



AACTE New Deans and Leadership Academy
Leading with Vision and Courage in a Time of Upheaval
June 23, 2025, and June 24-26, 2025
Baltimore, MD

Academy Faculty

- Rachel Endo, Dean and Professor, School of Education, University of Washington, Tacoma
- Gerardo Gonzalez, Professor and Dean Emeritus, Indiana University-Bloomington
- Ann Larson, Dean and Professor, Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania
- Ryan Gildersleeve, Dean, College of Education, Eastern Michigan University

New Deans Academy
Monday, June 23

The New Deans Academy provides newly appointed (e.g., within the last 3 years) deans with a structure for success as they embark on their new position. The academy provides a space for new deans to learn about the expectations and responsibilities of their roles in small groups with peers who are similarly beginning their leadership journey in today's context. Sessions will focus on problem-solving those pressing issues that can lead to sleepless nights, hearing from experienced deans regarding critical dos and don'ts related to leading and serving, and providing a structure for acting and networking once new deans return to their institutions and the significant grind of the position begins. Unless otherwise stated, all sessions will be led by Leadership Academy faculty.

7:30 – 5:00 p.m.

REGISTRATION

8:00 – 9:30 a.m.

NETWORKING BREAKFAST
Welcome and Introductions

9:30 – 10:30 a.m.

What I Wish I Would Have Known

A panel of seasoned, current, and former deans and department heads will share key points to understand as program participants embark on their new role.

10:30 – 10:45 a.m.

BREAK

10:45 – 11:30 a.m.

Finance and Budgeting Crash Course

This session offers a practical introduction to the fundamentals of finance and budgeting in higher education. Participants will gain a clear understanding of foundational budget principles, how to effectively oversee and manage a college-level budget, and how to identify and prioritize critical financial components. The session will also explore how to build strategic relationships with key campus stakeholders, engage in essential budget conversations,

**All listed sessions and speakers are subject to change*

and communicate your college's financial narrative with clarity and purpose. Participants will leave with tools and strategies to leverage their influence, align budgeting with institutional goals, and lead with confidence in resource-constrained environments.

11:30 – 1:00 p.m.

Leading with Speed: Mini-Mentoring Sessions

In teams of 5-6, participants will engage in 20-minute mini-mentoring sessions around the following topics:

- Create an agenda for your first or next 1:1 with your Provost/President with Ann
- Develop your 60-second elevator speech/pitch for fundraising and/or a new partnership opportunity with Ryan
- Creating space for feedback and reflection with Gerardo
- Setting healthy workplace boundaries with Rachel

1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

LUNCH AND BREAK

2:30 – 4:00 p.m.

Crisis Management 101

This session will help participants build confidence and competence in crisis leadership. Participants will explore the principles of effective crisis management, learn to develop rapid response frameworks, and engage in scenario-based exercises. Emphasis will be placed on clear communication, stakeholder engagement, values-based decision-making, and sustaining morale under pressure.

4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

AI Technology in Educator Preparation: Opportunities and Challenges

Artificial intelligence is rapidly reshaping the educational landscape — from how students learn to how teachers are trained. For deans and education leaders, understanding the implications of AI is no longer optional; it's essential. This session will explore both the opportunities and challenges AI presents for educator preparation programs. Participants will examine how AI can enhance teaching, streamline administrative processes, and support candidate development, while also considering the ethical, equity, and policy concerns that must guide its use. Through discussion and practical examples, attendees will gain insights into how to lead responsibly, ask the right questions, and position their colleges to innovate thoughtfully and strategically in the age of AI.

Guest Speakers:

*Anne Tapp Jaksa, Saginaw Valley State University
Beth Kubitskey, University of Michigan*

5:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Closing Remarks and Networking Reception

**Leadership Academy
Tuesday, June 24-Thursday, June 26**

The Leadership Academy is a unique opportunity for deans, department chairs, and other administrators and faculty to enhance their leadership skills, address current issues, and build a professional peer network. Attendees will participate in strategic conversations that will leave them feeling empowered to return to campus with fresh perspectives, elevated narratives, best practices, and practical strategies that lead to results. Unless otherwise stated, all sessions will be led by Leadership Academy faculty.

Tuesday, June 24

7:30 – 5:00 p.m.

REGISTRATION

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.

NETWORKING BREAKFAST

9:00 – 9:30 a.m.

Welcome, Program Overview, and Academy Introductions

9:30 – 11:15 a.m.

Educator Preparation Leadership in a Politicized Era

This panel will feature education and educator preparation leaders as they discuss hot-button issues such as academic freedom, DEI bans, funding cuts, and the federal administration with clarity and candor.

Guest speakers:

Marvin Lynn, Dean, College of Education, University of Colorado-Denver

Laurie Mullen, Dean College of Education, Towson University

KerryAnn O'Meara, Provost and Dean, Teachers College, Columbia University

11:15 – 11:13 a.m.

BREAK

11:30 – 1:00 p.m.

Staying the Course: Leading through Challenging Times

This session empowers leaders to keep their institution's mission and values at the forefront of their work despite sociopolitical realities.

Guest Speaker: Tandra Jackson, Dean and Professor, School of Education, Indiana University Indianapolis

1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

LUNCH AND BREAK

2:00 – 2:30 p.m.

"Office" Yoga (optional, no changing required)

2:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Policy Power: Advocacy Skills for Deans

Learn how to build strong relationships with state and local education leaders in order to advance institutional goals, influence policy, and champion the needs of future educators and students.

