

# Western Academic Leadership Academy



July 17-19, 2024

## Program

The Western Academic Leadership Academy's intensive, two-and-a-half-day professional development seminar kicks off a year-long process of building the leadership skills and functional knowledge of academic leaders aspiring to become chief academic officers in the West's postsecondary two-year and four-year sectors.

# Schedule

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## Tuesday, July 16, 2024

5:00 - 6:00 pm **Informal Meet and Greet at WICHE**

## Wednesday, July 17, 2024

8:00 - 8:30 am **Introductions and Goals for the Day**  
Laura Woodworth-Ney, Academy program and mentoring coordinator

8:30 -10:00 am **Provost Uncovered: Thriving on Day 1 and Beyond**  
*All-Faculty Discussion:*  
Jeffrey Alexander, vice president of academic affairs, Truckee Meadows Community College  
Veronica Dujon, director of academic planning and authorization, Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission  
Denise Runge, provost and executive vice chancellor, University of Alaska Anchorage  
Todd Schwarz, special assistant to the provost, University of Idaho  
Karyn Scissum Gunn, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs, California State University, Long Beach

10:00 - 10:15 am **Break**

10:15 - 11:15 am **Navigating Political Landscapes in Higher Education**  
All Faculty and Ray Burgman Gallegos, vice president of programs and services, WICHE

11:15 am – 12:15 pm **Promoting Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Higher Education Today**  
Veronica Dujon and Karyn Scissum Gunn

12:15 – 1:30 pm **Lunch/Introduction to WICHE Units**  
Ray Burgman Gallegos; Patrick Lane, vice president of policy analysis and research; Dennis Mohatt, vice president of behavioral health program; Megan Raymond, senior director of membership and programs, WCET

1:30 – 2:15 pm **Small Group Reflection: Finding and Filling Gaps in Your Preparation**  
Denise Runge

2:15 – 3:45 pm **Managing Personnel and Legal Issues**  
Jean Bannon, attorney, German • Burnette & Associates

3:45 – 4:00 pm **Break**

4:00 – 4:30 pm **Small Group Reflection and Case Studies**

4:30 – 5:15 pm **Leadership and Building Great Teams**  
Todd Schwarz and Jeffrey Alexander

5:15 – 5:30 pm **Wrap-up and Adjourn**  
Laura Woodworth-Ney

6:15 pm **Group Dinner**

## Thursday, July 18, 2024

8:30 – 8:45 am	<b>Reflections and Goals for the Day</b> Karyn Scissum Gunn
8:45 - 9:45 am	<b>Accreditation and Strategic Planning</b> Veronica Dujon, Jeffrey Alexander, Denise Runge
9:45 - 10:30 am	<b>Small Group Reflection and Case Studies</b>
10:30 - 10:45 am	<b>Break</b>
10:45 – 11:45 am	<b>Governance, Unions, and Faculty Relations</b> <b>All Faculty</b>
11:45 am – 12:30 pm	<b>Small Group Reflection and Case Studies</b>
12:30 - 1:45 pm	<b>Lunch</b>
1:45 – 3:00 pm	<b>Student Success: Enrollment Management and Collaborating with Student Affairs</b> Kaylyn Bondy and Karyn Scissum Gunn
3:00 – 3:45 pm	<b>Small Group Reflection and Case Studies</b>
3:45 – 4:00 pm	<b>Break</b>
4:00 – 5:15 pm	<b>The Provost’s Role in Finance: Policy, Budget, and Funding Formulas</b> Glen Nelson and Todd Schwarz
5:15 – 6:00 pm	<b>Work/Life Balance: Is It Possible?</b> Cassandra Manuelito-Kerkvliet, past president, Antioch University Seattle
<b>Dinner on your own</b>	

## Friday, July 19, 2024

8:15 – 8:30 am	<b>Reflections and Goals for the Day</b> Laura Woodworth-Ney
8:30 – 9:45 am	<b>The Importance of Building Coalitions: Presidential and Cabinet Relations</b> Glen Nelson and Denise Runge
9:45 - 10:00 am	<b>Break</b>
10:00 - 10:45 am	<b>Case Studies with Your Mentoring Circle</b>
10:45 - 11:45 am	<b>Reflection Panel</b> All Faculty
11:45 - Noon	<b>Adjourn</b>

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## Academy Faculty

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**Jeffrey Alexander, Ph.D.**, has served as vice president of academic affairs at Truckee Meadows Community College since June 2021, and he represents Nevada's 2-year public institutions as Chair of the Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders (Alliance). Alexander served for 6 years as dean of arts and sciences at Pueblo Community College, prior to which he taught history at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside. He received his doctorate in history from The University of British Columbia in Vancouver, and he has published three books on Japanese consumer product manufacturing, sales, and consumption. Jeff and his wife, Carolyne, live in Reno with their two unemployed dogs.



