

Fourth Annual

Credo + AAC&U Leadership Institute for Women & Gender Diverse Leaders

O.Henry Hotel, Greensboro, N.C.

Tuesday, Dec. 2–Wednesday, Dec. 3, 2025



CREDO

POWERED BY CARNEGIE

+

AAC&U

Credo + AAC&U Partners

Credo: Powered by Carnegie and AAC&U are thrilled to welcome these partners to the 2025 Leadership Institute for Women and Gender-Diverse Leaders. Find their representatives on site in Greensboro for further conversation.



Academic
Search



BARET LEADERSHIP
CONSULTING



ThirtyOne

Higher Ed Strategy + Marketing
+ Communications



20
25

Leadership Institute for Women & Gender-Diverse Leaders

@CredoHigherEd | @AACU | #CredoAACULeadership

Sustaining Your Leadership Energy

With a mix of panel discussions, attendee-presented sessions, time with industry experts, and space for leader-to-leader conversation and reflection, this institute focuses on building a community of exceptional leaders during this time of intense challenge in higher education. The Credo + AAC&U Leadership Institute for Women and Gender-Diverse Leaders equips participants to lead more courageously, authentically, and effectively as we all work to serve students and fulfill higher education's promise of individual transformation.

Agenda Overview

TUESDAY DECEMBER 2

- 8:30–9:00 AM** Badge Pick-Up Available
- 9:00 AM–12:00 PM** **PRE-INSTITUTE WORKSHOP**
Preparing for and Navigating Senior-Level Searches
- 12:00–1:30 PM** Lunch on Your Own
- 1:00–1:30 PM** Badge Pick-Up Available
- 1:30–2:30 PM** **2025 INSTITUTE LAUNCH**
Welcome and Introductions
- 2:30–2:45 PM** Break
- 2:45–4:30 PM** **SESSION 1**
Leading with Energy and Intention in Unstable Times
- 5:30–8:00 PM** **RECEPTION & DINNER**
Throw Higher and Harder Than You Think You Need To: A Reflection on the Future of Leadership in Higher Education

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3

- 8:00–9:00 AM** Breakfast
- 9:00–10:15 AM** **SESSION 2**
Building a Cross-Functional and Collaborative Leadership Team
- 10:15–10:30 AM** Coffee Break
- 10:30 AM–12:00 PM** **SESSION 3**
Overcoming Barriers to Leadership: Structural, Strategic, and Policy Changes that Make a Difference
- 12:00–1:15 PM** Lunch
- 1:15–2:30 PM** **SESSION 4**
Claiming Your Space as the Protagonist in Your Own Narrative
- 2:30–3:00 PM** O.Henry Afternoon Tea Break
- 3:00–4:30 PM** **SESSION 5**
Politics, Personhood, and Higher Education Leadership
- 4:30 PM** Institute Concludes



Tuesday December 2

8:30–9:00 AM » O. HENRY LOBBY, MAIN LEVEL

Badge Pick-up

9:00 AM–12:00 PM » HAWKINS-BROWN ROOM, LOWER LEVEL

PRE-INSTITUTE WORKSHOP » Preparing for and Navigating Senior-Level Searches

► **Maya Kirkhope**, Vice President, Senior Consultant, & Senior Executive Coach, Academic Search

Whether participants are considering a career move in the near term or may look to take a next step in the future, this session will elevate the ability of senior leaders to advance in executive roles. Participants will delve into career mapping and gain a comprehensive understanding of the executive search process. The presenter draws from a deep well of expertise, having served as a search consultant for nearly 19 years. The session aims to equip attendees with the knowledge of best practices in executive search, including:

Pre-registration is required.

- » **Creating a Strong Application Package:** Learn how to craft a compelling application that stands out to search committees and the hiring authority.
- » **Preparing for Semi-Finalist Interviews:** Gain insights into the semi-finalist interview stage. Discover techniques for demonstrating your suitability for the position, along with tips for articulating your leadership style.
- » **Finalist Campus Visits:** Understand what to expect and how to best prepare for campus visits as a finalist candidate. We'll cover what to expect during these visits, how to interact with various stakeholders, and the best ways to leave a lasting positive impression.
- » **Contract Negotiations:** Understand the critical elements of contract negotiations.
- » **Transition Planning:** Once you've accepted a new position, the next step is to develop a transition plan. This session will highlight the importance of a well-thought-out transition strategy to ensure a smooth changeover and continued success in your new role.
- » **The Importance of Executive Coaching:** Learn about the role of executive coaching in fostering professional growth and leadership development.



