



AACTE New Deans Institute and Leadership Academy
Leading with Purpose and Partnership in a Time of Complexity

June 15–18, 2026

Columbus, Ohio

Hyatt Regency Columbus (Downtown)

Academy Faculty

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

New Deans Institute

Monday, June 15

The New Deans Institute provides newly appointed (e.g., within the last 3 years) deans with a structure for success as they embark on their new position. The institute 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 – 10:45 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.

10:45 – 11:00 a.m.

BREAK

11:00 – 12:15 p.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

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

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, 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.

12:15 – 1:30 p.m.

LUNCH AND BREAK

1:30 – 2:45 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
- Develop your 60-second elevator speech/pitch for fundraising and/or a new partnership opportunity
- Creating a space for feedback and reflection
- Accessing informed decision making in a fast-paced environment
- Setting healthy workplace boundaries

2:45 – 4:00 p.m.

Leading Crucial Conversations

Participants will build the skills and dispositions needed to lead crucial conversations that are inherent to teacher education leadership today. Emphasis is placed on facilitating dialogue across differences, managing power and positional authority, and responding effectively to political pressures and external scrutiny. Leaders will practice approaches that foster transparency, shared understanding, and forward momentum in difficult or contentious situations.

4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Creating your Action Plan and Closing Remarks

This culminating session brings the day's learning into focus as new deans synthesize key insights, reflect on their leadership context, and translate ideas into action. Participants will identify immediate priorities, short-term goals, and strategic next steps to guide their transition into the role. The session concludes with closing reflections, reinforcing the importance of purposeful leadership, intentional relationship-building, and sustained momentum as participants leave with a clear, actionable plan for their first phase as dean.

5:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Networking Reception

Leadership Academy

Tuesday, June 16 – Thursday, June 18

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 16

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 – 10:45 a.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.
10:45 – 11:00 a.m.	BREAK
11:00 – 12:15 p.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.
12:15 – 1:15 p.m.	LUNCH AND BREAK
1:15 – 2:45 p.m.	Faculty and Staff Hiring, Retention, and Succession Planning This session addresses one of the most critical responsibilities facing deans of colleges of education: building and sustaining a strong, future-ready faculty and staff. Participants will examine current challenges affecting recruitment and retention—including enrollment shifts, budget constraints, workforce shortages, and evolving expectations of academic work—and consider strategies for attracting diverse, high-quality talent. The session will also focus on proactive succession planning, helping deans anticipate leadership transitions, develop internal talent, and ensure

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continuity in key academic, clinical, and administrative roles. Through discussion and applied reflection, participants will leave better prepared to make strategic, values-driven human capital decisions that support institutional stability, program quality, and long-term mission success.

2:45 - 3:15 p.m.

BREAK

3:15 – 4:30 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.

4:30 - 5:00 p.m.

Closing activities

6:00

Optional Evening Activity TBD

Wednesday, June 17

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.

BREAKFAST

9:00 – 9:45 a.m.

Ready to Lead: Strengthening Educator Preparation

This session calls for educator preparation leaders to move from managing challenges to shaping solutions. Drawing on current workforce reality, participants will explore clear leadership moves, building bold partnerships, simplifying messages, and elevating teaching as a career—to drive meaningful change. The session concludes with a focused charge to take one bold action that can help change the trajectory of the educator workforce.

Cheryl Holcomb-McCoy, President and CEO of AACTE

9:45 – 11:15

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 Up
- Accreditation and Accountability
- Academic freedom and freedom of speech

11:00 – 11:15 a.m.

BREAK

11:15 – 12:00 p.m.

Greetings from City of Columbus and Ohio SOE Institutions

12:00 – 1:00

LUNCH and BREAK

1:00 – 2:00 p.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.

2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Policy Power: Advocacy Skills for Deans

Participants will learn about and practice essential techniques for effective advocacy, including power mapping, persuasive storytelling, and leveraging traditional and social media. All attendees will receive a complimentary copy of AACTE's Advocacy Workshop Toolkit.

3:00 - 3:15 p.m.

BREAK

3:15– 4:15 p.m.

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

This session explores how colleges of education can strategically engage with philanthropy to advance shared educational goals. Representatives from leading foundations will discuss current funding priorities, emerging areas of interest, and what funders look for in strong, mission-aligned partnerships.

Participants will gain practical insight into engaging funders effectively, positioning institutional strengths, and aligning proposals with philanthropic visions. A moderated Q&A will follow, allowing attendees to leave with actionable ideas to strengthen their college's funding strategy.

4:15 – 5:00 pm

Closing activities

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 18

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

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.	Networking Breakfast
9:00 – 10:30 a.m.	<p>Generative AI in Educator Preparation and Beyond</p> <p>This session explores the growing role of generative AI in educator preparation and its implications beyond the classroom. Participants will examine how AI tools are shaping teaching, learning, assessment, and professional practice, while also addressing critical considerations such as ethics, equity, academic integrity, and faculty preparation. Designed for education leaders and faculty, the session offers practical insights into leveraging generative AI thoughtfully to enhance educator effectiveness and prepare candidates for an evolving educational landscape.</p>
10:30 – 10:45 a.m.	BREAK
10:45 – 11:45 a.m.	<p>Closing Keynote: Education in 2050: Preparing Learners for a World Not Yet Imagined</p> <p>In this forward-looking session, participants will be challenged to consider what education must become as we look toward 2050. Drawing on global trends in technology, workforce transformation, demographics, and societal change, the session explores how learning environments, educator roles, and systems of preparation may fundamentally evolve over the coming decades. Participants will be prompted to think beyond current reforms to examine what knowledge, skills, and dispositions future learners will need—and how today’s decisions in educator preparation can either constrain or enable that future. The session offers insight into emerging possibilities while grounding the conversation in strategic questions leaders must grapple with now to ensure education remains relevant, equitable, and human-centered in a rapidly changing world.</p>
11:45 – 12:00 p.m.	Wrap-up and Closing