**Veronica Dujon** is the director for academic policy and authorization at Oregon Higher Education Coordination Commission. She leads the Commission's efforts to coordinate academic programs, degree pathways, and student success initiatives among Oregon's public universities. Dujon also oversees degree authorization for private schools, and licensing and compliance for private career schools. Prior to joining the HECC she was an associate dean in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Portland State University. Dujon did her graduate work at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Dujon's research and publications focus on conflicts over declining natural resources; the role of women in the global economy; and the tensions between national development strategies and forces of globalization.



**Denise Runge, Ph.D.**, has served as provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs at the University of Alaska Anchorage since 2020. She leads programming across five campuses and collaborates closely with the other campuses in the Alaska system. Previously, she held similar positions in Montana and Georgia. Runge received her B.A. in political science from Washington and Jefferson College, an M.A. from Jacksonville State University, and Ph.D. in policy and administration from the University of Alabama.



**Todd Schwarz** served as provost at the College of Southern Idaho for over 11 years before taking a position this spring as special assistant to the provost for community college relations with the University of Idaho. He has had a long career in a variety of roles spanning 35 years at CSI, including over 20 in administration as department chair and dean of career technical education. In 2012 he was appointed to the role of state administrator of the Idaho Division of Career Technical Education where he was instrumental in the creation of the Idaho micro credentialing system before returning to CSI. Schwarz holds associate, baccalaureate, and master's degrees from three Idaho schools and a Ph.D. in education from the University of Idaho for which he researched career decision making characteristics of community college students.



**Karyn Scissum Gunn** joined California State University, Long Beach as provost and senior vice president for academic affairs in July 2021. Before coming to CSULB, she served as an associate vice president in academic affairs at Cal State Fullerton and spent over 20 years at Alabama State University in Montgomery, where she served as professor, chair, dean, associate provost, and provost. Under her leadership, she garnered \$54.5 million in federal funding from NIH, NSF, USDA, and U.S. Dept of Education to support scientific research, student training and STEM faculty development, and state capital funding for a new instructional and research facility. Scissum Gunn earned both her bachelor's degree in biology and a master's degree in cell biology from Tuskegee University and her Ph.D. in molecular genetics from Auburn University.



**Laura Woodworth-Ney, Ph.D.**, joined AGB Search in 2022. Woodworth-Ney has more than thirty years of experience in higher education as a tenured full professor, academic historian, and administrator. With over a decade in the provost's office at Idaho State University, she was the first female executive vice president and provost. A staunch advocate for equity and accessibility, Woodworth-Ney helped pioneer initiatives that significantly expanded the application and retention rates of Idaho's public institutions and was honored with the 2021 President's Medallion Award from Idaho State University. An expert on the history of the North American West, Woodworth-Ney is the author of three books. She holds a Ph.D. and M.A. in History from Washington State University and a B.A. in English from the University of Idaho.

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## Guest Speakers

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**Jean Bannon** enjoys advising clients on employment law compliance, mentoring other German • Burnette & Associates attorneys and assisting with the defense of cases in all of the firm's practice areas. Prior to joining the firm in 2009, Bannon served as senior in-house employment counsel for the University of New Mexico for many years and also worked in private practice. She is an experienced employment lawyer, advising clients on a variety of personnel matters, and other civil litigation claims against public and private entities. Jean offers practical legal advice and a wealth of expertise in employment and other areas of law. She has served as an arbitrator, has participated in numerous mediations and federal settlement conferences and has provided management training for public and private clients. She has been a frequently invited speaker at the American Association of State Colleges and Universities annual conferences.



