action
- Operational Oversight
- Implement Strategies
- Academic/Career Coaching
- Data Analysis
- Develop Effective Communication Plan
- Engage Stakeholder as Part of Innovator Student Success Model
- Team Training/Coaching
- Financial Aid Navigation
- Collaborative Leaders
- Community Outreach/Network
- Implementation Office Processes and Procedures
- Project Lead for CRM Software
- Served as MD Veteran Commissioner for Higher Ed

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Howard Community College
Associate Director – AMBICIONES

Columbia, MD
2023 – Current

Involves senior strategic leadership, program management, and cross-functional coordination, focusing on developing and executing retention strategic actions, managing projects (like content, fundraising, or business planning), overseeing team, analyzing data, ensuring brand consistency, and driving operational improvements, essentially bridging director-level vision with practical execution.

Core Responsibilities:

- Leading strategic initiatives, developing implementation plans, and aligning projects with organizational goals, often involving market analysis and business cases.
- Overseeing complex projects, ensuring delivery on time/budget, establishing processes, and monitoring content or strategic planning roles.
- Managing and developing teams, providing guidance, and influencing cross-functional partners without direct authority.
- Conducting quantitative/qualitative analysis, financial modeling, and reporting on performance to senior leadership.

- Driving content strategy, managing marketing related to Ambiciones program and ensuring brand voice consistency.
- Building strong relationships and communicating effectively with internal/external partners and senior leaders.
- Event Manager for career development activities on/off campus
- Overseeing program advising and interns team, and ALPFA Student Chapter as part of career development and student success

Key Skills & Experience:

- Strategic Thinking: Ability to see the big picture and create actionable plans.
- Project Management: Proven ability to manage multiple complex projects.
- Analytical Skills: Strong financial acumen and data analysis.
- Communication: Excellent written/verbal skills, able to simplify complex ideas.
- Leadership: Influencing skills, diplomacy, and self-starter mentality.
- Technical: Proficiency in MS Office (PowerPoint, Excel).
- Bilingual: Spanish/English

**WASHINGTON ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY
Director of Admission and Recruitment/PDSO**Takoma Park, MD
2013–Present

Lead strategies and execution of admissions/recruitment services. Manages veteran student services and compliance reports following MD Veteran Commission for Higher Education guidelines. Serve as Primary Designated School Officer (PDSO) for Homeland Security to maintain compliances and regulations for F1 international students. Supervise other designated officers (DSO) who serve and keep records in status for undergraduate and graduate students. Experience in maximizing data for strategic decisions in territorial management and admission processes and procedures. Create strategic actions to reach enrollment goals. Develop and build relationships with partner organizations throughout the local and international markets to sustain the recruitment of targeted groups. Support creation of processes, practices, and training to ensure short- and long-range recruitment goals. Develop diversity strategy, advertising and promotions, and criteria for expanded engagement. Oversee an interdisciplinary team of full-time and student employees/interns. Implement and oversee CRM system to provide accurate quality and quantitative Admission matrix reports.

Selected current and past accomplishments:

- Oversaw enrollment goals, recruitment, and admissions processes for 1,250 students, increasing international students by 21% and more than doubling enrollment from diverse candidates, including military, transfer, and adult learners.

- Appointed Principal Designated School Official (PDSO) and primary liaison to international students seeking F-1 status, working in compliance with Department of Homeland Security rules to individually support students and determine appropriate visa statutes and academic programs.
- Initiated Articulation Agreements/MOU with other universities/colleges to build transfer population pipelines and increase enrollment
- Served as MD Veteran Commissioner for Higher Education for the last two years, conducting presentations, workshops, and orientations for staff and faculty. This position allows the institution to demonstrate a service model by including our men and women in uniform.
- Structured, implemented, and managed International Services, Campus Tour Program, and qualified institution as Military Veteran Friendly university to serve and increase our diverse funnel
- Served by promoting student outreach and engagement, faculty and staff training, and leveraging internal resources to create an in-community brand to connect with potential students in an authentic way.
- Supervised customer service team to assist prospects with enrollment, financial aid, registration, and student success services
- Project Lead for CRM project and monitored the progress of third party (EAB, Naviance, NRCCUA, AACU, etc.) for enrollment goal, analyzing past performance and data to drive projections for territorial management and enrollment goal
- Monitored admissions and recruitment budget

CENTRAL STATE UNIVERSITY
Executive Admission Manager/Diversity Officer

Wilberforce, OH
 2009–2013

Successfully executed various academic and co-curricular programs to deepen engagement with upcoming students and increase the enrollment number of those from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds. Organized, revised, and managed recruitment calendars and supervised admission officers and work-study students coordinating recruitment activities and multicultural events, including campus preview day, receptions, career day for first time in college population, and training program advisors/ counselors. Oversaw budget and resources needed to achieve project goals.

