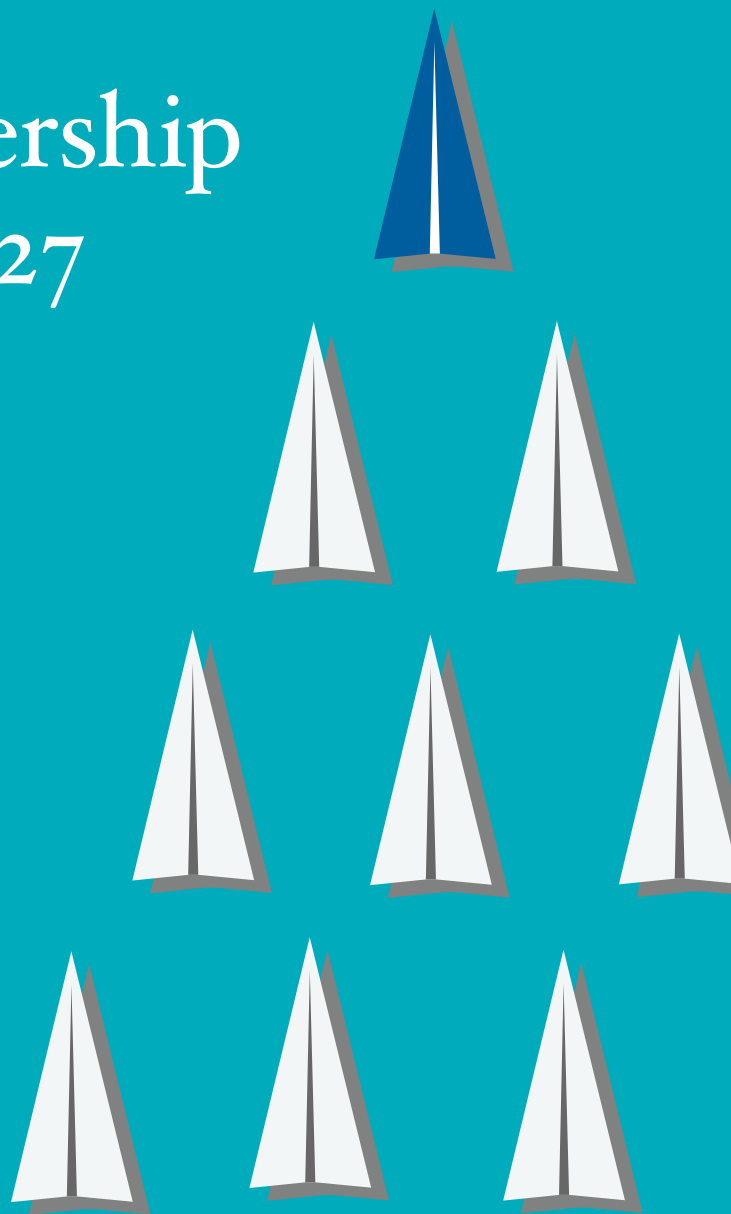


Executive Leadership Academy 2026–27

A leadership development program
to prepare college and university
vice presidents and cabinet-level
officers for presidencies and other
senior executive positions



OPENING SEMINAR:
June 15–16, 2026
Washington, DC

CLOSING SEMINAR:
June 10–11, 2027
Washington, DC

CIC NOMINATION DEADLINE:
Friday, January 30, 2026
5:00 p.m. ET

Executive Leadership Academy 2026–27

The Executive Leadership Academy (ELA) is a yearlong program cosponsored by the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC), the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), and the American Academic Leadership Institute (AALI) to prepare experienced provosts and vice presidents to move to positions of greater responsibility, including presidencies. Participants will acquire knowledge, skills, and experiences germane to the responsibilities and activities central to the work of a president or other senior-level leader. The program assumes that participants will remain in their current positions throughout the program.



“One of the highlights was learning from experienced presidents and peers during our in-person sessions—those conversations were honest, insightful, and deeply encouraging. The mentorship and real-life case studies made the experience especially relevant and applicable.”