**All listed sessions and speakers are subject to change*

Guest Speaker: Mark Nook, President, University of Northern Iowa

3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

Funding the Future: How Colleges of Education Can Align with Philanthropic Priorities

Philanthropy plays a critical role in shaping the future of education, and colleges of education are uniquely positioned to partner with foundations to advance shared goals. This dynamic panel session brings together representatives from leading philanthropic organizations to discuss current funding priorities, emerging areas of interest, and strategies for building meaningful, mission-aligned partnerships.

This conversation will offer insight into how to effectively engage with funders, craft compelling proposals, and align institutional strengths with philanthropic visions. Participants will gain a clearer understanding of how to position their colleges as innovative partners in addressing the most pressing challenges in education.

The session will be followed by a Q&A, giving attendees the opportunity to connect directly with panelists and leave with actionable ideas for advancing their college's funding strategy.

Guest Speakers:

James L. Moore III, National Science Foundation

Angel Miles Nash, Wallace Foundation

Stephen Plank, Casey Foundation

5:00 – 5:30 p.m.

Closing

6:00

Optional Evening Activity TBD

Wednesday, June 25

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.

BREAKFAST

9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Morning Meeting with Cheryl Holcomb-McCoy

This will be an informal conversation between AACTE President and CEO Cheryl Holcomb-McCoy and higher education leaders. Attendees will listen in and hear about Cheryl's leadership journey and her vision for AACTE.

Guest Speakers:

Loury Floyd, Assistant Provost for Academic Operations, Lenoir-Rhyne University

Christine Carrino Gorowara, Dean, School of Education, Trinity Washington University

10:00 – 10:15 a.m.

BREAK

10:15 – 10:20 a.m.

Greeting from Mayor Brandon Scott, City of Baltimore

**All listed sessions and speakers are subject to change*

10:20 – 11:45 a.m.

Creating, Maintaining, and Innovating University Partnerships

This session offers a practical, forward-thinking approach to developing and evolving university partnerships. Participants will explore the life cycle of successful collaborations—from initial visioning and stakeholder engagement to sustaining momentum and driving innovation. Participants will also learn about examples from education leaders currently engaged in partnership work that is equitable, reciprocal, and responsive to community and institutional needs.

Guest Speaker:

Afra Hersi, Dean, School of Education, Loyola University Maryland

11:45 – 1:00 p.m.

Leading Crucial Conversations

Participants will develop skills to facilitate challenging or difficult conversations that attend to power dynamics and political contexts in their role on campus.

1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

2:00 – 2:30 p.m.

LUNCH AND BREAK

“Office” Yoga (optional, no changing required)

2:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Prioritizing Wellness for Yourself and Supporting Wellness within Your Team

Leadership in higher education — especially in times of uncertainty and change — can take a personal toll. This session invites deans and academic leaders to explore how to sustain their own well-being while fostering a culture of wellness within their teams. Participants will learn practical strategies for self-care, managing stress, and maintaining career longevity, all grounded in principles of trauma-informed leadership. The session will also address how to recognize signs of burnout, create psychologically safe environments, and lead with empathy and resilience. Attendees will leave with actionable tools to support both personal wellness and the collective health of their teams and institutions.

3:30 – 3:45 p.m.

BREAK

3:45 – 5:00 p.m.

Innovation and Change in Today’s Higher Education Environment

This session highlights the vital role of academic leaders in driving innovation, transforming educational practices, and meeting the changing needs of students, faculty, and communities. Participants will explore leadership strategies for creating a culture of innovation and navigating the complexities of today’s higher education landscape. Breakout rooms will allow focused discussion on key topics:

- Strategic enrollment management
- Faculty leadership development
- Managing limited resources

- Academic freedom and freedom of speech

5:00 – 5:30 p.m.

Closing

5:45 p.m.

DINNER ON YOUR OWN

Meet in the hotel lobby to walk over with your “Dine-Around” group, if you signed up at the registration desk (optional)

Thursday, June 26

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.

Networking Breakfast

9:00 – 10:30 a.m.

Capacity Building and Communications for a Changing Time

In today's rapidly evolving educational and social landscape, deans must lead with clarity, adaptability, and strategic vision. This session focuses on how to build institutional capacity and strengthen internal and external communications in ways that align with emerging challenges and opportunities. Participants will explore strategies for aligning people, processes, and resources to support innovation and resilience, as well as techniques for transparent, values-driven communication with faculty, staff, students, and community partners. Emphasis will be placed on leading through change, building trust, and crafting compelling narratives that inspire action and foster alignment across diverse stakeholders.

Guest Speaker: Danielle Kristine Toussaint, Founder & CEO, Purple Haus

10:30 – 10:45 a.m.

BREAK

10:45 – 11:45 a.m.

Closing Keynote

Hope and Resilience in Times of Uncertainty

In a time marked by rapid change, political tensions, and mounting pressures across the education landscape, deans and academic leaders are being called to lead not only with competence but with compassion, clarity, and courage. Drawing on real-world experiences and leadership insights, this keynote address will highlight how leaders can stay grounded in their values, foster resilience within their communities, be catalysts for change, and model the kind of vision and steadiness that the current moment demands. Attendees will be invited to reflect, reconnect with their purpose, and leave reenergized to lead with heart and resolve—even when the path ahead is unclear.

Guest Speaker: Michael Dantley, Dean Emeritus, Miami University of Ohio

11:45 – 12:00 p.m.

Wrap-up and Closing