Talking about Private Colleges: Busting the Myths...NOW

Wednesday, March 24, 2021 ● 11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. EDT

A virtual workshop exclusively for presidents of CIC member institutions. Participants will explore how public perceptions, questions, and myths about higher education have changed in the past year—and which longstanding myths still need busting through informal exchanges with members of the community.

This workshop is made possible by the generous support of:
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Cohost: Ohio Wesleyan University

10:55 a.m. Digital meeting space opens
Access details for the Zoom meeting will be shared separately.

11:00 a.m. Orientation
Jo Ellen Parker, Senior Vice President, Council of Independent Colleges (CIC)

11:02 a.m. Welcome
Rock Jones, President, Ohio Wesleyan University

11:05 a.m. Why Are We Talking about Private Colleges Now?
Richard Ekman, President, CIC
Hal Hartley, Senior Vice President, CIC
The goals of the Talking about Private Colleges: Busting the Myths workshop series; the plan for today; and an overview of the trend data that have helped CIC members make an effective case for the quality, impact, and value of private colleges in the past. Selected trend data will be shared in advance.

11:15 a.m. Framing Today's Conversation: New Challenges from a Pandemic Year
S. Georgia Nugent, President, Illinois Wesleyan University,
and Senior Fellow, CIC
Longstanding public concerns about the cost and value of higher education—and private colleges and universities in particular—have intensified as a
result of the COVID-19 pandemic, recent economic instability, and the movement for racial justice. How have public attitudes towards higher education changed since the start of the COVID pandemic? And which of the older myths have been thrown into sharper relief? A selection of national data, public opinion surveys, and representative public statements from the past year will be shared in advance.

11:30 a.m. **Breakout Groups (1): How Has the Public Conversation Changed?**

Participants will be randomly assigned to moderated breakout groups of 6–8 presidents and offered discussion prompts to help explore *persistent* and *new* challenges to the public understanding of private colleges.

11:45 a.m. **Debrief and Discussion (1)**

Moderator: *Georgia Nugent*

Be prepared to share brief insights from each breakout group via an interactive polling tool. (Instructions will be provided, but please keep your phone or a web browser handy.) To be followed by an open discussion.

Noon **Breakout Groups (2): Shaping the Public Conversation**

Participants will be randomly assigned to new breakout groups (again, 6–8 presidents plus a moderator) and offered discussion prompts to help explore the best approaches, messages, and data to shape public understandings of private higher education through informal interactions.

12:15 p.m. **Debrief and Discussion (2)**

Moderator: *Jo Ellen Parker*

Be prepared again to share brief insights from each breakout group via an interactive polling tool, followed by an open discussion.

Additional discussion topics may include: a) New data resources to support effective community conversations about private colleges. b) Cultivating “ambassadors,” both on and off campus, who can help shape public perceptions of private higher education now and in the future.

12:35 p.m. **Reflections and Final Comments**

*Georgia Nugent* and *Richard Ekman*

12:45 p.m. **Workshop concludes**