LEADERSHIP
IN HIGHER EDUCATION
CONFERENCE

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

October 2–4, 2025 | Philadelphia, PA

Welcome!

We eagerly look forward to our higher-education conferences because of the cordial, talented, and dedicated people we meet. We are especially excited to welcome you to the Leadership in Higher Education Conference and look forward to seeing you at many more. We have confidence you will return to your campus with new ideas, new enthusiasm, and new connections. Let us know if there's anything we can do to improve your experience.
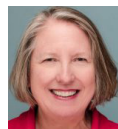
Advisory Board

We sincerely appreciate the guidance of our advisory board in helping organize Magna Publications' ninth annual conference for academic leaders. Their contributions were invaluable in shaping the conference structure, including selecting track topics, conducting a blind review of session proposals, and providing advice on various aspects of the program. We are especially looking forward to the concurrent sessions presented by our board members.

David A. Bucci, EdD
Program Director
Project Kitty Hawk
UNC

Kathy Burlingame, EdD
Dean
Galen College of Nursing

Russell Carpenter, PhD
Assistant Provost and Professor
Eastern Kentucky University

Edna B. Chun, DM
Chief Learning Officer
HigherEd Talent

Oliver Dreon, PhD
Professor
Millersville University of Pennsylvania

Robert Cipriano, EdD
Professor Emeritus
Southern Connecticut State University

Stephanie Delaney, PhD
Vice President of Instruction
Renton Technical College

Craig Hlavac, EdD
Associate Dean
Southern Connecticut State University

Gretchen Oltman, JD, PhD
Associate Professor
Creighton University

Magna Staff

The Magna onsite team is here to assist you throughout the conference. Please see us if we can be of service.

Bonny Wolter
Events Coordinator

Mark Beyer
Customer Service Manager

David Burns
Vice President

Matt Nieman
Content Coordinator

General Information

Wi-Fi

Enjoy complimentary Wi-Fi using:

Network: **MarriottBonvoy__Conference**
Password: **Magna25$** *(case sensitive)*

Registration/Check-In

Be sure to check-in at the conference registration desk on Level 5 at Registration Desk II when you first arrive to pick up your name badge, meal tickets, and other conference materials.

Name Badges

Name badges are required for all sessions, meals, and plenary presentations. Please wear your name badge at all times. If you lose your name badge, please see a conference staff member at the registration desk for a replacement.

Download the LHE App

Download the conference app from your app store for many features including networking, scheduling sessions, speaker handouts, and alerts about changes or updates to the program schedule.

1. Scan the QR code to the right or search and download "Bizzabo" in your app store

2. Enter the email address you registered with

3. Click the Leadership in Higher Education Conference

Meals

Your registration includes a reception on Thursday, a continental breakfast and plated lunch on Friday, and a continental breakfast and to-go lunch card on Saturday. If you selected any dietary restrictions on your registration, you will be provided with special meal tickets. Present these tickets to the hotel staff at lunch.

Exhibitors/Sponsors

Visit the exhibitor displays on Level 5, Salon H Foyer to learn about products and services for your campus.

Networking Opportunities

- Attend the New Attendee Orientation
- Attend the reception
- Attend as many sessions as possible
- Use the breaks between sessions to continue conversations
- Share a meal with someone you don't know
- Use the activity wall or attendee/speaker tab within the conference app to plan or connect with other attendees beyond the conference
- Tweet #LHE25

Stay Connected

Connect with other attendees using the conference hashtag #LHE25, and stay connected with us all year by following us on social media.

Conference Hashtag: **#LHE25**

🄕 facebook.com/MagnaPubs

🄧 @Magnapubs

🄛 Linkedin.com/company/604209/

Session Tracks

The Leadership in Higher Education Conference focuses on both academic and administrative leadership with six tracks. Our interactive 60-minute sessions engage and inform attendees in these six unique topical areas, color coded and designated at the beginning of each session listing.

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

This track shares ways to respond to campus issues, such as structural diversity, change management, transformation of institutional culture, diversity skills and competency training programs and supporting and retaining diverse staff and faculty.

Institutional Culture & Climate

The culture of a university consists of the set of values that helps the university's faculty, staff, students, and administrators understand which actions are considered acceptable and which actions are considered unacceptable. Climate looks at the present moment: what is the atmosphere like for members of the faculty, staff, students, and administrators? This track includes presentations on managing and improving institutional culture and climate and dealing with the problems that arise at the department and college level.

Leadership & Professional Development

Sessions in this track focus on building and refining innovative approaches to higher-education leadership in support of student success, building faculty collaboration, addressing conflict resolution, promoting innovation through research, fostering needed curricular change, mentoring faculty, establishing equitable promotion and tenure processes, and building a positive working and learning environment. Sessions in this track may also address new trends or developments in higher education.

Student Retention & Success

Student success is a gauge of institutional success, and—as such— it is an indicator of the institution's overall product. Presentations in this track focus on overcoming challenges to retention, such as escalating costs, declining state support, and a shrinking student population; creating successful retention strategies through student-focused efforts in admissions, financial aid, academic advising, course management, or residential living; and promoting student success by supporting high-risk students, adult learners, academic assistance, health and wellness counseling, and more.

What New Leaders Need to Know

This track is a boot camp for new leaders. Sessions within the track are specific to the main skills required for successful leadership at a higher-education institution, including hiring, development and retention, budgeting and finance, academic policymaking, program development, evaluation and assessment, mediation and problem solving, fundraising and development, communication, and mentoring.

Special Topics in Higher-Education Leadership

With the complexity of leadership roles and responsibilities at different institutions, sometimes our work doesn't fit neatly into a single category. Sessions in this track represent topics not clearly defined in another track.

Sessions

Please keep in mind that sessions are available on a first-come, first-served basis and seating may be limited. Please be prompt; some sessions will fill early. Please have your second and third choices ready. If you attend a session and realize it's not for you, please feel free to leave and join another session.

Evaluation

You will receive an electronic survey after the conference via email. Please take note of the sessions you attend and complete the survey! Your feedback helps us improve future programs.

