



**New Deans Institute Preconference  
February 19, 2026  
AACTE Annual Meeting 2026  
Sheraton New Orleans – 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Napolean Ballroom B1**

**Purpose**

To equip new deans with leadership skills, strategic insights, and peer support necessary to thrive in their roles.

**Faculty**

- *Michael Dantley, Ed.D., Dean Emeritus, Miami University of Ohio*
- *Rachel Endo, Ph.D., Dean and Professor, School of Education, University of Washington, Tacoma*
- *Ann Larson, Ph.D., Dean and Professor, Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania*
- *Corinne M. Murphy, Ph.D., Dean and Professor, Western Kentucky University*

**8:00 – 9:00 a.m.      Networking Coffee & Introductions**

**9:00-10:15 a.m.      What I Wish I Would Have Known  
Faculty: ALL**

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.

**10:15 – 10:30 a.m.      Break**

**10:30-11:15 a.m.      Elevating Your College's Voice**

**Guest Speaker: Danielle Kristine Toussaint, CEO at Purple Haus**

This session equips deans to lead with clarity and strategic focus amid rapid change. Participants will learn how to build institutional capacity, strengthen internal and external communication, and align people, processes, and resources to support innovation and resilience. The session emphasizes transparent, values-driven communication, leading through change, building trust, and crafting compelling narratives that inspire action across diverse stakeholders.

**11:15 – 12:30 p.m. Mini-Mentoring Sessions: Leading with Speed**

**Faculty: ALL**

In teams of ~10, 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
- Develop your 60-second elevator speech/pitch based on feedback and reflection
- Accessing informed decision making in a fast-paced environment
- Setting healthy workplace boundaries

**12:30 – 1:15 p.m. Lunch & Peer Coaching Circles**

Take this time to casually meet with your faculty mentor and peer groups over lunch, network with other faculty and fellow attendees.

**1:15 - 1:45 p.m. Break**

**1:45 – 2:45 p.m. Finance and Budgeting Crash Course**

**Faculty: Corinne M. Murphy**

This session provides a practical introduction to higher-education finance and budgeting. Participants will learn core budgeting principles, how to manage and prioritize elements of a college-level budget, and how to communicate financial needs and narratives effectively. The session also covers building strategic stakeholder relationships and engaging in essential budget conversations. Attendees will leave with tools to align budgets with institutional priorities and lead confidently in resource-constrained environments.

**2:45 – 3:45 p.m. Leading Crucial Conversations**

**Faculty: Michael Dantley**

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

**3:45 – 4:00 p.m. Break**

**4:00 – 4:30 p.m. Fireside chat with AACTE's President and CEO**

This will be an informal conversation between AACTE President and CEO Dr. Cheryl Holcomb-McCoy and former Board Chair, Ann Larson. Attendees will listen in and hear about Cheryl's leadership journey and her vision for AACTE.

**4:30 – 5:00 p.m. Resource and Commitment Sharing, and Closing Remarks**

**Faculty: ALL**