



2026 AILACTE Conference

February 19-20, 2026

New Orleans, LA

Independent Voices, Collective Impact: Shaping the Future of Educator Preparation

Independent liberal arts colleges have long played a vital role in cultivating reflective, justice-oriented educators. As the landscape of education shifts due to evolving policy, technology, equity demands, and workforce dynamics, private, not-for-profit institutions face both challenges and opportunities to lead with integrity, innovation, and impact.

The Association of Independent Liberal Arts Colleges for Teacher Education (AILACTE) invites proposals from higher-education faculty and administration, researchers, and P-12 practitioners to engage in rich dialogue and collaborative scholarship aimed at shaping the future of educator preparation within the liberal arts tradition.

We look forward to seeing you at the [Association of Independent Liberal Arts Colleges for Teacher Education \(AILACTE\)](https://ailacte.org/conference/conference-proposal-submission) national conference in **New Orleans, Louisiana, to be held February 19 & 20, 2026.**

Presentation Proposal Deadline: August 30, 2025 is the latest date for submission. Review of proposals will begin **July 15** and accepted submissions may be notified as early as **August 1, 2025**. AILACTE has elected this rolling acceptance process to permit conference attendees to plan their travel needs effectively.

Submit Proposals Here: <https://ailacte.org/conference/conference-proposal-submission>

Conference Strands

Strand 1: Humanizing Pedagogies in a Digital Age

This strand examines the balance between educational strategies, technology and relationship-centered teaching. Educator preparation programs must foster compassionate, critical, and ethical educators with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to facilitate learning in a digital age.

Focus Questions:

- What approaches can EPPs use to cultivate compassion, critical thinking, and ethical responsibility in teachers, educational leaders, and educational support professionals?
- How can digital technologies be used in educator preparation to support—not supplant—human connection, culturally responsive teaching, and learner engagement?
- How can teacher educators critically evaluate and select digital tools that align with the values of humanizing pedagogies and support meaningful learning experiences?
- What are best practices for integrating artificial intelligence in educator preparation?
- How can online programs effectively prepare educators with a foundation in relationship-focused pedagogies?

Strand 2: Sustaining Programs with Big Impact

Proposals focused on this strand will identify innovative strategies for enrollment, accreditation, cross-campus collaboration, and curricular redesign that support the viability and vibrancy of independent educator preparation programs.

Focus Questions:

- What innovative strategies and programs (e.g., STEM, STEAM, Bilingual, Residency, Education Specialist) have proven effective in maintaining or growing enrollment in independent educator preparation programs ?
- How can accreditation processes be leveraged as tools for strengthening program quality and long-term sustainability?
- In what ways can cross-campus or cross-institutional collaborations enhance program impact and resource efficiency?
- How can curricular redesign address evolving educational needs while supporting program viability and distinctiveness?
- How can collaboration within and across institutions enhance the viability and impact of educator preparation programs?"

Strand 3: Advancing Equity-Centered and Inclusive Educator Preparation

This strand invites exploration of how independent liberal arts colleges can critically examine their own contexts while preparing future educators to advance equity, inclusion, belonging, and justice in diverse P–12 classrooms.

Focus Questions:

- How can independent liberal arts colleges critically examine their institutional programs (e.g., STEM, STEAM, Bilingual, Residency, Education Specialist) and practices to better support equity, inclusion, and justice in educator preparation?
- What approaches best prepare future educators to foster belonging and address systemic inequities in diverse P–12 classrooms, even in contexts where these ideals are explicitly discouraged?
- How can programs more effectively partner with international EPPs and international teacher candidates to advance inclusive and equity-centered education?
- In what ways can partnerships with diverse P-12 schools and communities enhance culturally and linguistically responsive preparation across coursework and clinical experiences?

Strand 4: Clinical Partnerships in Rural, Urban, and High-Need Communities

Building, maintaining, and learning from partnerships that serve high-need schools and communities, with attention to reciprocity, local knowledge, and long-term impact.

Focus Questions:

- How can educator preparation programs build and sustain reciprocal partnerships with rural, urban, and high-need schools that honor local knowledge and community context?
- What strategies support long-term impact and mutual benefit in clinical placements within high-need communities?
- How can partnerships with rural, urban, and high-need schools inform program design and candidate preparation?
- What role does community voice play in shaping meaningful and effective clinical experiences?

Submission Guidelines

Submit Proposals Here: <https://ailacte.org/conference/conference-proposal-submission>

Proposals must align with the conference theme and address one of the conference strands. Submission will contain the following:

- **Presenter(s) Information:** name, email, phone number, title, institution, address
- **Presentation Title** (18 words or fewer)
- **Specific Conference Strand**
 - *Strand 1: Humanizing Pedagogies in a Digital Age*
 - *Strand 2: Sustaining Programs with Big Impact*
 - *Strand 3: Advancing Equity-Centered and Inclusive Educator Preparation*
 - *Strand 4: Clinical Partnerships in Rural, Urban, and High-Need Communities*
- **Session Format** (select one):
 - **Traditional Concurrent Sessions** - These 50-minute sessions will be shared between two presentations of research, program innovations, or case studies associated with one or more of the conference strands. Each 25-minute presentation should include opportunities for audience members to actively engage in the session.
 - **Collaborative Scholarship Development Labs (CSDL)** - These 50-minute sessions are designed to foster scholarly collaboration, particularly among early-career faculty. Instead of traditional presentations, participants will submit a brief abstract describing scholarship-in-progress that aligns with one of the conference strands. During the session, accepted participants will be grouped by theme to share their work, build peer networks, and explore opportunities for co-developing a shared “Best Practices” manuscript. Each group will be supported by an experienced facilitator to guide discussion and collaboration. *All accepted CSDL participants will be recognized in the conference program, listed individually alongside their contribution to the theme. Thus, they are credited with a national conference presentation, which may lead to co-authored, publishable work.*
- **Program Summary** (50 words or fewer): to be included in the conference program
- **Presentation Description** (200-400 words):

Concurrent proposals should describe the presentation’s purpose, context, methods (if applicable), key findings or insights, and relevance to the conference strand. Proposals for these formats should also provide clearly stated goals with respect to participant engagement during the session.

Collaborative Scholarship Development Lab (CSDL) proposals should describe the current state of a scholarly inquiry relevant to one of the conference strands. Submissions should include anticipated next steps and key unanswered questions to help facilitators foster meaningful engagement within the group. Because the goal of the CSDL format is to promote collaboration and peer feedback, each submission should be ***individually authored***. Individuals who have been collaborating on these topics are encouraged to submit separate proposals that represent their unique experiences with the strand.

- **Key Words** (3-5 words): All proposals should include key terms to help categorize the submission.