Conference Schedule

	Thursday, Oct 2	Friday, Oct 3	Saturday, Oct 4

7am

8am

Continental Breakfast
7:30–8:30 AM
Level 5, Salons G – L (Friday, Oct 3)

Continental Breakfast
7:30–8:30 AM
Level 5, Salons G – L (Saturday, Oct 4)

9am

Sessions
8:45–9:45 AM (Friday)

Closing Plenary
8:45–10:00 AM
Level 5, Salons G – L (Saturday)

10am

Sessions
10:00–11:00 AM (Friday)

Sessions
10:15–11:15 AM (Saturday)

11am

Registration Hours
Noon–5:00 PM
Level 5, Registration Desk II (Thursday)

Sessions
11:15 AM–12:15 PM (Friday)

Sessions
11:30 AM–12:30 PM (Saturday)

12pm

Exhibitor Hours
12:30 – 7:30 PM
Level 5, Salon H Foyer (Thursday)

Lunch
12:30–1:30 PM
Level 5, Salons G – L (Friday)

1pm

Preconference Workshops
1:00 – 3:30 PM
Level 4, Franklin 1, 2, 4, 13 (Thursday)

2pm

Sessions
1:45–2:45 PM (Friday)

3pm

Exhibitor Spotlight Sessions
3:15 – 4:00 PM (Thursday)

Sessions
3:00–4:00 PM (Friday)

4pm

New Attendee Orientation
4:15–4:45 PM (Thursday)

Registration Hours
7:30 AM–4:00 PM
Level 5, Registration Desk II (Friday)

Registration Hours
7:30 AM to 1:30 PM
Level 5, Registration Desk II (Saturday)

5pm

**Conference Welcome
& Opening Plenary**
4:45–6:00 PM
Level 5, Salons G – L (Thursday)

Exhibitor Hours
7:30 AM – 4:00 PM
Level 5, Salon H Foyer (Friday)

Exhibitor Hours
7:30 AM – 1:30 PM
Level 5, Salon H Foyer (Saturday)

6pm

Reception and Exhibitor Mingle
6:00–7:30 PM
Level 5, Salon H Foyer (Thursday)

7pm

Thursday, October 2

Preconference Workshops

*Separate registration and fee required

1:00–3:30 PM

A Toolkit for Grading Reform at Scale

Josh Eyler, University of Mississippi

We are currently in the midst of one of the most fruitful, effective periods of grading reform in our country's history, both in K–12 and in higher ed. At many of our institutions, faculty are experimenting with a variety of alternative grading strategies and are having success, but many are eager to see more widespread change at the department and institutional levels. This preconference workshop provides attendees with a rationale for change, with research–based tools for advancing grading reform initiatives at scale, and with strategies for moving the conversation forward.

📖 *Level 4, Franklin 13*

Last Mile: Where Higher Ed Needs to Show Value in an AI World

Hollis Robbins, University of Utah

Universities can no longer defend a business model where students pay tuition for a human to deliver information that an AI can personalize for each learner instantaneously. Once AI can deliver the entire general education curriculum, the university's value proposition must shift from introducing students to knowledge to guiding students at the frontier of knowledge. In the AI era, undergraduate education should be organized around three questions: What do we know? How do we know it? And what remains unknown? This pedagogy requires direct engagement with primary sources, raw data, and research methodologies. If US universities are to remain competitive, students must work at the frontier. It is the only part of education that cannot be automated, and the only thing worth the price of tuition.

📖 *Level 4, Franklin 2*

Know Thyself: Building Your Leadership Insight Engine

Stephanie Delaney, Renton Technical College

One of the main reasons that leaders fail is because of a lack of self awareness or emotional intelligence. In this workshop, you will dive into four popular leadership assessments, reviewing the results for key insights in how you manage yourself and how you work with others. As a bonus, we'll use the results to build a custom AI tool that will enable you to generate AI content grounded in your personal leadership approach.

📖 *Level 4, Franklin 4*

We Have to Talk: Strategies to Build Understanding, Enhance Engagement, and Navigate Difficult Conversations

Lynne A. Texter, La Salle University

Higher education leaders at every level and in every division must communicate effectively with a wide variety of colleagues and other internal and external stakeholders to support and advance strategic goals/initiatives and to animate the institutional mission. In order to strengthen your work and also be better prepared to avoid or mediate the negative behaviors and communications that impede or stall progress, you need to pursue every opportunity to improve your ability to communicate to foster understanding, enhance engagement, and build constructive relationships. This workshop will expand your understanding of how you can communicate more effectively and provide guidance about how you can put this knowledge into practice at your institution. You'll learn about different communication approaches to enhance understanding and engagement so you can work more successfully with others, including those who are resistant to change/new ideas and those who have different and/or difficult styles. We'll also provide a framework for how to prepare for and facilitate difficult conversations to address challenges and pursue opportunities to yield more positive outcomes.

📖 *Level 4, Franklin 1*

Exhibitor Spotlight Session

3:15–4:00 PM

The Value of Virtual Simulations for Academic Leadership Development

Thomas Lewis, ETU

etu

It is a challenging time for US higher education requiring robust leadership within institutions. ETU, a Dublin-based immersive simulation platform, creates scalable, skill-driven learning and training solutions aimed at making the leaders of today, and tomorrow, more empathetic, proficient, and—crucially—motivated. By engaging in practical scenarios drawn from real life, ETU simulations allow for the application of skills in behaviors in a safe space while providing deeper participant data than standard, LMS-based asynchronous offerings. In this discussion, Thomas Lewis, Director of ETU's Learning Solutions, will lead a participatory walkthrough of ETU's simulation platform, including from the learner's perspective, as well as showcase the types of data-rich insights the ETU platform can deliver. The discussion will also look at the "no code" authoring side of the ETU tool including a demonstration of ETU's imminent AI-enabled authoring application.

