Executive Leadership Academy (ELA)
2015–2016

A Leadership Development Program to Prepare College and University Vice Presidents for Presidencies

Purpose
The Executive Leadership Academy (ELA) is a year-long 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 senior cabinet officers to become successful presidents. It includes two national seminars, readings, webinars, individualized experiential activities, and structured mentorship experiences. 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 the president.

Program Description
The ELA enhances the skills and knowledge of senior cabinet officers as they contemplate future roles as college or university presidents. The program consists of (1) two seminars in Washington, D.C., (July 16–18, 2015, and June 20–22, 2016) led by current and former presidents and vice presidents; (2) readings concerning presidential leadership; (3) a Professional Experiential Plan (PEP) developed by the participant and his or her president to be carried out on the home campus or another conveniently located campus as the participant engages in activities relevant to the presidency; (4) mentorship by both the participant’s president and the program director; (5) executive career coaching; and (6) several structured conference calls with the participant, mentor, and program director.

The program director is Tom Kepple, president of the American Academic Leadership Institute and president emeritus of Juniata College (Pa.). He is the former vice president of business affairs at Sewanee: The University of the South and former provost of Rhodes College.

The ELA is supported by the American Academic Leadership Institute, Academic Search, Inc., and the Henry Luce Foundation.

Background
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; the difficulties experienced by excellent candidates who come to presidential searches with some, but not all, of the experiences of sitting presidents; and the reluctance of some boards of trustees to select candidates without substantive and demonstrated experience in the full complement of the responsibilities of the presidency—many of them external. We know that the roles of presidents have changed significantly in recent years; that the role of institutional fit is critical; and that institutional type affects the role of the president. The president’s role now requires some understanding of everything 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 borders of the institution—into the broader world. Candidates with at least some 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.

Participants
Approximately 40 cabinet officers, drawn from all divisions of the institution, will be selected for the 2015–2016 program—half from Council of Independent Colleges member institutions and half from American Association of State Colleges and Universities institutions. Eligibility is open to individuals who are currently serving in “cabinet-level” positions.

National Seminars
Two seminars will be held in Washington, D.C., led by current and former presidents and chancellors as well as experts in various areas of presidential responsibility.

Readings
Reading materials will be assigned on the responsibilities of the presidency and on the specific topics of the seminars to provide breadth and depth.

Content Areas
The program will focus on presidential areas of responsibility—none of which is completely contained within the portfolio of a single senior campus officer’s position. The topics will include, but not be limited to: fundraising; comprehensive campaigns; student affairs; endowment development and management; board development and board relations; institutional strategic planning as well as institutional re-positioning; alumni affairs; marketing and branding; financial management; legal issues; governmental relations at the state and federal levels; town-gown relations; campus master planning; buildings and grounds; enrollment management; athletics; personnel management; and the mechanics of the search process.

Professional Experiential Plan (PEP)—Activities and Initiatives
Working with his or her president, each ELA participant will analyze personal “gaps,” then design, with the help of the director and the mentor, a plan of activities and initiatives to gain hands-on experience in the conduct of the day-to-day activities covered in the content areas of the program. The activities in the PEP may occur (a) on the home campus, (b) on a nearby campus, or (c) at a campus where the cabinet officer might naturally travel as part of ongoing duties during the year. These initiatives will be customized to fit the individual needs of the respective cabinet officer, president, and institution. Experience has shown that the PEP component is essential to the success of the program. The PEP may be conceptualized as a self-directed, self-initiated year-long internship. Several reports on PEP activities are submitted to the mentor and program director on specific dates.

Mentoring and Executive Coaching Components
Participants will be mentored throughout the year by their own presidents and the program director. Individualized executive coaching is available throughout the program.

Program Costs
The program fee for the 2015–2016 academic year is $2,200. 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. Support to offset some of these costs is available to a small number of participants at institutions with limited funding for professional development.

Nomination Process
Presidents to whom the cabinet officer reports must nominate the candidate. Presidents complete the nomination form and commit to serve during 2015–2016 as a mentor and to work with the cabinet officer on appropriate 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 a single nomination packet to CIC at www.cic.edu/ExecutiveLeadershipAcademy, or to AASCU at www.aascu.org. The packet should consist of the following items:

- Nomination forms are available at www.cic.edu/ExecutiveLeadershipAcademy, or www.aascu.org and are to be 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. This letter should be specific, citing particular strengths and accomplishments of the candidate. It also should address the probable career path of the candidate. The letter can be written by anyone with knowledge of the nominee’s qualifications and potential to be a president.

A statement by the candidate explaining his or her interest in and potential for a presidency 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, or www.aascu.org.

Nomination Deadline
Nomination packets are due to AASCU by Monday, March 2, 2015.

Additional Information
For questions about the AASCU nomination, selection process, or program logistics, contact George L. Mehaffy, vice president for Academic Leadership and Change, AASCU, at mehaffy@ aascu.org or 202.478.4672. For questions about program content, contact Tom Kepple, president, AALI, at kepplet@ americanali.org or 202.263.7488.

ELA Results to Date

CIC, AASCU, and AALI piloted a Provost to President program in 2009–2010 to prepare cabinet-level administrators in CIC and AASCU member institutions to assume presidencies. Of the 41 participants in that pilot program, 16 have since been appointed as president or chancellor. Ten others have experienced other forms of advancement, such as being promoted to a senior vice presidency or moving to a similar position at a significantly larger or more prestigious institution. Approximately 63 percent of this first cohort has “moved up” in the higher education ranks.

The program’s name was changed to the Executive Leadership Academy for the 2011–2012 academic year. A remarkable 71 percent of the 2011–2012 cohort has advanced, with 18 being appointed president or chancellor and another 12 advancing their careers in other ways. Of the 40 participants in the 2012–2013 ELA, 45 percent have advanced their careers, including 10 who were appointed to presidencies. In the 2013–2014 cohort that completed the Academy this past summer, two already have earned presidential appointments and another three have experienced promotions, for an early 13 percent “upward mobility” rate.

Although AALI and CIC maintain data on the professional advancement of participants, successful outcomes also are obtained when participants’ leadership in their current positions is strengthened or when they learn from the experiences that they do not want to pursue a presidency.