**Kaylyn Bondy** serves as the vice president for student affairs at Bismarck State College (BSC) in Bismarck, North Dakota. She oversees student success and development, strategic enrollment planning, policy formation, and state/federal regulation implementation. Prior to her work at BSC, she led student affairs for nine years at Williston State College and worked prior to that in international education. Bondy received her B.A. in French from the University of North Dakota, a Master's in French American international business from l'Université de Caen Basse-Normandie, an M.B.A. from the University of St. Thomas and a Ph.D. in higher education from the University of North Dakota.



As president of Antioch University Seattle, **Cassandra Manuelito-Kerkvliet** became the first Native American woman to ascend to the presidency of a mainstream university outside the tribal colleges. Prior to her presidency in Seattle, she served as the first Navajo woman president of Diné College, a tribal college on the Navajo reservation in Arizona and New Mexico. Manuelito-Kerkvliet received her bachelors degree in social work and masters degree in counselor education from the University of Wyoming. She earned her Ph.D. from the University of Oregon in educational policy and management, with a special emphasis in higher education administration.



**Glen Nelson** is the vice president, administration and finance/CFO for California State University Monterey Bay. He has worked in higher education for 26 years holding senior administrative positions at the college, university and system levels including service at Arizona State University, Idaho State University, the University of Nebraska, and the University of Wisconsin System. Prior to entering higher education, he spent fourteen years in the corporate sector. His research is focused on the unintended consequences of administrative actions such as differential tuition and tuition transparency on access and choices made by first generation students and those from low socioeconomic status backgrounds. Glen earned a Ph.D. in educational studies, with a specialization in educational leadership and higher education from the University of Nebraska, an M.B.A. from Thunderbird (AZ), and a B.S. in business administration from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

## 2024 Cohort

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**Joseph Bull** is the dean of the Maseeh College of Engineering and Computer Science at Portland State University. Before joining Portland State, he served as the associate dean for research, faculty affairs and graduate studies in the school of science and engineering at Tulane University, where he held the John and Elsie Martinez Biomedical Engineering Chair, and was a professor of biomedical engineering, and the interim chair of the department of earth and environmental sciences. He is a fellow of the American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering, and a Sequoyah fellow of the American Indian Science and Engineering Society. Bull is an enrolled member of the Delaware Tribe of Indians, and he is the first Native American dean of engineering in the country.



**Meghan Davis, M.S.**, has served as dean of instruction at Colorado Northwestern Community College (CNCC) since August 2017. She strives to ensure programs continue providing the best educational opportunity to students through collaboration with all departments at the college. She has worked with various programs instituting program restructure, salary and adjunct pay adjustments, curriculum development, and has led the college with credentialing policies, and program review strategies. Previously, she was the agriculture program director where she developed and started the agriculture program at CNCC in 2014. Davis received her B.S. and M.S. in animal sciences from Washington State University.





**Andrea DeCosmo**, Ph.D., serves as the assistant vice president of academic affairs at Aims Community College in Greeley, Colorado. She provides leadership and oversight of online learning, CTE/Perkins, curriculum, program review, curricular assessment, policy and procedure, prior learning assessment, articulation agreements, the Learning Commons, and the Faculty Teaching and Learning Center. She also leads the training and professional development for the deans, department chairs, and program directors. Previously, DeCosmo held roles at other community colleges as dean, department chair, and faculty. DeCosmo holds a B.A. in mathematics, an M.Ed. in mathematics education, and a Ph.D. in higher education leadership.



**Dustin Eicke**, Ph.D., has served Laramie County Community College as vice president of performance and planning since 2022. In higher education for twelve years, Eicke spent a decade as criminology faculty including three years as department chair. He also served as statistical consultant to the Graduate School at Texas Tech University (TTU) and director of institutional research at Western Nebraska Community College. He has conducted research on access/equity, rural higher education, and faculty empowerment. Eicke received his B.A. in pre-law from Lubbock Christian University, an M.A. in conflict resolution from Abilene Christian University, and Ph.D. in higher education research from TTU.



**Heidi Estrem**, Ph.D., serves as the associate academic officer with the Idaho State Board of Education. In this role, she leads initiatives designed to provide college access and success to a broader range of Idaho citizens through facilitating ongoing conversations and projects focused on improving general education, transfer, and first-year college math and writing across Idaho's eight public postsecondary institutions. Prior to joining the state board, she was a writing program administrator and faculty member at two state universities. Estrem received her B.A. in English from California State University, Chico, and her M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Nevada, Reno.