📖 *Level 4, Meeting Room Franklin 3*

The Coming Wave: Generation Alpha Student Life Needs

Michael Garvey, BHDP Architecture

BHDP

With only four years until they enroll in higher education, it is time to start planning for the coming wave: Generation Alpha. In this presentation, we will discuss the culmination of many months of research by BHDP looking at past generation trends, societal and world events that shaped previous students' life needs, and how we can use that as a predictive model for the needs of Generation Alpha. Attendees will recognize the need to plan and/or update their facilities to meet this new demand and will gain a better understanding of the changing needs of the incoming generation relative to previous generational needs. Further, attendees will be better prepared to discuss these changes with their institution's leadership. By understanding their forthcoming needs, administrators and faculty can start planning for future students. Among other things, we will cover the unique and somewhat novel technology, social behavior, holistic wellness, and personal growth needs of Generation Alpha. Participants will be engaged throughout the session to share their experiences in and out of the classroom with late Gen Z and Gen Alpha to understand firsthand accounts of how the changing demographic will translate to new learning experiences in higher education.

📖 *Level 4, Meeting Room 402*

Thank you to our Exhibitors

BHDP

etu

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ACADEMIC Leader

MAGNA

TEACHING PROFESSOR® DIGITAL LIBRARY

4:15–4:45 PM

New Attendee Orientation

Matt Nieman, Magna Publications

New attendees are encouraged to attend our brief orientation about navigating the conference, expectations, making the most of your experience, and upcoming Magna events.

📖 *Level 5, Salons G – L*

4:45–6:00 PM

Conference Welcome

David Burns, Magna Publications

📖 *Level 5, Salons G – L*

Opening Plenary

How Much "Me" Should I Be? Reflecting on Authenticity and Values in Higher Education Leadership

Kimberly Griffin, University of Maryland

As we become leaders, we think a lot about what to do, but perhaps less than we should about who we are. Books and workshops often focus on leadership tactics and strategies, but we rarely receive guidance or structured opportunities to think about the connections between what is important to us and how we lead. In this plenary, we'll explore and practice identifying, understanding, and leaning into your authentic self as you engage in leadership, highlighting how self-reflection can promote clarity and coherence in your work, particularly when navigating challenging times.

📖 *Level 5, Salons G – L*

6:00–7:30 PM

Reception and Exhibitor Mingle

Enjoy light hors d'oeuvres and refreshments while networking with other attendees. Beer and wine available for purchase. This is also a good opportunity to visit the exhibitors who have products and services that support teaching and learning.

📖 *Level 5, Salon H Foyer*

Friday, October 3

7:30–8:30 AM

Continental Breakfast

Enjoy seasonal whole fruit, freshly baked pastries, and a variety of breads with whipped butter, house berry thyme jam, and nut butter. Assorted cereals, milk, and hard boiled eggs are also available. Enjoy coffee, tea, and a variety of juices.

📖 *Level 5, Salons G – L*

8:45–9:45 AM

Can You Let It Go? Building Trust to Delegate in Academia

💡 *Gretchen Oltman, Creighton University*

Leadership & Professional Development

Leaders in higher education settings often have difficulty delegating their responsibilities, often thinking it's just easier to complete a task themselves than to put it in someone else's hands. This session explores how to build a delegation-friendly environment in academia— one in which trust to delegate is built, the importance of time management is prioritized, and leaders are empowered to make strategic decisions about where to put their time and effort. Participants will devise an individual plan identifying tasks that might be delegated, how to build a delegation pipeline in their environment, and ideas on where more impact can be created when delegation is done well.

📖 *Level 4, Franklin 13*

The Future of DEI in the Higher Education Workforce

💡 *Edna Chun, Columbia University*

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

Based upon a forthcoming book by Edna Chun and Alvin Evans, this session highlights key developments in the ongoing controversy surrounding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives in American higher education over the past two decades. The session discusses the impact of legal shifts and advocates for a recalibration of HR/diversity processes in organizational structures that transcend institutional silos and address new workforce realities. Amid current controversies, the session will share next-generation DEI strategies that reflect institutional mission, values, and goals, support student success, and offer the potential for attaining greater equality and inclusion within the higher education workplace.

📖 *Level 4, Meeting Room 404*

💡 *= Advisory Board Sessions*

Fostering Ethical AI Use in Collegiate Environments

◇ *Oliver Dreon, Millersville University*

Special Topics in Higher-Education Leadership

As artificial intelligence tools become more deeply integrated into higher education, institutions face urgent questions around ethical implementation, academic integrity, student privacy, and equitable access. This session explores how college and university leaders can proactively shape campus-wide approaches to AI that reflect institutional values and prioritize responsible use. Participants will examine emerging challenges such as generative AI in coursework and the ethical implications of AI-powered predictive analytics. Through case studies and collaborative discussion, attendees will gain insights into building inclusive frameworks that balance innovation with accountability.

📖 *Level 4, Meeting Room 401/402*

Leading with Courage and Wisdom: Impactful Tools for the Evolving Academic Landscape

◇ *Kathy Burlingame, Galen College of Nursing*

Special Topics in Higher-Education Leadership

Leadership in higher education is not for the faint of heart. Leadership requires courage, humility, and adaptability. Leading up, down, and across an organization is complex and requires a cadre of tools in one's toolkit and wisdom to utilize the optimal approach at the right time. If you are interested in dialoging about best practices, fostering accountability, and leaving with new or revised strategies to equip you for the current academic environment, this is the session for you!

📖 *Level 4, Franklin 1*

Your First 90 Days as Chairperson: What You Need to Know to Start Strong

◇ *Craig Hlavac, Southern Connecticut State University*

What New Leaders Need to Know

The academic department chairperson is perhaps the most influential—and demanding—roles in the contemporary university. Unfortunately, few institutions provide adequate preparation, and formal training is costly. This session is designed to support new chairs by outlining what they can expect in the first 90 days. Attendees will learn the roles, tasks, and conflicts typical of the position, followed by suggestions for clarifying expectations with colleagues and your dean. Practical strategies for building community within the department as well as addressing conflicts will also be explored.

📖 *Level 4, Franklin 3*

Loneliness: An Epidemic in Higher Education

◇ *Robert Cipriano, ATLAS – Academic Training, Leadership & Assessment Services*

Institutional Culture & Climate

Loneliness is a universal human emotion that is both complex and unique to everyone. It has no single and widespread cause. Therefore, the prevention and treatment of loneliness as a potentially damaging state of mind can vary dramatically from person to person. A sad reality of modern life is that loneliness is pervasive and on the rise. In fact, since 1985 the number of people in the US who indicated they have no close friends has tripled. Younger generations—college age students—are significantly more lonely than older generations. This session will provide the attendees with specific strategies to facilitate our students, as well as faculty members and administrators, to feel more connected and less isolated, while cultivating strong positive connections with people to bring meaning and well-being.

