

2026 Presidents Institute

A Deeper Purpose



January 4-7, 2026 • Signia by Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek • Orlando, FL



The Council of Independent Colleges

Navigating Conflict and Tense Political Times

Presenter

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Facilitators

- Carol Bruess
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- Nancy Frambes
Presidential Spouse, Allegheny College (PA)
- Joan Livingston
Presidential Spouse, Lewis University (IL)
- Darryl Lunon
Presidential Spouse, Columbia College Chicago (IL)
- David Rifkind
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Discussion Questions

- When you and your spouse talk about how the current climate is affecting their work as a president, **what types of things do you talk about? How do you and your spouse/partner manage those conversations?**
- As our spouses and partners navigate the treacherous waters of public discourse, where does that leave us with respect to our ability to express our own political views? **Do you feel pressure--explicit or implicit--to tone down or even mute your opinions? Conversely, do you feel the need to speak up more or otherwise act because your spouse/partner is constrained?**
- **In public settings, what are some ways that you respond to politically fraught situations, especially if you are feeling particularly uncomfortable?**

DISCUSSION



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Strategies

- Be aware of your emotional responses, as well their intended and unintended consequences
- Stay informed about what's going on, both on campus and around the world
- Identify alignment between your personal values and your institution's values
- Acknowledge the constraints that come with the role, but also be alert to the opportunities
- Join an initiative focused on fostering better dialogue on campuses and in communities
- Co-envision and co-create the partnership you want once the job is over

Thank you for attending this session!