



The Council of
Independent Colleges

Building Places
of Promise:
**Unlocking
Student
Success**

2025 Institute for Chief Academics Officers with
Chief Student Affairs Officers and Chief Student Success Officers
November 1–4, 2025 📍 JW Marriott, Indianapolis, IN

Humane Leadership in Hard Times: Faculty Governance and Academic Change



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Building Places of Promise:
Unlocking Student Success

Presenters

- Lynne Bongiovanni
Provost, University of Mount Saint Vincent (NY)
- Kristin Flora
Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College,
Franklin College (IN)
- Laura McLary
Nora Kizer Bell Provost, Hollins University (VA) — *Session Chair*
- Tynisha Willingham
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs,
Eastern Mennonite University (VA)
- Kathy Wolfe, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College,
Roanoke College (VA)



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Hollins University

Founded in 1842

672 women
undergraduates

Appr. 80 graduate
students (all genders)

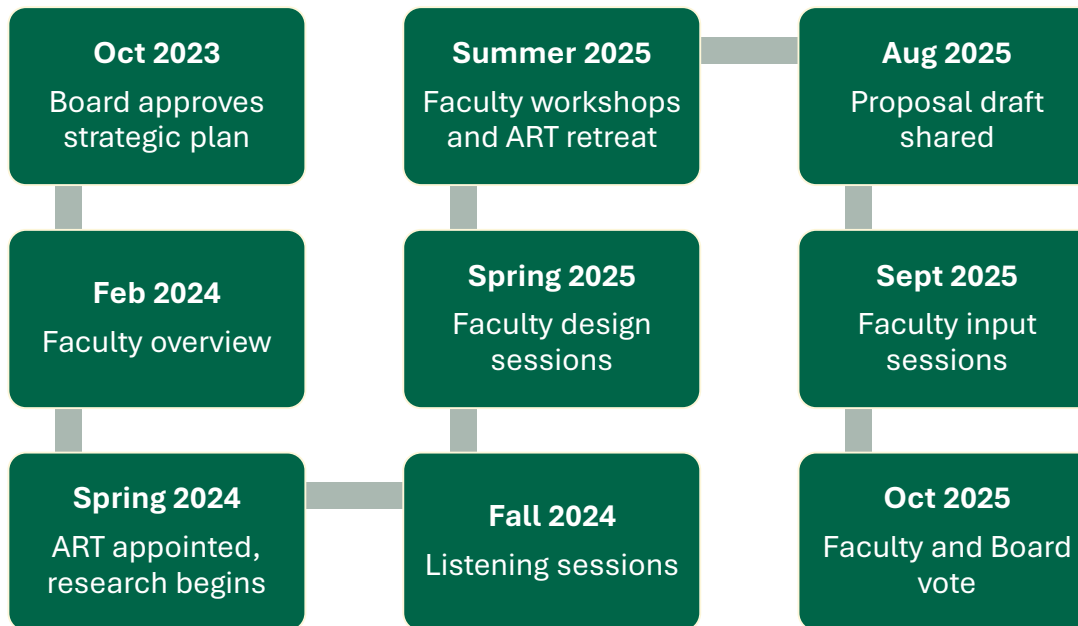
HOPE Scholarship
(Fall 2025: 67% high-
achieving, low-
income)

82 FT faculty

14% visiting
10% non-TT
37% pre-tenure
39% tenured

29 undergraduate
majors
7 graduate degree
programs

Academic Renewal Timeline



Academic Renewal

A proactive response to challenges from within and without before we are forced to make difficult decisions.



Rapid Change and Humane Leadership

- New faculty governance system
- Academic Renewal

AND

- New Faculty Academy
- New compensation structure
- Compensation for service

ROANOKE COLLEGE

- Founded 1842
- ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church of America) affiliated
- Undergraduate enrollment = 1725, graduate enrollment = 19
- 135 FT faculty (74% TT, 26% NTT)
- 45 undergraduate majors in 4 Schools; 2 (soon to be 4) graduate programs
- DIII athletics, 26 sports



ROANOKE COLLEGE

ACADEMIC CHANGES AT ROANOKE

- Move to School structure (task force 2022–23)
- 12 new majors (2022–25)
- Increase in teaching load (announced fall 2023, implemented fall 2024)
- Creation of innovation unit: Roanoke College – Roanoke Valley (RC-RV) (2024)
- Strategic Plan, *Imagine Roanoke* (launched 2024)
- General Education (Intellectual Inquiry) renewal (2024–26)
- Faculty Handbook revisions (2024–26)
- Zero-based budgeting (first round, spring 2025)
- Cost containment (decision-making 2025–26, implementing 2026–28)



