

LEONARD (LEN) L. LIRA, PHD

COLLABORATIVE LEADER | STRATEGIC MANAGER | EXECUTIVE EXPERIENCE

Senior executive leader in community college education with over 20 years of experience advancing workforce development, career and technical education (CTE), and academic program innovation across complex, multi-institutional environments. Proven record of designing and scaling workforce-aligned degree and certificate programs that respond to regional Labor market demands, strengthen industry partnerships, and expand economic mobility for diverse student populations. Demonstrated expertise in building cross-sector collaborations with business, government, and community organizations to develop talent pipelines, work-based learning opportunities, and career-aligned educational pathways. Experienced in managing workforce-related funding streams, including grant-supported program development, and aligning institutional strategy with state and regional workforce priorities. Recognized for leading large-scale organizational change, driving enrollment growth, improving credential attainment, and integrating workforce and academic pathways to support both transfer and career outcomes. Brings deep experience in strategic planning, accreditation, outcomes assessment, and data-informed decision-making to improve retention, completion, and workforce readiness.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

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| ▪ Workforce Development & CTE Leadership | ▪ Labor Market Alignment & Workforce Pipeline development | ▪ Grant-Supported Program Development |
| ▪ Industry & Community Partnerships | ▪ Strategic Planning & Organizational Change | ▪ Student Success & Completion Strategies |
| ▪ Academic & Workforce program Development | ▪ Budgeting & Resource Management | ▪ Dual Credit Partnerships |
| | | ▪ Accreditation & Institutional Effectiveness |

RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

CHAIR, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC POLICY AND SERVICE

SAN ANTONIO COLLEGE, ALAMO COLLEGE DISTRICT, SAN ANTONIO, TX

2022- PRESENT

Provides executive leadership for a multi-program academic and workforce-aligned department, overseeing career and technical education (CTE) pathways, transfer programs, and workforce pipeline initiatives. Leads program development, Labor market alignment, and cross-sector partnerships to ensure programs respond to regional workforce demands and support high-wage, high-growth career fields. Directs strategic planning, budgeting, enrollment management, and student success initiatives aligned with institutional and state workforce priorities.

Workforce Program Development & Labor Market Alignment

- Led redesign and expansion of workforce-aligned programs, including revitalization of the Court Reporting program, a high-value, high opportunity field, resulting in a 380% increase in enrollment and a 171% increase in credentials awarded through curriculum alignment with regional Labor market demand.

CONTINUED ...

- Developed accelerated degree pathways and workforce-focused program structures to improve time-to-completion for adult learners and working students.
- Collaborated with regional workforce initiatives, including San Antonio Ready to Work and SA WORX, to align program offerings with targeted industry sectors and economic development priorities.

Industry & Community Partnerships

- Established strategic partnerships with industry and government entities, including the Bexar County Sheriff's Office, to develop workforce pipelines, customized training programs, and leadership development initiatives tied to employment outcomes.
- Expanded dual credit and early college pathways through partnerships with ISDs and charter networks, strengthening K–12 to workforce pipelines.
- Coordinated engagement with employers and community organizations to expand internships, practicums, and career-aligned experiential learning opportunities.

Workforce Funding & Resource Management

- Managed workforce-related funding streams, including Carl D. Perkins grants and institutional resources, to support program development, equipment, and student success initiatives.
- Supported identification and development of grant-funded opportunities aligned with workforce and career technical education priorities.

Strategic Leadership & Program Oversight

- Directed five academic and workforce programs through organizational restructuring into a unified department, improving efficiency, alignment, and program coherence.
- Led strategic enrollment growth initiatives resulting in a 177% increase in total enrollment and a 157% increase in credentials awarded.
- Oversaw departmental budgeting and resource allocation aligned with workforce program priorities and institutional performance metrics.

Student Success & Workforce Outcomes

- Implemented data-informed strategies that improved Productive Grade Rate (PGR), Course Completion Rate (CCR), and retention, with a focus on workforce and economically disadvantaged students.
- Integrated guided pathways frameworks across workforce and academic programs to improve onboarding, progression, and completion.
- Expanded experiential learning opportunities aligned with workforce readiness and career placement.

Institutional & Cross-College Leadership

- Led cross-functional initiatives with advising, student success, and academic support units to improve workforce student persistence and completion.
- Contributed to institutional strategic planning aligning workforce programs with regional economic mobility goals.
- Ensured compliance with accreditation standards and workforce program requirements.

Assistant Professor of Public Administration

SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY – SAN JOSE, CA

2017- 2022

Taught graduate-level courses in public management, budgeting, and organizational leadership. Contributed to workforce pipeline development by connecting students to internships and careers in federal agencies and public service organizations.

- Secured and managed grant funding totaling \$50,000 to support workforce-aligned academic programs and student professional development.
- Connected students to internships with federal agencies including FBI, CIA, NSA, and DIA, supporting workforce entry into national security careers.
- Led curriculum development and program assessment efforts contributing to full accreditation of the MPA program.

DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR TEACHING & LEARNING EXCELLENCE,

ARMY UNIVERSITY – FT. LEAVENWORTH, KS

2015-2017

Founded and led a university-wide center focused on workforce development through faculty training, curriculum innovation, and adult learning strategies.

- Led development of workforce-relevant curriculum and training programs for over 250 faculty.
- Built partnerships with universities and professional organizations to support workforce transition and career development initiatives.

DIRECTOR OF INTERAGENCY AND STRATEGIC STUDIES DIVISION & ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL STUDIESUS ARMY COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF COLLEGE, ARMY UNIVERSITY
– FT. LEAVENWORTH, KS

2009-2015

Directed curriculum and workforce-oriented education programs for graduate and executive-level students.

- Developed academic programs in Homeland Security, Interagency Studies, and Cyber Security aligned with workforce needs.
- Led partnerships across government, nonprofit, and academic sectors to support workforce development and interagency collaboration.

ADDITIONAL SENIOR LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCEUNITED STATES ARMY – (Colonel, O-6)
1989-2017

Held multiple executive leadership roles overseeing large-scale operations, workforce development initiatives, and organizational strategy across global environments, including Iraq and Afghanistan.

- Managed multimillion-dollar budgets and large, diverse teams in complex operational environments.
 - Led workforce development and governance initiatives supporting economic development and institutional capacity-building.
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EDUCATION

PHD -PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (SPECIALTY: PUBLIC MANAGEMENT & ORGANIZATION THEORY) -
University of Kansas– Lawrence, KS - 2016

MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION - Syracuse University – Syracuse, NY - 2003

MASTER OF ARTS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS - Syracuse University – Syracuse, NY - 2003

CERTIFICATE OF ADVANCED STUDY IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION - Syracuse University – Syracuse, NY -2003

BACHELOR OF ARTS, CRIMINAL JUSTICE-POLICE ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCES, Sam Houston State University – Huntsville, TX - 1994

WORKFORCE & CTE LEADERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

Workforce program expansion aligned with high-demand industries
Industry partnership development and workforce pipeline creation
Grant-supported workforce program development (Perkins and institutional funding)
Dual credit and early college workforce pathway expansion
Integration of workforce and academic guided pathways
Data-informed program evaluation and labor market responsiveness

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Senior Staff College Selectee, National Defense University, Washington, DC
U.S. Army Defense Strategy Course, Carlisle Barracks, PA
U.S. Army Command and Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS
U.S. Army Command and Staff Service School, Fort Leavenworth, KS
Advanced Officers' Career Course, US Army, Fort Knox, KY
Basic Officer Leaders' Course, US Army, Fort Knox, KY

REFERENCES SUBMITTED AS REQUESTED