📖 *Level 4, Meeting Room 407/408*

Convening as a Strategy for Academic Leadership and Faculty Development

◇ *Russell Carpenter and Kevin Dvorak, Eastern Kentucky University*

Institutional Culture & Climate

At a time when higher education faces myriad challenges, faculty engagement and workplace satisfaction are critical to the everyday and long-term success of American universities. One challenge academic leaders face is bringing faculty together–convening–in ways that allow them to network with one another, build positive relationships, and connect deeply with their institutions–actions critical to engagement and satisfaction. Strategic design firm Shook Kelley defines "convening" as "the art and science of bringing people together around a physical place, space, idea, forum and experience" (n.d.) with a goal of creating "bonfire moments" that make people "feel more connected to one another" (Kelley, 2024). If convening is critical to employee success, then how do we build dynamic opportunities–bonfire moments–that may lead to improved workplace satisfaction? The goal of this session is to use current research on employee engagement (Gallup) and Shook Kelley's principles of convening as frameworks for examining how academic leaders might develop strategies for improving faculty engagement and satisfaction. Participants will design action plans to create meaningful "bonfire moments" that engage faculty, aligned with their institution's specific needs, goals, and context.

📖 *Level 4, Meeting Room 414/415*

◇ *= Advisory Board Sessions*

10:00–11:00 AM

The Call is Coming from Inside the House: How Grades Affect Learning and Jeopardize Student Wellbeing

Invited Presenter: *Josh Eyler, University of Mississippi*

Student Retention & Success

Getting a good grade is supposed to be a marker of excellence, but research shows that grades diminish our intrinsic motivation and emphasize the outcome rather than the process that leads to what researchers refer to as deep learning. Grades also mirror and magnify many of the systemic inequities that are a part of higher education. Further still, rates of anxiety and depression have spiked dramatically, and academic stress tied to grades is a factor contributing to this escalation. In this session, Eyler will offer a range of strategies we can try in order to be more equitable in our classrooms by mitigating the damaging effects of grades.

📖 *Level 4, Franklin 13*

Coaching Skills for Academic Leaders: Bringing Out the Best in Yourself and Others

Susan Robison, Professor Destressor

Leadership & Professional Development

The interpersonal aspects of academic leadership, such as annual reviews, performance evaluations, or other difficult conversations with faculty, can be especially challenging to the inexperienced chair/dean. In this session, you will practice several powerful brain-based coaching skills drawn from improv games to increase your skills and confidence for leadership that matters: transformational coaching conversations that build institutional collegiality, civility, and engagement. Participants will apply a structure for shaping such conversations in dyad practice and then contribute to a facilitator/volunteer demonstration of these skills.

📖 *Level 4, Meeting Room 404*

The Evolution of Leadership: Managing Transitions in Higher Ed

📍 *David Bucci, North Carolina State University*

Leadership & Professional Development

In this session, attendees will explore the landscape of leadership transitions in higher education, covering perspectives from advancing faculty members to those shifting administrative roles within student or academic affairs, and even those moving from formal leadership to more subtle or unofficial positions. This discussion will address various challenges and opportunities, including personnel dynamics, working through policy challenges, and

other shifts within the higher education landscape. Although experiences vary widely, formal training and knowledge sharing on managing these changes are often lacking. Through interactive dialogue, participants will discuss best practices, innovative strategies, and personal insights, gaining actionable solutions to enhance their leadership skills in a constantly evolving academic environment.

📖 *Level 4, Meeting Room 407/408*

Leading through Crisis and Change: Building Resilient Campuses through Effective Communication

Lee Abraham, Columbia University

What New Leaders Need to Know

In the ever-evolving landscape of 21st-century higher education, where campus crises are increasingly common, effective communication is essential for fostering transparency, maintaining trust, and ensuring timely, coordinated, and effective responses. By engaging with real-world scenarios, attendees will examine how to engage with stakeholders and learn how communication can be coordinated and integrated across their institutions to provide consistent, proactive, and empathetic communication and feedback. This interactive workshop will also explore strategies for building resilience and advancing campus renewal in the aftermath of crises.

📖 *Level 4, Meeting Room 414/415*

Transforming Student Retention: Implementing the Unified Student Success Model

Edward Robinson, 3-I Innovation

Student Retention & Success

Student retention remains a top priority for institutional leaders seeking to drive long-term success and equity in higher education. This session introduces the Unified Student Success Model (USSM), a strategic framework that integrates foundational retention theories into a cohesive, data-driven approach. Designed to support proactive and sustainable initiatives, USSM offers a clear structure by distinguishing between pillars, themes, objectives, goals, and strategies—making it easier for leaders to align student success efforts with institutional priorities. Through empirical analysis and real-world case studies, participants will gain actionable insights into implementing the USSM to improve student engagement, retention outcomes, and strategic planning across diverse campus environments.

📖 *Level 4, Franklin 3*

📍 *= Advisory Board Sessions*

From Awareness to Action:
Creating an Inclusive and Supportive Climate in Higher Education

Lisa Tereshko and Mary Jane Weiss, Endicott College

Institutional Culture & Climate

A sense of belonging—marked by inclusion, respect, and shared purpose—has been shown to enhance academic achievement, engagement, and retention for students and increased job satisfaction, productivity, and collaboration for faculty and staff. To foster a sense of belonging for everyone in the university community, institutions must implement culturally responsive strategies that address systemic barriers and promote equity. This session will explore key assessments and initiatives aimed at improving institutional culture and climate through intentional policies, leadership engagement, and community-building efforts and provide participants with resources for enhancing the climate of their own setting.

