R. Michelle Sawyers

For over 15 years, Michelle has built a career advocating for education and economic equity for limited income and marginalized populations. An experienced higher education administrator and non-profit operations leader, she has worked to have an impact in the areas of education and workforce development. Passionate about ending the cycle of poverty and educational access, she has demonstrated her commitment to her community by her efforts. Michelle is a student-centered professional, who is dedicated to student success. Previously serving as Dean of Student Support Services at Medaille College, Michelle was responsible for grant funded programs, the Academic Success Center and the Say Yes to Education student support department. Michelle has served as a member of the President’s Cabinet and administrative leadership team, contributing to operational decisions that support academic persistence, retention, and institutional growth. Understanding that having an inclusive economy is key to addressing economic disparities, Michelle spent several years in youth workforce development with the Hillside Family of Agencies as Director of Operations for Hillside Work Scholarship Connection. Michelle has demonstrated a proven ability to provide directional leadership focused on strategic growth and innovation while generating a maximum return on investment. She is skilled in leveraging relationships in the public and private sector, secondary and post-secondary education sectors and with community organizations.

R. Michelle Sawyers is a native of Buffalo, New York, and a graduate of the Buffalo public school system. Michelle graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor’s degree in History and master's degree in Higher Education Student Affairs Administration from State University of New York College at Buffalo.