12:00–1:30 PM » CALDWELL ROOM, MAIN LEVEL

Lunch on Your Own

1:00–1:30 PM » O.HENRY LOBBY, MAIN LEVEL

Badge Pick-up

1:30–2:30 PM » CALDWELL ROOM, MAIN LEVEL

Institute Launch: Welcome and Introductions

- ▶ **Emma Jones**, Executive Vice President for Leadership, Carnegie

2:30–2:45 PM » CALDWELL ROOM, MAIN LEVEL

Break

2:45–4:30 PM » CALDWELL ROOM, MAIN LEVEL

SESSION 1 » **Leading with Energy and Intention in Unstable Times**

- ▶ **Emma Jones**, Executive Vice President for Leadership, Carnegie (*moderator*)
- ▶ **Francine Conway**, Chancellor, Rutgers University-New Brunswick
- ▶ **Kathryn Kay Coquemont**, Vice President for Student Affairs, Macalester College
- ▶ **Yves Salomon-Fernández**, President, Urban College of Boston

Five years ago, higher education leaders everywhere were navigating the personal implications of a global pandemic while also working overtime to support their teams, constituents, and communities through a fundamental destabilization of not only the higher ed sector but every aspect of our daily lives. We all emerged from that year never wanting to hear the word “unprecedented” again. But what higher education is facing at this moment is, once more, unprecedented, representing a significant degree of challenge to foundational assumptions about our sector. So, what does it take for college and university leaders to sustain themselves and the communities in their care through these dramatic changes? Through the voices of leaders, this session will explore how leaders can build a powerful foundation for their own leadership through challenging times and offer participants an opportunity to articulate their own leadership intentions for the year ahead.

5:30–6:15 PM » HAWKINS-BROWN ROOM, LOWER LEVEL

Reception

6:15–8:00 PM » CALDWELL ROOM, MAIN LEVEL

DINNER »

Throw Higher and Harder Than You Think You Need To: A Reflection on the Future of Leadership in Higher Education

► **Lynn Pasquerella**, President, AAC&U

The future of higher education leadership will require reclaiming higher education's moral purpose and reimagining leadership as a shared moral enterprise grounded in truth-seeking and the common good. Yet women and gender-diverse leaders are often discouraged from the bold, strategic risk-taking that is needed. Pasquerella's remarks will urge attendees to take the full space of their authority, vision, and voice and to lead with moral courage and resilience. Attendees will receive a copy of Pasquerella's 2022 book *What We Value*.

Wednesday, December 3

8:00–9:00 AM » CALDWELL ROOM, MAIN LEVEL

Breakfast

9:00–10:15 AM » CALDWELL ROOM, MAIN LEVEL

SESSION 2 »

Building a Cross-Functional and Collaborative Leadership Team

► **Kathryn Enke**, Vice President for Leadership and Strategy, AAC&U

► **Heather Pieper-Olson**, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, College of Saint Benedict

Leadership roles can be lonely. As one gains leadership responsibilities, one bears the full weight of difficult decisions more frequently and benefits less often from the camaraderie and commiseration of “work friends.” This session will share strategies for lessening isolation, amplifying your leadership impact, and sustaining leadership energy by fostering a collaborative leadership team and recruiting allies across campus.



10:15–10:30 AM » CALDWELL ROOM, MAIN LEVEL

Coffee Break

10:30 AM–12:00 PM » CALDWELL ROOM, MAIN LEVEL

SESSION 3 »

Overcoming Barriers to Leadership: Structural, Strategic, and Policy Changes that Make a Difference

- ▶ **Carolyn Stefanco**, Former University President; Founder, Barét Leadership Group (*moderator*)
- ▶ **Nkenge Friday**, Vice President of Inclusive Excellence, American University
- ▶ **Gretchel L. Hathaway**, Retired Vice President for Community and Belonging, Franklin & Marshall College
- ▶ **Carin D. Silkaitis**, Interim Provost, Professor of Humanities, University of Alaska Southeast

Research indicates that women and gender-diverse leaders experience different identity-based barriers to leadership, and that a complex set of factors—both individual and systemic—offers the best explanation for their continued underrepresentation in higher education leadership. This panel will reveal the experiences of a diverse group of leaders, drawing from both their personal insights and their knowledge of scholarship to suggest structural, strategic, and policy changes that make a difference for the professional success and advancement of women and gender-diverse leaders. In doing so, the panel will challenge some myths, such as missing female agency and the Queen Bee, as explanations for the lack of career progression. Panelists will also be asked to share their best thinking on how to continue supporting and promoting women and gender-diverse leaders in the challenging context in which we operate.