POSITIVE (?) TENSION AT ROANOKE

- 💬 CREATIVITY UNLEASHED—BUT WHO ARE WE BECOMING?
- 💬 DON'T PROTECT US
- 💬 IT'S A SHIT SANDWICH, BUT WE GET TO DECIDE HOW TO PLATE IT
- 💬 WHAT DOES 'SHARED' GOVERNANCE REALLY MEAN?
- 💬 SO MUCH DOING . . . SO LITTLE TIME TO COMMUNICATE WELL



**“TO LEAD CHANGE, YOU NEED THE ABILITY TO
OPERATE IN DESPAIR AND KEEP GOING.”**

—Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership:
Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World*



ROANOKE COLLEGE



Franklin College Fast Facts

- Founded in 1834, first college in Indiana to admit women
- Affiliated with the American Baptist Church
- NCAA Division III; 22 sports
- AY 2024: 943 full-time students
 - 27% identify as multicultural or international
 - 87% Indiana residents
 - 41% Pell eligible
- ~ 73 full-time faculty across 19 departments

WWW.FRANKLINCOLLEGE.EDU



Academic Prioritization

- New President in January 2020 faced with reality of a \$2M budget deficit
 - Early retirement packages
 - Halting projects not deemed mission critical
 - Changes to benefits and compensation
 - Deficit at ~\$1M
- Task Force convened in Fall 2021 and given a 3-year timeline to report back
 - 2021-2022: First year focused on understanding the model, adjusting to address the structures and systems of our campus
 - 2022-2023: Roll out to faculty with department level data with some additional precinct work and model modifications
 - 2023-2024: True roll out to faculty, collecting observations/explanations/action items
 - Summer 2024: Report to the BOT

Successes and Stumbling Blocks

- Composition and structure of the task force
- Pros and cons of a longer runway
- Morale – the ‘Hunger Games’
- Institutionalizing the model – how do we shift the culture?
 - Program Reviews
 - Case Statements
 - Annual release of data to department chairs for planning



UNIVERSITY OF
MOUNT SAINT VINCENT

- Founded in 1847 by the Sisters of Charity, New York
- First institution of higher education in New York to offer degrees to women
- Obtained university status in January 2024
- Serves over 4,000 students (1300 on campus traditional undergraduates)
- Recent establishment of two-year degree program, online programs, partnership pathways, Physician Assistant program, etc.
- In Fall 2023, President Burns encouraged faculty to think about what a university structure would look like



UNIVERSITY OF
MOUNT SAINT VINCENT

Reorganization process

- Spring 2023: Charge Faculty Senate with creating a proposal of what a university structure would look like ...
 - Budget neutral; would better reflect academic growth and portfolio changes; solve problem of uneven administrative abilities of department chairs
- Fall 2023: Focus on MSCHE visit
- Spring 2024: Announcement of university status
 - Email from provost explaining new structure, asking for feedback, holding listening sessions, open office hours
 - Contentious faculty meeting with president, mostly centered around elimination of department chairs
 - Provost goes back to the drawing board



UNIVERSITY OF
MOUNT SAINT VINCENT

- Summer – Fall 2024
 - Faculty works with budget provided by provost on alternate proposal, which in the end ends up basically the same
 - Provost convinces president to keep department chairs
- New organization plan takes effect January 2025 — and is a success (at least from my point of view!)

Eastern Mennonite University

Founded 1917 – Eastern Mennonite School by Mennonite leaders (a Bible School) (inclusive of K-12 education)

1947 – became Eastern Mennonite College

1959 – received SACSCOC accreditation

1987 – EMU joins ODAC (DIII)

1989 – EMU offers classes in Lancaster

1994 – became Eastern Mennonite University



LEAD **TOGETHER**

Eastern Mennonite University

We serve 1,200 students (undergraduate, graduate, and Lancaster instructional site)

August 2024: began the work of “Reimagining EMU” as

A Radically Inclusive Learning Environment Rooted in Justice

Immediate work: Reimagining the learning environment

- Program closures and new programs
- Reimagining general education
- Move from three schools to two divisions



LEAD **TOGETHER**

Eastern Mennonite University

REIMAGINED EMU:

A Radically Inclusive Learning Environment Rooted in Justice

Core Decision Making Values:

- Center EMU mission, vision, and values
- Create a forward-looking model
 - that is student success-focused
 - that is financially sustainable and adaptable for continued change
 - that reinvests in our employees and workforce sustainability

Areas of Reimagining:

- Students
- Academic Portfolio
- Income Model
- Space usage and Facilities
- Workforce Model



LEAD **TOGETHER**

Q&A



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**Thank you for attending
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See Guidebook for resources



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