

## Dr. Kathleen Linaker

Dr. Kathleen (Kat) Linaker brings with her over 20 years of experience as a faculty member and college administrator along with 15 years of experience working in the healthcare industry as an employee, small business owner, and consultant. Her most recent academic roles were as the Vice President of Academics at Western Technical College (Western) in LaCrosse, Wisconsin, and the Assistant Vice President of Academics and Dean of the School of STEM, Health, and Natural Sciences at Mohawk Valley Community College (MVCC) in Utica, New York.

Kat has a deep commitment to both student success and technical education because together they have the power to end generational poverty while simultaneously driving economic growth. She has experience leading student success initiatives, at scale, which are rooted in the equity framework of the Guided Pathways philosophy as an administrator at both MVCC and Western, and as a Coach for the SUNY Community College Guided Pathways cohort program. During her time at Western, Kat led the infusion of equity-based practices across academics using a Professional Learning Community to provide training in poverty, trauma, and culturally informed practices complete with self-reflection and application to ensure all faculty and staff are equipped to provide first choice service to each student based on that student's individual needs. This work is showing preliminary success through increased conversions of GED students to college programs (>200%) and increased student success in courses where faculty have embraced equity informed practices – even in the face of the pandemic with the rapid conversion to the online environment (e.g., Anatomy and Physiology >20%). She is currently taking part in the National Center for Inquiry and Improvement (NCII) Rural Leader Learning Community, a cross-functional group of rural administrators working to develop innovative solutions to student success reform issues that are specific to the rural context. She coauthored a brief for the NCII on the hiring and retention of diverse faculty at rural community and technical colleges and, using the strategies outlined in the brief, Western had a 10% increase in diverse hires in one year.

As a servant-leader Kat is particularly proud of her dean team's collaborative leadership during the pandemic. Together, they made an early decision to deliver the bulk of the Fall 2020 curriculum remotely so that faculty would have time to learn how to teach in a new format and to prepare their courses; suspending all projects that did not support faculty and student success or safety. Kat has an extensive background in teaching and continues to teach one diagnostic imaging course a year. Like many other faculty members, she transitioned her course to the online environment during the pandemic. These varied experiences, combined with her education and ongoing professional development, provide her with a broad understanding of the higher education landscape and the ability to lead effective change to meet the fluctuating demands we are experiencing in higher education today.

The youngest of five children, Kat grew up in rural Alberta, Canada. The first in her family to attend college, she holds a Bachelor of Science in Biology from the University of Alberta; a Doctor of Chiropractic from Northwestern Health Sciences University; and a Ph.D. in Higher Education from Loyola University, Chicago. She is a strong advocate for community and technical college education, having witnessed firsthand generational rural poverty and the power of education to transform the lives of both our students and that of their families. She and her husband Clint have been married 23 years. They have a teenage daughter, Katherine, and a rescue dog, Biscuit.