12:00–1:15 PM » CALDWELL ROOM, MAIN LEVEL

Lunch

1:15–2:30 PM » CALDWELL ROOM, MAIN LEVEL

SESSION 4 » Claiming Your Space as the Protagonist in Your Own Narrative

▶ **Rachel Stephenson**, Chief Transformation Officer, City University of New York (CUNY) System

In this interactive workshop, participants will explore what it means to take ownership of their personal and professional narratives. Through guided reflection, storytelling frameworks, and peer dialogue, attendees will identify the internal and external forces that shape their stories—and how to reclaim authorship. This session invites women and gender-diverse leaders to step into their power, articulate their values, and lead from a place of authenticity. Participants will leave with a clearer sense of their leadership identity and a practical tool to continue shaping their narrative beyond the conference.

2:30–3:00 PM » CALDWELL ROOM, MAIN LEVEL

O.Henry Afternoon Tea Break

3:00–4:30 PM » CALDWELL ROOM, MAIN LEVEL

SESSION 5 » Politics, Personhood, and Higher Education Leadership

▶ **Emma Jones**, Executive Vice President for Leadership, Carnegie (*moderator*)

▶ **Marjorie Hass**, President, Council of Independent Colleges

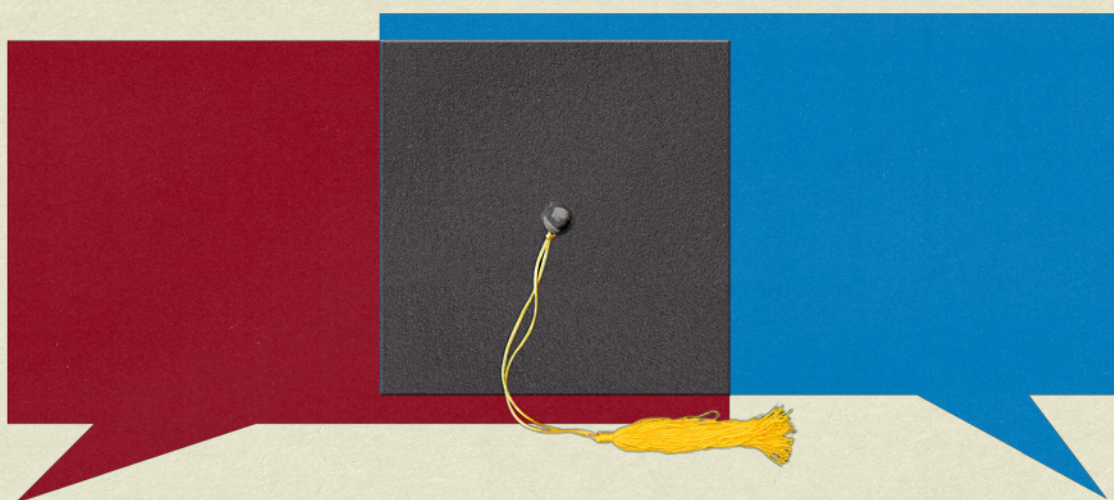
▶ **Susana Rivera-Mills**, President, Aurora University

In this moment of heightened scrutiny and political pressure being exerted on colleges and universities, campus leaders are being forced to navigate increasingly complex terrain. This dynamic and interactive panel brings together senior higher education leaders to discuss the complexities of upholding institutional integrity, fostering inclusive environments, and preserving the democratic purposes of higher education during an era in which identity is wielded as a weapon to seed division and mistrust. Panelists will explore strategies for responding to real issues without being derailed by the politicization of their own identities. Key topics will include maintaining authenticity and integrity as a leader, navigating public perception and political pressures, responding to issues while encountering personal identity-based attacks, and supporting colleagues and communities facing similar challenges. Join this candid conversation to gain insights, share experiences, and build resilience as we lead through turbulent times.

CONCLUDE AT 4:30 PM

ANSWERING THE CALL FOR
**CONSTRUCTIVE
ENGAGEMENT**

2026 AAC&U ANNUAL MEETING



REGISTER

AACU.ORG/AM



JANUARY 21–23, 2026
WASHINGTON, DC

AAC&U

CARNEGIE



CREDO

POWERED BY CARNEGIE



Sustain Your Energy. Amplify Your Impact.

The leadership strategy you trust, now
back by the power of human connection.

Leadership requires courage, authenticity, and the resilience to keep moving the needle. At Carnegie, we believe the most powerful way to sustain that energy is through **connection**.

By bringing Credo into the Carnegie family, we've combined the industry's most trusted leadership and organizational strategy firm with the nation's leading marketing and enrollment solutions strategy agency.

You focus on leading with hope. **We'll make sure the world hears your story.**

Carnegie + Credo

Together for the
future of higher ed.



CREDO

POWERED BY CARNEGIE

+

AAC&U

2025

Leadership Institute for Women
& Gender-Diverse Leaders

Tuesday, Dec. 2–Wednesday, Dec. 3, 2025