

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



The Council of  
Independent Colleges

A Deeper Purpose

2026 Presidents Institute

# Presenter

Michael Householder

Presidential Spouse, Macalester College (MN)

- Facilitators**
- Carol Bruess  
Presidential Spouse, College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's (MN)
  - Nancy Frambes  
Presidential Spouse, Allegheny College (PA)
  - Joan Livingston  
Presidential Spouse, Lewis University (IL)
  - Darryl Lunon  
Presidential Spouse, Columbia College Chicago (IL)
  - David Rifkind  
Presidential Spouse, Alvernia University (PA)

# 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

# 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!