

2027 Academic Partnerships Annual Meeting

Hosted by: Western Academic Leadership Forum &
Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders
Call for Session Proposals | Submission Deadline: Friday, November 13, 2026

This Year's Theme: *Honoring Our Mission, Shaping Our Future*
April 14-16, 2026 | Metropolitan State University | Denver, CO

The [Western Academic Leadership Forum \(Forum\)](#) and the [Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders \(Alliance\)](#) are thrilled to invite you to join us at Metropolitan State University in Denver, CO, on April 14-16, 2027, for the Academic Partnerships Annual Meeting. This year's theme is: *Honoring Our Mission, Shaping Our Future*.

The Forum and the Alliance are membership organizations housed within the [Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education \(WICHE\)](#). Each organization serves as a collaborative network of chief academic officers and other senior academic leaders across the [WICHE region](#), which includes Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawai'i, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, and the U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States (Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Palau, and American Samoa).

Higher education is experiencing a period of profound transformation as institutions respond to changing student needs, evolving workforce expectations, technological innovation, shifting public policy, and increasing demands for institutional agility and accountability. This annual meeting brings together chief academic officers and other senior academic leaders to share strategies, explore emerging ideas, and learn from one another's experiences in navigating this complex landscape. Through conversations that span leadership, academic innovation, student success, faculty excellence, and institutional partnerships, we will examine how colleges and universities can strengthen their missions, expand opportunity, and shape the future of higher education in the West.

We invite academic leaders, researchers, and administrators to submit session proposals that align with the annual meeting's theme with special emphasis on actionable takeaways for attendees. Please note that proposal submissions are not limited to members of the Forum or the Alliance nor members of the WICHE region. [Please submit proposals here.](#)



Desired Topics:**1. Leading Institutional Transformation**

Higher education leaders are navigating unprecedented change while preserving institutional mission and academic quality. We invite proposals that explore strategic leadership, organizational transformation, governance, culture, and decision-making that position institutions to thrive amid evolving expectations and complex challenges. Topics may include leadership development, strategic planning, change management, shared governance, crisis leadership, board relations, and organizational culture.

2. Designing the Future Academic Enterprise

As student demand, workforce needs, and financial realities evolve, institutions are reimagining their academic portfolios and educational models. We welcome sessions that examine academic planning, program innovation, curriculum redesign, technology-enabled learning, artificial intelligence, credential innovation, and strategies for creating sustainable, future-focused academic enterprises.

3. Advancing Student Success and Educational Opportunity

Today's learners follow increasingly diverse pathways into and through higher education. We seek proposals that highlight innovative approaches to improving access, belonging, persistence, completion, and career readiness across the student lifecycle, including transfer, dual enrollment, adult learners, technology-enabled support, and partnerships that expand educational opportunity.

4. Strengthening Faculty and Academic Excellence

Faculty remain central to institutional success, requiring policies and practices that foster excellence in teaching, scholarship, leadership, and professional growth. Proposals are encouraged on faculty development, evaluation and promotion, academic workforce trends, research support, teaching innovation, and cultivating faculty leadership in a changing higher education landscape.

5. Higher Education Policy, Partnerships, and Public Impact

Institutions increasingly operate within complex policy environments while relying on partnerships to advance their missions and serve their communities. We invite proposals addressing accreditation, public policy, academic freedom, external engagement, workforce partnerships, community collaboration, institutional alliances, and strategies for building public trust and long-term impact.

Session Types:

- **Lightning Session** (15 minutes): Do you have an idea or promising practice that you're eager to share and discuss in a short-format session? Our lightning sessions offer the perfect platform to showcase your expertise in 15 minutes. These fast-paced sessions are ideal for delivering concise and impactful content that will leave participants energized and inspired.
- **Presentation or Workshop** (40 minutes + a 10-minute Q&A): Take center stage with a presentation or workshop, which allows you to delve into your subject matter, engage the audience, and leave a lasting impression. From thought-provoking discussions to practical demonstrations, your presentation or workshop should offer valuable insights, actionable takeaways, and plenty of opportunities for attendee interaction.
- **Panel Discussion** (40 minutes + a 10-minute Q&A): Join with 2-3 fellow experts for a dynamic panel discussion that explores key themes, challenges, and opportunities facing colleges and universities today. Panel discussions provide a platform for divergent perspectives, lively dialogue, and collaborative problem-solving designed to inspire, inform, and engage the audience in insightful discourse.
- **Case Study Roundtables** (30 minutes): Consider the range of contemporary challenges facing higher education today (perhaps a challenge facing your own campus) and design a case study to submit for roundtable discussion. These roundtables offer an interactive forum where participants will examine real-world challenges faced by institutions. Each table will focus on a specific case, encouraging collaborative discussion, strategy-sharing, and solution-building. This format fosters practical insight and peer-to-peer learning in an active, small-group setting.

Proposals Content:

- I. Lead Presenter Name, Title, and Institutional/Organizational Affiliation
- II. Co-Presenter(s) Name(s), Title(s), and Institutional/Organizational Affiliation(s)
- III. Title (no more than 15 words)
- IV. Session Abstract (no more than 50 words): Please note that this will be published in Annual Meeting materials.
- V. Session Description (no more than 250 words): Please describe the session including how the session connects to the meeting theme and a plan for interacting with session attendees.
- VI. Session Learning Outcomes (no more than 25 words each): Please outline 1-3 learning outcomes associated with your session.
- VII. Session Type: Please indicate your preferred session type
 - a. Lightning Session
 - b. Presentation or Workshop
 - c. Panel Discussion
 - d. Case Study Roundtable
- VIII. Session's Overarching Topic(s): Please indicate which overarching topics your session addresses.
 - a. Leading Institutional Transformation
 - b. Designing the Future Academic Enterprise
 - c. Advancing Student Success and Educational Opportunity
 - d. Strengthening Faculty and Academic Excellence
 - e. Higher Education Policy, Partnerships, and Public Impact

Proposal Timeline:

All sessions proposals are due by Friday, November 13, 2026, by 11:59 PM MTN. Decisions on proposals will be sent via email to the lead presenter by Friday, December 11, 2026.

Required Meeting Registration:

If selected, everyone listed as a presenter in the proposal is expected to attend and present in person. All presenters are responsible for paying the appropriate registration fees. Please ensure that all presenters included in your proposal are aware of this information.

For any questions related to the 2027 Academic Partnerships Annual Meeting or proposal submissions, please contact: Nicholas Fuselier, Director of Academic Partnerships, Learning, and Development via email at nfuselier@wiche.edu.