Level 4, Franklin 13

11:15 AM –12:15 PM

Building Your Plane As You Fly:
A Dean's First Year

Craig Leager and Amy Taylor, Indian Hills Community College

What New Leaders Need to Know

Stepping into a college leadership role presents both opportunity and complexity, especially for those new to the position. Anchored in the experiences of two newer college leaders, participants will explore research-based strategies to address key themes including: casting vision, identifying priorities, achieving early wins, navigating challenges, and investing in relationships. Participants will gain practical strategies for navigating the complexities of college leadership. This session is designed to fill critical gaps in early leadership preparation and provide a clear, confident path forward for new college leaders.

Level 4, Franklin 13

A Journey Beyond Burnout:
Neuroscience-Informed Pathways for Healing Moral Injury and Rekindling Courageous Academic Leadership

Invited Presenter: *Mays Imad, Connecticut College*

Institutional Culture & Climate

Over the past decade, and especially since 2020, senior academic leaders have faced a cascade of ethically charged pressures: pandemic triage, sudden budget austerity, rollbacks of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, statelevel mandates censoring curricula, and rising political polarization that threatens academic freedom. These forces routinely compel deans, provosts, and presidents to implement or defend policies that conflict with their convictions about justice, campus wellbeing, and the public mission of higher education. While the resulting exhaustion is usually labeled "stress" or "burnout", this session proposes that many leaders are grappling with moral injury: a deeper rupture characterized by shame, anger, guilt, diminished trust, and a loss of moral agency. In this session, attendees will first unpack moral injury through the lens of higher-education leadership, tracing how chronic ethical dissonance reshapes the brain's threat-detection, social-cognition, and imagination networks. Building on this foundation, a neuroscience-grounded framework for restoring moral agency will be introduced—one that nurtures moral courage, moral imagination, and, ultimately, moral transcendence. Participants will then translate the model into action, co-designing both daily micro-practices and institution-level strategies they can begin implementing immediately on their own campuses.

Level 4, Meeting Room 401/402

Can't We Just Get Along?
Managing a Multigenerational Workforce in Higher Education

Marcine Pickron-Davis and Alicia Hahn, Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine

What New Leaders Need to Know

Today's workforce spans five generations—Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, Baby Boomers, and Traditionalists—each bringing unique perspectives, values, and work styles. Millennials currently make up the largest share, followed by Gen X and Baby Boomers, while Gen Z is quickly emerging as the most racially, ethnically, and socially conscious generation. Expected to comprise 70% of the workforce by 2030, Gen Z is already the predominant group in medical school. These generational differences influence workplace culture, performance, and dynamics. As the workplace becomes more diverse, challenges exist in everyday communication, work styles and values, and performance. This session will help higher education leaders build the skills necessary to address these challenges and provide tools that they can use to positively impact workplace culture and performance.

Level 4, Franklin 1

Adaptive and Self Reflexive Leadership for Student-Centered Success

Heather Moore Roberson, Allegheny College

Student Retention & Success

Institutions of higher education thrive with compassionate, self-aware and self-reflexive leaders who continually assess how their personal and professional experiences equip them with the skills to successfully lead. In this session, attendees will explore key dimensions of their experiences—such as pain, grief and labor—to help better understand the challenges students face on and off campus. As today's student population grows increasingly diverse, including more first-generation, adult, and nontraditional learners, higher ed leaders must cultivate greater empathy and adaptability. Participants will explore how to strike a balance between confidence and humility, become more resilient through personal challenges, and develop the self-awareness needed to lead with a strong moral compass in an evolving academic landscape.

🗺 *Level 4, Meeting Room 404*

The Care and Feeding of Mid-Career Faculty: Professional Development Across the Career Life Cycle

Invited Presenter: Lynne Texter, La Salle University

Leadership & Professional Development

To build and sustain faculty currency, vitality, and engagement, leaders must find ways to support and encourage faculty at all career stages. While there are many formal and informal development opportunities for junior faculty, there is often less support for faculty at mid-career and beyond who may be exhausted, disillusioned, or unclear about how to continue their development. There is thus a need to commit to support ongoing professional development. This session will explore the challenges for mid- and late-career faculty; propose programs and activities for continued professional development; and share best practices for institutions, chairs, and faculty.

🗺 *Level 4, Franklin 3*

The Teaching Effectiveness Framework and Toolkit for Developing and Evaluating Teaching

Jennifer Todd and Tonya Buchan, Colorado State University

Leadership & Professional Development

Evaluating and developing teaching effectiveness remains a complex challenge for higher education leaders. This session introduces the Teaching Effectiveness Framework (TEF) and Toolkit, created at a land-grant R1 institution to provide a clear, evidence-based approach for aligning goal setting, professional development, mentoring, evaluation, and recognition of teaching. Designed to move beyond reliance on student course surveys, the TEF offers a consistent and transparent structure for documenting teaching efforts and their impact. Participants will explore how to implement the toolkit—or adapt its principles—to support equitable and effective faculty evaluation, and will leave with an action plan to bring this resource or a similar tool to their own institutions.

🗺 *Level 4, Meeting Room 414/415*

12:30–1:30 PM

Lunch
🗺 *Level 5, Salons G – L*

Enjoy a plated chicken lunch with a fall flavor theme. Served with a side salad and roll.

1:45–2:45 PM

Using Data to Drive Continuous Improvement in Online Course Assessments

Cindy Solari and Catherine McBride, Colorado Technical University

What New Leaders Need to Know

Data-informed decision-making is essential for continuous improvement in online education. This session will explore how faculty and academic leaders can collect, analyze, and apply assessment data to enhance student learning outcomes, refine course design, and boost engagement. Participants will gain practical strategies for identifying learning gaps, aligning assessments with course objectives, and personalizing instruction to meet diverse student needs. Emphasizing evidence-based teaching and institutional alignment, the session will offer actionable tools that support ongoing instructional success and broader institutional goals such as retention, course effectiveness, and graduation rates—ensuring online education remains responsive, impactful, and student-centered.

🗺 *Level 4, Franklin 3*

Empowering Cultural Change Through Inclusive Leadership Development

Jennifer Deranek, Indiana University South Bend

Institutional Culture & Climate

Creating a positive and inclusive institutional culture begins with recognizing the leadership potential and humanity of every team member. This session will explore the outcomes of a six-month leadership development program designed to foster a culture of support, purpose, identity, and joy among faculty and staff in a college of health sciences. Through practical activities and reflective strategies, attendees will learn how to elevate the strengths of their academic teams, particularly during times of institutional transition. The session will offer actionable takeaways to cultivate meaningful engagement, shared leadership, and cultural transformation that can be adapted across diverse campus settings.