Since January 2021, **Elizabeth Gunn**, Ph.D., has served as dean of the school of liberal arts, sciences, and business at Nevada State University (NSU), a public minority serving institution adjacent to Las Vegas. Prior to NSU, she held faculty and administrative positions at Rutgers University and Morgan State University. She received her Ph.D. in romance languages and literatures from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and she holds three Master's degrees: an M.A. in Spanish from Middlebury College, an M.F.A. in creative writing from the University of Baltimore, and an M.B.A. in management from the Johns Hopkins University Carey Business School.



**Jeffrey Kaplan**, M.A., has worked in the Colorado Community College System since 2014. He has worked as an advisor, adjunct instructor, faculty member, department chair, and is currently serving as the dean of academic affairs. His academic background is in philosophy and ethics. These fields of study allowed him to operate at a high level across varying roles. They also enabled him to excel within the federal judiciary, wherein he served as a United States probation officer. Kaplan received his B. A. in philosophy from the University of South Florida and an M. A. in philosophy from the University of Oregon.



**Catherine Kleier**, Ph.D., has served as the associate vice president for faculty affairs at Metropolitan State University of Denver since 2023 where she guides and supports all areas of faculty development. Previously, she served as an associate dean at the California Polytechnic University of San Luis Obispo, CA. Prior to that, she was department chair and professor of biology at Regis University in Denver. Kleier received her B.A. in biology from the University of Colorado Boulder, an M.S. from Oregon State University and her Ph.D. in organismic biology, ecology, and evolution from University of California, Los Angeles.



**R.T. James McAteer**, Ph.D., is deputy provost and professor of astronomy at New Mexico State University. His service in academic oversight, student success, and faculty excellence, builds relationships among faculty, staff, students, and leadership. As chair of astronomy, McAteer performed financial management over Apache Point Observatory, and as director of Sunspot Solar Observatory, leadership in science and strategic planning, community engagement, and fund raising. As an NSF Career awardee, he was a member of two NASA missions, and a NAS Future Leader. He has a master's and Ph.D. in astrophysics (Queen's University Belfast) and served five years in the British Army.



**Carrie B. Mospens**, M.A., has served as interim dean of liberal arts and sciences for Hawai'i Community College since 2023. Previously, she was a faculty member in the English department for thirteen years. With a background in applied linguistics, her interests include the intersection between language and identity and the revitalization and perpetuation of languages. Mospens received her B. A. in English as a second language and her M.A. in second language studies from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.



**Jennifer Pedersen, Ph.D.**, serves as the executive director at the University of Alaska Fairbanks' eCampus and Center for Teaching and Learning. She directs the administration of 55+ online programs with strategic initiatives expanding UAF's global presence in over 210 countries. She established the CTL as a central hub for faculty excellence, promoting culturally responsive teaching and pedagogical innovation. Pedersen has previously served as a professor of psychology and a consultant with the United States Air Force. She earned a B.S. in psychology at Troy University and an M.S. and Ph.D. in educational psychology from Walden University.



**Angela Sackett, D.C.** has served as the dean of health sciences at the College of Eastern Idaho since 2021. She works to provide excellent health science programs and create opportunities with community healthcare partners for students, as they complete programs and work towards employment. Sackett has held various positions at the College of Eastern Idaho over the past 11 years to include: adjunct and full-time faculty, inaugural science and math department chair, and dean for general education. She received her Doctor of Chiropractic Degree from Cleveland Chiropractic College, a B.S. from Idaho State University and an A.S. from BYU-I.



**Tiffany Seeley-Case** is the vice president of instruction at the College of Southern Idaho. Before assuming this position in May of 2024, she served as the dean of general and transfer education at CSI. She has held several positions at CSI over the last 27 years where she started as an instructor teaching and coaching the speech and debate team. Seeley-Case received her B.A. in communication/English from Boise State University and her M.A. from Boise State University in curriculum and instruction and is currently completing her doctoral degree from Idaho State University in educational leadership.



