



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
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Partnering for Progress: Innovative Approaches to Community and Business Engagement

Presented by Sean Burke and Melissa Chastain



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Presenters

- Sean Burke
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- Melissa Chastain
Provost
Spalding University (KY)
- *Moderator:* Susan Larson
Provost and Dean of the College
Concordia College (MN)



Types of Partnerships

- Academic Partners
 - Community colleges, K–12 schools, other higher education institutions, discipline experts
- Industry Partners
 - Local businesses, corporations, sector partnerships, chambers of commerce
- Community Partners
 - Nonprofit organizations, government agencies, community groups



Core Principle 1: Goal Identification and Alignment

- Define clear short-term and long-term objectives.
- Ensure alignment with institutional mission and strategic priorities.
- Develop multi-pronged approaches that serve multiple constituencies.



Core Principle 2:

Partner Research and Relationship Building

- Conduct thorough due diligence on potential partners.
- Understand partner values, mission, and organizational culture.
- Identify key decision makers and influencers.
- Establish authentic relationships before formal agreements.



Core Principle 3:

Internal Stakeholder Engagement

- Secure cross-institutional commitment and collaboration.
- Avoid single-point-of-failure partnership structures.
- Maintain transparent campus communication about partnership activities.



Core Principle 4:

Resource Planning and Sustainability

- Assess budgetary requirements and resource allocation needs.
- Identify possible short- and long-term funding sources.
- Assess the viability of the partnership.



Interactive Activity:

Goal Setting and Partner Brainstorming

- What specific challenge or opportunity do you want a partnership to address?
- Identify one specific partnership goal for your campus.
- What type of partners would be most valuable?



Brainstorming, Sharing & Celebrating

- Brainstorming: Identify a challenge or opportunity where partnership could make a difference.
- Sharing: Exchange ideas with peers—what's working, what's emerging, what's possible.
- Celebrating: Recognize innovative approaches and successful collaborations across campuses.
- Takeaway: Every idea shared today is a seed for future impact.



Institutional Example # 1

Alma College
Alma, Missouri



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Paraeducator to Special Education Teacher Program



ALMA COLLEGE

- Founded: 1886
- Location: Alma, MI (one hour north of state capital Lansing)
 - City of Alma: Population 9,000+
 - Gratiot County: Rural, population 41,000+
- Undergraduate Students: 1200+
- Graduate Students: 30+
- Degrees Awarded: BA, BFA, BS, BSN, BM, MFA, MA
- Athletics: 22 NCAA Division III sports



- What specific challenge or opportunity do you want a partnership to address?
 - Challenge: shortage of special education teachers in Michigan
 - Opportunity: K-12 schools employ many paraeducators
- Identify one specific partnership goal for your campus.
 - Provide paraeducators with an affordable pathway to a BA and teacher licensure with endorsements in special education
- What type of partners would be most valuable?
 - Academic
 - Regional K-12 schools: paraeducators to participate
 - Mid Michigan College: first year of online courses
 - Government agency
 - Michigan Works!



Institutional Example # 2

Spalding University
Louisville, Kentucky



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In Conclusion:

- The future of higher education depends on collaboration.
- Identify your goals. Find the right partners. Engage your stakeholders.
- Start building the partnerships that will define your institution's next chapter.



Q&A



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Thank you for attending this session!



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