📖 *Level 4, Meeting Room 404*

The Psychology of Leadership: Creating an Environment Where Faculty Thrive

Erin Martin, Lindenwood University

What New Leaders Need to Know

Navigating the complexities of academic leadership as a department chair demands more than just administrative skills; it requires creating a departmental environment that fosters trust, collaboration, inclusivity, transparency, resiliency, and creativity. In other words, it requires creating psychological safety. In this session, participants will learn about the importance of psychological safety and the role of emotional intelligence in fostering a psychologically safe environment.

📖 *Level 4, Meeting Room 401/402*

A Roadmap for Leaders: Improving Student Outcomes through Effective Teaching

Milagros Castillo-Montoya and Jillian Ives, University of Connecticut, Corbin Campbell, American University, and Kerry Brenner, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine

Exhibitor Spotlight Session

Effective teaching improves student outcomes for all students, and higher education leaders play a crucial role. Two recently released reports from the National Academies of Science, Engineering & Medicine and the Equity Based Teaching Collective (EBTC) describe the effective teaching practices that lead to student learning and how leaders can build a culture of improvement. The EBTC report, "Equity Based Teaching in Higher Education: The Levers That Institutions Can Use for Scaling Improvement", details 15 recommendations for institutional leaders, directors and staff of centers for teaching and learning, school deans and department chairs, faculty, and students. The National Academies report, "Transforming Undergraduate STEM Education: Supporting Equitable and Effective Teaching" provides 7 principles for effective teaching and provides guidance for institutional leaders on how to support departments, faculty, and instructors in making change. Together these two report and this session will provide an evidence-based roadmap for leaders to improve student success at scale through effective teaching.

📖 *Level 4, Franklin 1*

Doing DEI as a Senior Leader in a Time of Crisis

Invited Presenter: *Nimisha Barton, California State University Long Beach*

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

Against the nation-wide assault on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts, many higher education institutions have begun to scale back their equity and inclusion initiatives. Drawing from her recent book, A Just Future: Getting from Diversity and Inclusion to Equity and Justice, Dr. Nimisha Barton will discuss the history of DEI in higher education and suggest a path forward in these tumultuous times. In particular, she will discuss how social justice advocates have weathered political crisis before, highlight effective institutional strategies, and provide recommendations for action that higher ed leaders can implement immediately.

📖 *Level 4, Franklin 13*

Dismantling the Chair: Navigating the Shift to Self-Directed Teams

Linda McNeely, Brenau University

Leadership & Professional Development

This session explores the transition from a traditional department chair model to a self-directed work team structure within a higher education setting. Presenters will detail the motivations behind this shift, including the desire for improved collaboration, research productivity, and curriculum planning, while also addressing anticipated concerns such as communication flow, conflict resolution, and the redistribution of responsibilities. Attendees will gain insight into how shared leadership and distributed responsibilities can foster innovation, streamline decision-making, and support a more sustainable leadership model—particularly relevant at a time when institutions are rethinking traditional hierarchies and roles.

📖 *Level 4, Meeting Room 414/415*

Reframing Faculty Engagement: Leadership Strategies for a Changing Academic Landscape

Russell Carpenter and Kevin Dvorak, Eastern Kentucky University

`Institutional Culture & Climate`

The past few years have been particularly turbulent for higher education – including post-pandemic return-to-work initiatives, diminished public trust in higher ed, the spread of campus protests, the introduction of generative AI, which challenges so much of the work we do, to name only a few – so it is no wonder that there has been an increased focus on faculty burnout (Pope-Ruark, 2022, 2023; Vyletel, 2023) and subsequently, ways to improve faculty engagement (Carpenter, et al., 2024; Kimmel, 2024). While initial post-pandemic reports concluded that faculty had become increasingly disengaged (McClure, 2022; Musgrave, 2022), more recent reports suggest that working conditions, especially those beyond the classroom, have not improved (Lu, 2025; McMurtrie, 2025). The goal of this session is to apply current research on faculty (dis-)engagement to help academic leaders at all levels better understand the complexities of faculty engagement and develop strategies for improving faculty engagement at their institutions.

📖 *Level 4, Meeting Room 407/408*

3:00–4:00 PM

Transformative Leadership Practices for Thriving Higher Education Institutions and Communities

Tennille Woodward, GrowLeadEmpower, LLC

`Leadership & Professional Development`

This session explores transformative leadership strategies designed to foster inclusive, high-performing environments in higher education. Through The Leadership Game, an interactive tool that promotes collaboration, emotional intelligence, and self-reflection, participants will engage in hands-on exercises to strengthen their leadership effectiveness. The session emphasizes the importance of inclusive practices, adaptive leadership, and strategic thinking in navigating change and driving institutional success.

📖 *Level 4, Meeting Room 404*

Bridging Generations: Mentorship Strategies for Senior and Emerging Higher Education Leaders

Andrew Smith, Post University, and Peter Madonia, Southern Connecticut State University

`What New Leaders Need to Know`

Leadership transitions are inevitable, yet the gap between senior leaders nearing retirement and emerging leaders stepping into key roles presents challenges. Generational differences, evolving workplace expectations, and the rise of virtual and hybrid environments demand new approaches to mentorship. This session will facilitate a conversation addressing approaches to support both senior and aspiring leaders with strategies to navigate these complexities. Participants will explore research-based best practices for fostering meaningful mentorship, leveraging technology, and ensuring leadership continuity in diverse institutional settings.

📖 *Level 4, Franklin 3*

Restorative Practices in Action: A Process-Oriented Approach to Conflict Mediation in Higher Education

Patricia Gagliardi and Craig Hlavac, Southern Connecticut State University

`Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion`

Leaders in higher education frequently report interpersonal conflict as a key factor contributing to inefficiencies and tension within departments and organizational units. While human resource personnel provide direction when policies are violated, most behaviors do not escalate to that level—but are nonetheless destructive. This session offers leaders valuable strategies for using restorative practices to address and resolve interpersonal conflicts while refocusing efforts on the mission and goals of the organization. Through active participation in activities and scenario-based learning, attendees will experience and apply foundational restorative practices and leave with resources to learn more.