Selected accomplishments:

- Obtained Ohio Commission for Latino Affairs (OCHLA) Grant for \$10K, supporting multicultural recruitment and on-campus events to promote college access and leadership training.
- Coordinated on-campus and community events that support and promote multiculturalism, increasing and sustaining the Hispanic prospect pool from 20 to 200 applicants per year.
- Founded Today's Latinos and Caribbean Student Organizations, advocating for under-represented students with campus diversity events.
- Developed and implemented Veteran Friendly Institution proposal for the Presidential Leadership Institute, attracting and educating active duty, retired, and military families.
- Developed new admission officer's manual, covering disciplinary procedures, code of conduct, FERPA policy, and enrollment management information.
- Executed and maintained new admission office policies, procedures, and practices, unifying workflow among teams to increase effectiveness and employee satisfaction.
- Managed admission and recruitment team to reach enrollment goals
- Reviewed international applicants for I-20 and managed compliance for DHS
- Represented the institution in organizations that support its mission and enrollment goals
- Executive Board Member for ***YMCA Black and Latino Achievers, Ohio Commission for Latino Affairs, Ohio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and Vice President for LULAC – Ohio Chapter***

Admission Offices and Diversity Coordinator

2005–2009

Manage admissions, recruitment, communication, relationship with other departments to reach enrollment goals for subgroups such as Latinos, Veterans, and international prospects. Served as the first point of contact for internal and external constituencies, participated in community outreach activities, and attended college fairs to promote academic and diversity programs. Managed and planned all recruitment travel, reviewed prospective student files, and followed up about admission decisions.

Selected accomplishments:

- Researched inquiries and applications and evaluated historical data on key feeder schools, effectively planning recruitment itinerary.
- Maintained follow-up with prospective students through phone communication, email, and delivering a personalized approach to engage students and increase enrollment.
- Formed relationships with alumni to host student receptions supporting improvements in recruitment through peer-to-peer contact.

**CENTRAL STATE UNIVERSITY
Focus City Recruiter**Wilberforce, OH
2003–2005

Coordinated long-term recruitment strategies and programs, planned and implemented recruiting activities for assigned territory and student population, and developed presentations and marketing materials to promote the university. Offered in-person student engagement at college fairs and by visiting schools, via social media, email, and other digital platforms, and through community organizations. Determined qualification by interviewing the student and reviewing transcripts.

Selected accomplishment:

- Utilized a variety of modalities to engage prospective students, expanding on technology and digital platforms to gain program recognition.
- Regularly presented reports and analyses of recruitment data, enabling educational leadership to make critical decisions on business objectives in real-time.
- Reached out to local community colleges and coordinated academic departments for articulation agreements
- Engaged the community and partnered with university initiatives in an assigned area such as NY, Washington, D.C., Chicago, and Ohio

ADDITIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE

Smith Marketing <i>Higher Ed Consultant</i>	LLC Dayton, Ohio
Wilberforce University <i>Spanish Instructor,</i>	Wilberforce, OH
Spectrum Healthcare Resources, Womack Army Hospital <i>Physical Therapy Front Desk Manager, Evening Clinic</i>	Fort Bragg, NC
647th QM Company, US Army <i>Family Support Coordinator</i>	Fort Bragg, NC
Primus/Navcare Program, US Army Medical Corps Fort Hood, TX <i>Medical Laboratory Technologist</i>	

EDUCATION

Certification Association for the Coaching and Tutoring Profession
Academic Coach

M.A. Central State University Wilberforce, OH
Higher Education Administration

B.G.S. University of Mary Hardin-Baylor Belton, TX
Biology

A.A.S. Temple Junior College Temple, TX
Medical Laboratory Technician