**Cheryl Siemers, Ph.D.**, currently serves as the director of Kenai Peninsula College, a community campus of the University of Alaska Anchorage. Siemers oversees operations for two campuses and one extension site in the communities of Soldotna, Homer, and Seward, Alaska. Siemers has served in a variety of roles at KPC, including English faculty, department chair, and assistant director, spanning a 20-year period with the institution. Former positions at other colleges include academic dean and director of advancement. Siemers holds a Ph.D. in rhetoric and linguistics from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and an M.A. in English from the University of Alaska Anchorage.



**Trent Sutton, Ph.D.**, has served as the vice provost, accreditation liaison officer, and dean of the division of exploratory studies and academic success at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) since July 2023. He oversees institutional accreditation, assessment, and student success initiatives. Formerly, he was the associate dean of academic programs in the UAF College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences, and held faculty positions at Lake Superior State University, Purdue University, and UAF. Sutton completed his B.S. in fisheries and wildlife at Michigan State, M.S. in biological sciences at Michigan Tech, and Ph.D. in fisheries sciences at Virginia Tech.



**Randi Lynn Tanglen, Ph.D.**, has served as vice provost for faculty affairs at the University of North Dakota since 2023. She believes that to effectively support students, institutions must, in turn, effectively support faculty. To that end, her leadership advances faculty excellence and opportunity through policy and professional development initiatives throughout the university. Previously, she was executive director of Humanities Montana and a tenured English professor and director of faculty development at Austin College in Texas. She has degrees from Rocky Mountain College (B.A., English education), the University of Montana (M.A., English), and the University of Arizona (Ph.D., English).



**Justin Vance** serves as dean, school of arts and humanities at the College of Western Idaho. He earned a B.A. in history from Boise State University, an M.A. in diplomacy and military studies from Hawai'i Pacific University, and a Doctor of Education from the University of Southern California. Previously, he served as dean of the college of professional studies and associate professor of history at Hawaii Pacific University. Vance has a passion for helping students from all different backgrounds and levels of preparation reach their goals. He has a consistent record of embracing innovation to meet student needs and institutional goals.



**Ian Williamson, Ph.D.**, has served as the associate vice president of academic affairs, for New Mexico Highlands University since 2018 and the graduate dean since 2019. His primary work either involves creating collaborative teams to win grants, managing those grants, or proposing new Highlands graduate programs to the State of New Mexico and the Higher Learning Commission. Before becoming an administrator, he worked for fourteen years as a social psychology faculty whose primary research interests converged around interpersonal forgiveness. Williamson received his B.A. from Macalester College in psychology and Spanish, and his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.

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## About the Western Academic Leadership Forum

The Western Academic Leadership Forum (Forum) provides a unique avenue by which the West's top academic leaders share perspectives on current issues to help inform their future decision making and leadership. Through the Forum, colleagues share the lessons they've learned from tackling challenges, and provide advice and assistance to one another based on their special expertise. They engage in planning and developing innovative regional initiatives addressing common concerns and together help build a stronger future for higher education in the West. The official representatives of the Forum's members are the chief academic leaders at the four-year institutions and their related system and state agencies in the WICHE region. [www.wiche.edu/Forum](http://www.wiche.edu/Forum)

## About the Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders

The Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders (Alliance) is a membership organization that serves as an incubator for collaborating and problem-solving among chief academic officers (or equivalent) at WICHE-region community colleges and technical schools, related systems, and state coordinating and governing boards. How should community colleges retool in a fast-evolving economy? What strategies work for increasing student access and completion? How can colleges foster a seamless interrelationship between their programs and workforce opportunities? These are just a few of countless issues of distinct concern to chief academic leaders, but common to peer two-year institutions across the Western United States. Together, this network's participants seek solutions to these and other issues beyond the scope of a single institution, system, or state on behalf of Alliance-member institutions.

[www.wiche.edu/Alliance](http://www.wiche.edu/Alliance)

## About the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education works collaboratively to expand educational access and excellence for all citizens of the West. By promoting innovation, cooperation, resource sharing, and sound public policy among states and institutions, WICHE strengthens higher education's contributions to the region's social, economic, and civic life. WICHE's 16 members include 15 states: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawai'i, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, as well as member U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States (which currently include the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Guam). [www.wiche.edu](http://www.wiche.edu)



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