Cheri Betz
ELA 2024–25
Executive Vice President
Siena Heights University (MI)

Developing the Next Generation of Presidents

The president’s role, as well as that of other senior administrators, has changed. It now requires an understanding of all aspects of the institution—from enrollment to endowment management and from governmental to alumni relations—not to mention inclusion and belonging, athletics, fundraising, marketing, student affairs, strategic planning, and financial management. The president’s necessary expertise also has expanded beyond institutional borders, to include regulatory and legislative issues and crisis communications. Further, it is more essential than ever that the pipeline of senior leaders prepares a diverse range of candidates from all backgrounds to succeed. ELA develops the wide-ranging skills that new presidents and senior executives will need to meet the challenges of today’s educational environment and serve today’s students.

Program

The program consists of:

- Two seminars in Washington, DC, (**June 15–16, 2026**, and **June 10–11, 2027**) led by current and former presidents as well as specialists in key areas;
- A highly individualized Professional Experience Plan (PEP) designed to fill “gaps” in the participant’s expertise and experience;

- Mentorship by both the participant's current president and the program director;
- Individualized executive coaching;
- Peer-to-peer participant-led webinars, regional gatherings, and activities.

Program Leadership

The program director is Javier Cevallos, president of AALI and president emeritus of Framingham State University (MA).

Participants

Individuals currently serving in cabinet-level positions in any division of their institution are eligible to participate. Approximately 35 participants will be selected for the 2026–27 cohort—half from CIC member institutions and half from AASCU institutions.

Costs

The program fee for the 2026–27 academic year is \$3,750. This fee includes all program costs as well as meals during the two seminars. The participants or their institutions are responsible for travel and lodging expenses.

Fellowships Available

CIC is committed to preparing a new generation of leaders from varied backgrounds and perspectives to thrive on today's campuses. Nominators will be expected to explain how the candidacy of their nominee will support this goal. Through generous support from AALI and the Mellon Foundation, CIC is also able to provide a select number of fellowships to support this broad participation. All candidates will be considered for one of these fellowships.



"ELA was the most impactful professional development experience of my career. Every meeting and webinar was focused on concrete skills and specific knowledge we need to be successful presidents. From day one, I knew I would have a supportive community of colleagues and mentors from across the country: something rare in this hypercompetitive world of higher ed. I am incredibly grateful for this opportunity."

Manya Whitaker
ELA 2023–24
President
Colorado College (CO)



The ELA is supported by AALI and Academic Search.



"I believe that my capacity to lead has been expanded by engaging with leaders who are facing and overcoming the same challenges and opportunities that I am in this current higher educational environment. The final sessions were both timely and salient. They equipped each of us with tools and the tenacity to persevere."

Arto Woodley
ELA 2024–25
Vice President for Advancement
Eureka College (IL)

Nomination Procedure

All nomination materials must be submitted on the CIC website at cic.edu/ela

Nominations must come from the president to whom the nominee reports and indicate the president's commitment to serve during 2026–27 as a mentor. Individuals who wish to be nominated should discuss the opportunity with the president to request nomination.

The nomination packet should consist of the following items:

- A nomination form, available at cic.edu/ela;
- The nominee's curriculum vitae;
- A letter of nomination;
- A statement by the candidate explaining their interest in and potential for a presidency or other senior position in higher education.

See the website for full details about the nomination process.

Nomination Deadline

The nomination packet is due by **Friday, January 30, 2026, 5:00 p.m. ET**. Selection of participants will be announced by **Friday, March 13, 2026**. Every year we receive more applications than we can accommodate, therefore we are unable to consider submissions received after the stated deadline.

Questions?

For questions about the nomination process, contact Marina Esteve-Offord at mesteve-offord@cic.edu or (202) 552-8986. For questions about program content, contact Javier Cevallos, president, AALI, at javier@americanali.org or (202) 263-7488.



The Council of
Independent Colleges

One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 320
Washington, DC 20036-1142
(202) 466-7230 • cic.edu