📖 *Level 4, Franklin 1*

Changing Student Outcomes Through Corporate Partnership

Tony Pittarese and Brian Bennett, East Tennessee State University

`Student Retention & Success`

The BlueSky Tennessee Institute, a pioneering collaboration between East Tennessee State University and BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee, offers a transformative model for reimagining higher education through public-private partnership. This session will explore how the program's 27-month accelerated degree, combined with hands-on workforce training, addresses workforce shortages, increases access for underserved students, and strengthens the alignment between academic and industry needs. With a focus on diversity, affordability, and real-world readiness,

attendees will gain insights into the program's high-impact design, including executive mentorship, debt-free education, and impressive retention outcomes. Leaders will walk away with practical strategies for building scalable, workforce-aligned programs that enhance student success and restore public trust in the value of higher education.

📖 *Level 4, Meeting Room 401/402*

The Role Experiential Learning in Faculty Leadership Development: Perspectives from Faculty Interns

Sara Zeigler, Russell Carpenter, Jill Campbell, Anne Cizmar, Matthew Howell, Shijin Kozhumal, and Lisa Middleton, Eastern Kentucky University

Special Topics in Higher-Education Leadership

How can we create faculty leadership development that is impactful, practical, and immediately applicable? What program designs can support transferable leadership development? Experiential learning can serve as a powerful approach for faculty leadership development that moves beyond top-down or "sit and get" programming or dense theoretical books. An experiential learning design in faculty leadership development provides a hands-on approach where faculty learn by actively engaging in experiences and reflecting on those experiences—engaging with others and applying leadership skills gained in different contexts. It allows faculty to apply leadership principles in ways that are immediately relevant to their daily work. Academic administrators at all levels are in a position to support, mentor, and guide faculty as they prepare for various levels of responsibility within and across the institution. The Provost's Faculty Internship Program at Eastern Kentucky University

(EKU) develops leadership skills at the university level among faculty, building significant capacity among faculty ranks. As a complement to the University's Provost's Leadership Institute, the program's goal is to build skillful and nuanced leadership by supporting individual faculty development. Through this program, faculty participate in a range of mentoring and learning opportunities and collaborate with colleagues in the Office of the Provost and other academic and administrative offices across campus. This session focuses on strategies for designing experiential learning in faculty leadership development.

📖 *Level 4, Meeting Room 407/408*

Leading Up!
How to Survive and Thrive during Leadership Transitions

Jim Godfrey, Utah Valley University

Leadership & Professional Development

This session explores the concept of "leading up" during leadership transitions in higher education—particularly when navigating relationships with newly hired supervisors. Attendees will learn best practices for supporting new leaders while also leveraging the transition as an opportunity for their own growth and influence. The session will address common challenges new leaders face, offer strategies for mutual success, and highlight how leadership perspectives from the arts can provide valuable insights across disciplines. Participants will walk away with practical tools to foster successful leadership transitions, build strong partnerships, and advance their own professional trajectories through intentional, upward leadership.

📖 *Level 4, Meeting Room 414/415*

Saturday, October 4

7:30–8:30 AM

Continental Breakfast

Enjoy seasonal whole fruit, freshly baked pastries, and a variety of breads with whipped butter, house berry thyme jam, and nut butter. Assorted cereals, milk, and hard boiled eggs are also available. Enjoy coffee, tea, and a variety of juices.

📖 *Level 5, Salons G – L*

8:45–10:00 AM

Closing Plenary

Leadership in a Time of Crisis

Brian Rosenberg, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Higher education is facing perhaps the most challenging time in its history. To existing challenges related to the economic model, demographics, and technology have been added unprecedented political and legal pressures. What does it mean to be an effective leader during an era of turbulence? What changes might help secure the future of the industry? In this closing plenary, Brian Rosenberg draws on decades of leadership experience and scholarship to explore how higher education leaders can navigate complexity with clarity, courage, and purpose. Attendees will walk away with a deeper understanding of the systemic forces shaping the future of higher education, practical strategies for leading through uncertainty, and a renewed sense of resolve to make bold, necessary changes within their institutions. This session will leave participants with not only questions to ponder but also tools and perspectives to lead more effectively in the face of ongoing disruption.

📖 *Level 5, Salons G – L*

10:15–11:15 AM

Know Thyself:
Building Self-Awareness for Leadership Growth

📍 *Stephanie Delaney, Renton Technical College*

`Leadership & Professional Development`

A lack of self-awareness is one of the most common reasons leaders struggle. This interactive session introduces four widely used leadership assessments that illuminate your strengths, blind spots, and growth opportunities. You'll explore how each tool can support your development as a more emotionally intelligent and effective leader. By the end of the session, you'll walk away with a personalized professional development plan and actionable next steps tailored to your leadership journey.

📖 *Level 4, Franklin 1*

You Were Awarded! Now What?
A Toolkit for Effective Grants Management

Rhyan E. Romaine, Ellucian

`What New Leaders Need to Know`

Securing a grant is just the beginning—effective management is key to ensuring impact, compliance, and sustainability. This session offers higher education leaders a practical, compliance-first approach to managing the full lifecycle of grant-funded projects, from launch to closeout. Attendees will explore strategies for aligning grant initiatives with institutional goals, maintaining regulatory compliance, mitigating risk, and using performance metrics to drive success. Through real-world insights and a post-award toolkit, participants will gain the knowledge needed to steward grant resources responsibly, enhance institutional credibility, and position their campuses for continued funding and long-term success.

📖 *Level 4, Meeting Room 404*

Institutional Faculty Development in Trauma Informed Pedagogy: Building Resilient Systems

Karen Gordes, Mary Jo Bondy, and Violet Kulo, University of Maryland Baltimore

`Institutional Culture & Climate`

This session will describe the design, implementation, and evaluation of a multi-discipline/multi-school faculty development program grounded in best practices and designed to generate a pipeline of faculty trained in the principles of trauma-informed pedagogy. The impact of training at the individual faculty level (changing instructional practices) and the collective program level (reformed policies, practices, and culture) to reflect trauma-informed principles will be highlighted with quantitative/qualitative data. Based on shared recommendations and lessons learned, attendees will be able to formulate steps to develop a faculty development model to foster a trauma resilient educational system within their own institution.

