Talking about Private Colleges: Busting the Myths
Bay Path University • Longmeadow, MA
September 25, 2019

A workshop for leaders of CIC member institutions, designed to help them counter misperceptions and misinformation about independent higher education through informal conversations with neighbors, friends, businesspeople, and other members of the local community.

This workshop is made possible by the generous support of:

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9:30 a.m. Registration

Please sit with the other members of your team at the indicated tables.

10:00–10:30 a.m. Welcome

Richard Ekman, President, Council of Independent Colleges
Carol Leary, President, Bay Path University
S. Georgia Nugent, Interim President, Illinois Wesleyan University,
and Senior Fellow, Council of Independent Colleges

Welcoming remarks, introductions, the goals of the workshop, and the plan for the day.

10:30–11:15 a.m. Strong Answers to Tough Questions

Harold V. Hartley III, Senior Vice President, Council of Independent Colleges
Georgia Nugent
A review of the survey results from workshop participants, followed by a guided conversation to introduce some of the most persistent myths about private colleges, the essential facts and figures that might be used to refute the myths, and strategies for introducing compelling data into informal conversations.

11:15 a.m.–Noon  **How Presidents Counter Misperceptions**

Moderator: *Richard Ekman*
Panelists: *Mary-Beth Cooper*, President, Springfield College  
*Carolyn Stefanco*, President, The College of Saint Rose  
*Michele Perkins*, President, New England College

A panel of presidents will share how they have successfully fielded difficult questions about higher education and their institutions: What conversations do they seek out or dread? What myths and misperceptions do they frequently encounter? And what facts or stories have they found to be most effective in dispelling the myths?

Noon–12:15 p.m.  **Break**

12:15–1:00 p.m.  **Lunch and Discussion**

*Please sit with colleagues who have similar roles at other institutions (presidents, trustees, faculty members, and administrators). Roles are identified by signs on each table and matching colored dots on each name tag.*

What are some of the distinctive challenges and opportunities for people in your role to make a strong, positive case for private colleges and your own institutions? What misinformation about higher education do you regularly encounter? How do you respond? What would help you respond more effectively?

1:05–1:50 p.m.  **Role-Playing: How to “Talk the Talk”**

*Please rejoin the other members of your campus team.*

Facilitator: *Jo Ellen Parker*, Vice President for Communications, Council of Independent Colleges
The workshop materials include a full and detailed set of facts and figures about private higher education. This is an opportunity to apply the data to informal conversations. Each table has a container stocked with frequently-heard myths. Chose a partner, pick a topic from the container, and practice having a talk about private colleges! One person will play the questioner and the other will be the “myth-buster.” Everyone at the table should get a chance to play both questioner and myth-buster.

1:50–2:00 p.m.  
**Break**

2:00–2:30 p.m.  
**Sharing the Facts, Telling Our Stories**

*Georgia Nugent, Richard Ekman*

A pair of volunteers from each institution will be invited to come to the front of the room and repeat the role-playing exercise. Audience members will contribute suggestions and questions about how to handle the topic effectively, with examples from their own experiences. What works—and what doesn’t?

2:30–2:55 p.m.  
**Taking it Home**

*Georgia Nugent, Jo Ellen Parker*

What are the next steps to share the facts and strategies explored during the workshop with colleagues back on campus?

2:55–3:00 p.m.  
**Workshop Conclusion**

*Richard Ekman, Georgia Nugent*
S. Georgia Nugent, Senior Fellow. Nugent is interim president of Illinois Wesleyan University, president emerita of Kenyon College, and former interim president of the College of Wooster. As Senior Fellow, she led CIC’s public information campaign, “Securing America’s Future.” Nugent is a classicist by training and currently serves as a trustee of the University of Richmond, St. Lawrence University, and the American University of Sharjah.

Richard Ekman, President. Ekman is a leading advocate for America’s smaller private colleges and universities. A historian by training, he served as secretary and senior program officer of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation before joining CIC. Previously he served as vice president of the Atlantic Philanthropies, director of the divisions of Education Programs and Research Programs of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and vice president and dean of Hiram College.

Jo Ellen Parker, Vice President for Communications. Parker is a former president of Sweet Briar College and of the Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh. She previously served as president of the Great Lakes Colleges Association and executive director of NITLE, the National Institute of Technology and Liberal Education.

Harold V. Hartley III, Senior Vice President. Hartley oversees CIC’s research and data initiatives, including two annual benchmarking reports, as well as the annual Presidents Institute and the Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education.

Philip M. Katz, Director of Projects. At CIC, Katz has administered projects related to community college transfer, online humanities instruction, diversity and civility, and the future of independent higher education. His previous experience includes positions at the New York Council for the Humanities, American Historical Association, and American Alliance of Museums.