Executive Leadership Academy 2020–2021

A leadership development program to hone the skills of college and university vice presidents and other cabinet officers in preparation for presidencies and other senior-level positions.

OPENING SEMINAR:
June 25–27, 2020
Washington, DC

CLOSING SEMINAR:
June 14–16, 2021
Washington, DC

CIC NOMINATION DEADLINE:
Friday, January 17, 2020
5:00 p.m. EST
Executive Leadership Academy 2020–2021

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 become successful presidents or move to positions of greater responsibility. By completing the program, participants will have acquired considerable knowledge, skills, and experiences that are germane to the portfolio of responsibilities and activities central to the work of a president or other senior-level leader. Participants remain in their current positions during the program.

The Need for Highly Qualified Presidential Candidates

Several issues affect future leadership needs of the academy: the aging of the current generation of presidents; the reports of search consultants that candidate pools in presidential searches are becoming smaller; the increasing complexity of the president’s role; and the reluctance of some boards of trustees to select candidates without prior experience in the full complement of responsibilities of the presidency. Those responsibilities have changed significantly in recent years. The president’s role as well as that of other senior administrators now requires an understanding of all aspects of the institution—from enrollment to endowment management and from governmental to alumni relations—not to mention athletics, fundraising, marketing, student affairs, strategic planning, and financial management. The president’s necessary expertise also has expanded beyond the institutional borders. Candidates with prior knowledge of and experience in the range of responsibilities of the presidency are seen by boards of trustees and search committees as better qualified and better able to assume leadership quickly and to have a positive impact on the institution.

“The Executive Leadership Academy not only reinforced the fact that I am called to be a president but provided me with helpful content and contacts to move me forward in fulfilling that calling. I am still connected with leaders and colleagues from the program as I seek to serve most effectively as a president. I strongly recommend participation in this excellent leadership opportunity.”

—Susan S. Hasseler, ELA 2015–2016, president, Muskingum University; formerly senior vice president for academic affairs at Augustana University (SD)
Program Description
The program consists of:
• Two seminars in Washington, DC, (June 25–27, 2020, and June 14–16, 2021) led by current and former presidents and vice presidents as well as experts in key areas;
• Readings concerning presidential responsibilities;
• Professional Experience Plan (PEP), a highly individualized plan of activities developed by the participant and his or her president designed to fill the “gaps” in the participant’s expertise and experience;
• Mentorship by both the participant’s president and the program director;
• Individualized executive coaching throughout the program;
• Webinars, regional gatherings, and activities developed by participants; and
• Structured conference calls among the participant, mentor, and program director.

Program Leadership
The program director is Linda Bleicken, president of AALI and president emerita of Armstrong State University. Previously, she served as provost and vice president for academic affairs and as vice president for student affairs and enrollment management at Georgia Southern University.

The ELA is supported by the American Academic Leadership Institute and Academic Search.

Participants
Approximately 35 cabinet officers, drawn from all divisions of the institution, will be selected for the 2020–2021 program—half from CIC member institutions and half from AASCU institutions. Individuals who currently serve in cabinet-level positions are eligible.

Program Costs
The program fee for the 2020–2021 academic year is $2,800. The fee includes all program costs as well as meals during the two seminars. The participant or his or her institution is responsible for travel and lodging expenses.

With generous support from AALI, CIC will offer a small number of fellowships to enhance the gender, racial, and ethnic diversity of well-prepared leaders of colleges and universities. Preference will be given to nominees from under-resourced institutions that otherwise might be unable to support a participant in the leadership development programs. Nominators should check the box on the nomination form if they wish their nominee to be considered for a fellowship.

“The ELA experience for me was life changing. The opportunities it created to learn from national leaders and to gain friendships for the rest of my professional and personal lives have been unparalleled in my leadership experiences. ELA is definitely for those who want to progress in their leadership experience.”

—Marcheta P. Evans, ELA 2016–2017, president, Bloomfield College; formerly provost and vice president for academic affairs at Our Lady of the Lake University

ELA Results to Date
Since 2009, 85 of the participants in the nine cohorts that have completed the Executive Leadership Academy have been appointed as presidents or chancellors, and many more have advanced to other senior positions.

In addition to the professional advancement of participants, successful outcomes also occur when participants strengthen their leadership in their current positions or when they realize that they do not want to pursue a presidency.
Nomination Procedure
The president to whom the cabinet officer reports must nominate the candidate. Presidents complete the nomination form and commit to serve during 2020–2021 as a mentor and to work with him or her to arrange experiential opportunities consistent with the program’s content and intent. Individuals who wish to participate should ask the president of his or her current institution to submit the nomination. The nomination packet should consist of the following items:

• A nomination form, available at www.cic.edu/ExecutiveLeadershipAcademy, completed by the president of the institution, that includes the nominator’s agreement to serve as the nominee’s mentor during the ELA year;
• The nominee’s curriculum vitae;
• A letter of nomination that emphasizes the nominee’s qualifications for the program and potential for assuming a presidency, citing specific strengths and accomplishments of the candidate and addressing the probable career path of the candidate; and
• A statement by the candidate explaining his or her interest in and potential for a presidency or other senior position in higher education. The statement should address the candidate’s strengths, accomplishments, and career plans. It also should address what the candidate has learned thus far about leadership and his or her suitability for a leadership position. What “gaps” exist in the individual’s preparation for a presidency? What talents and skills need further development?

Submit nomination materials as a single, complete packet to www.cic.edu/ExecutiveLeadershipAcademy.

Nomination Deadline
The nomination packet is due by Friday, January 17, 2020, 5:00 p.m. EST. Selection of participants will be announced by February 14, 2020.

Additional Information
For questions about the nomination process, selection process, or program logistics, contact Barbara Hetrick, CIC senior advisor, CIC, at bhetrick@ncbe.edu or (202) 466-7230. For questions about program content, contact Linda Bleicken, president, AALI, at linda@americanali.org or (202) 263-7488.

“The Executive Leadership Academy was critical to my candidacy for a presidency and to shaping my work, particularly in my first years on the job. ELA gave me patience in my role as a vice president to wait for those opportunities that I felt would be ideal matches, which Alma College certainly has been for me. I continue to reach out to colleagues who spoke to my cohort, asking their advice at challenging moments. And the connections I made with colleagues at ELA have developed into friendships of more than a decade.”

—Jeff Abernathy, ELA 2009–2010, president, Alma College; formerly vice president and dean of Augustana College (IL)