📖 *Level 4, Franklin 13*

How AI Can Uncover Student Interests Without Bias

Invited Presenter: *Hollis Robbins, University of Utah*

`Student Retention & Success`

As students are going to be increasingly comfortable and conversant with AI models, universities may be able to leverage this comfort to elicit and uncover intellectual interests in first-year students. We know human bias can limit opportunities. Can AI do better? Higher education leaders will leave with a clearer understanding of AI's potential—and limitations—in fostering more inclusive, student-centered academic pathways.

📖 *Level 4, Franklin 3*

Leadership and Transformation: Navigating Rapid Change in Higher Education

Reinhold Hill, Joan Poulsen, and Lori Montalbano, Indiana University Columbus

Special Topics in Higher-Education Leadership

Change has become a near constant in US higher education, with institutions grappling with enrollment declines due to changing demographics and reduced funding from shifting political priorities. In this environment, positive leadership is essential for navigating successful organizational transformation. Leaders who articulate a clear vision, build change-ready cultures, and empower their teams are best positioned to guide their institutions forward. This panel explores strategies to create a culture of respect and collaboration, emphasizing people-driven change and community buy-in.

📖 *Level 4, Meeting Room 414/415*

Upstream Approaches to Nurture a Healthy Workplace for Downstream Impact

📍 *Kathy Burlingame, Galen College of Nursing*

Institutional Culture & Climate

Leaders are responsible for fostering a culture that focuses on the employees' well-being, resilience, satisfaction, and success so that they can, in turn, teach, mentor, and coach students to be empowered change agents. The presentation aims to share strategies, critical factors, and resources needed to support work-life balance, resilience, and employee engagement for online, remote, and on-campus employees. Implementing best practices and biannually evaluating the team's feedback and commitment to shared goals is essential. When the employees feel like they are in a healthy work environment, they have the energy, passion, and tools to impact students and other members of the team.

📖 *Level 4, Meeting Room 407/408*

11:30 AM – 12:30 PM

The Antecedents of Transformational Leadership Practices

Violet Kulo, University of Maryland Baltimore

Leadership & Professional Development

Transformational leadership has been espoused as one of the most effective leadership styles and is associated with high levels of performance and job satisfaction among team members. This session will discuss the predictors of transformational leadership based on the literature and findings from a recent quantitative research study. Attendees will gain insights into the five practices of exemplary leaders and antecedents of these practices, including leader efficacy and emotional intelligence. Attendees will walk away with more targeted professional development strategies to strengthen transformational leadership practices and cultivate a positive, high-performing working and learning environment.

📖 *Level 4, Meeting Room 407/408*

Global Expertise, Local Barriers: Challenges of International Faculty in America

Katherine Robertson, University of Utah

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

The number of international faculty in American universities is increasing rapidly, and the advantages of hiring them are clear; however, they face a myriad of unique challenges that disadvantage them professionally, and many universities are failing to retain them at the same rate as domestic faculty. In

this session, participants will gain a better understanding of their own cultural awareness as well as the unique challenges that impede the wellbeing and professional development of international faculty. Participants will identify strategies to better support the integration and professional success of international faculty at their institutions.

📖 *Level 4, Franklin 3*

The Quantified Impact of Proactive Outreach on Student Achievement

Catherine McBride and Cindy Solari, Colorado Technical University

Student Retention & Success

Despite investments in robust curricula and student support systems, many institutions still struggle with student persistence and performance—often due to a lack of meaningful faculty-student engagement. This session presents findings from a study of over 3,000 online business course sections comparing reactive versus proactive faculty outreach strategies. The results reveal that early, personalized, and intentional communication significantly improves student persistence, reduces failure and withdrawal rates, and boosts academic achievement. Participants will explore the critical role of emotional connection in online learning, examine communication strategies that drive success, and learn how to apply data-driven insights to improve faculty development, instructional practices, and institutional policy.

📖 *Level 4, Meeting Room 404*

📍 *= Advisory Board Sessions*

Bridging Perspectives: Navigating Leadership Growth Through Diverse Career Paths

Jeffrey Stevens and Jennifer Noble, Alfred State College

Leadership & Professional Development

Leadership in higher education is not a one-size-fits-all journey. Institutions require diverse, adaptable leaders who bring unique experiences, strengths, and approaches to leadership. This session explores the evolution of leadership through two distinct career trajectories: one from a traditional academic pathway and the other from a non-traditional background. By sharing our journeys, including challenges, successes, and pivotal moments, we aim to provide insight into how different experiences shape leadership styles and institutional impact. Participants will engage in reflective activities to assess their leadership styles, discuss barriers they may encounter, and develop actionable plans for continued growth.

📖 *Level 4, Franklin 13*

Culture Club: Leading with Values to Rock Your Campus Vibe

Cathy McKay, Jason Cohen, Crystal Neumann, and Amber Daub, American College of Education

Institutional Culture & Climate

Institutional culture and climate are foundational to how colleges function, lead, and evolve—but understanding their distinct roles is essential for effective leadership. This session examines how university leaders can assess, manage, and intentionally shape culture and climate at both the departmental and college levels. Participants will explore how clearly defined and consistently reinforced institutional values guide acceptable behaviors across faculty, staff, students, and administrators. Drawing on evidence-based practices, the session offers actionable strategies to build inclusive, values-aligned environments that improve operational efficiency and strengthen resilience in the face of emerging challenges in higher education.

📖 *Level 4, Franklin 1*

12:30 PM

To-Go Lunch

Don't forget to pick up your to-go lunch card from the registration desk after the last session at 12:30 PM. These to-go lunch cards allow you to gather with colleagues in the hotel restaurant, grab something on the go at the airport, or explore the Reading Terminal Marketplace just across the street.

📖 *Level 5, Registration Desk II*

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