

PROGRAM



MINNESOTA
College Personnel Association

Friday, March 28, 2025

St. Cloud State University
Atwood Memorial Center

9:30 AM - 10:15 AM
KEYNOTE

Transformation Starts Within:
Leading Higher Education Toward
Healing & Liberation

True transformation in higher education begins within. In this keynote, Dr. Aerial explores how contemplative practices can fuel sustainable leadership, inspire innovation, deepen resilience, and drive justice-centered change. Through storytelling and research, she will illuminate how cultivating mindful awareness fosters the adaptability and resilience needed in uncertain times. Dr. Aerial empowers educators to lead with intention—navigating emerging trends while advancing healing and liberation—for themselves, their students, and the future of higher education.



Dr. Aerial A. Ashlee
Ballroom



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10:30 AM - 11:15 AM
BLOCK ONE

Creating a Culture of Change through Project Management

Lecture & Discussion| Focus: Leadership

Charles Frame

Voyageur Room

This presentation walks attendees through Normandale Community College's approach to creating a change culture through the project management process. We will provide an in-depth overview of our success in redesigning not only physical space but also a new integrated service model in student affairs. We will provide a blueprint for other institutions to follow as they plan for large scale changes to physical, programmatic and organizational structures.

Students' Perceptions of Leadership after Completing an Experiential Educational Program

Lecture & Discussion| Focus: Justice

Mic Brunner

Glacier Room

This session will present the findings from a doctoral dissertation on students' perceptions of leadership. The purpose of this study was to analyze undergraduate students' perceptions of leadership. The analysis consisted of an in-depth document analysis that explored how students perceive leadership after going through the leadership track of an experiential educational program, including which experiences influenced those perceptions.



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BLOCK ONE

Creating a Mentor-Centered Community: The Importance of Peer to Peer Mentorship for Undergraduate Women of Color

Workshop | Focus: Persistence

Sydney Elizabeth Robinson

Alumni Room

This presentation will utilize an intersectional framework to explain the key components that the College of Saint Benedict (CSB) has implemented to create a culturally sensitive and empowering mentoring program, Advocates for Inclusive Mentoring (AIM). Beginning in the Spring of 2013, AIM strives to strengthen CSB's historically underrepresented student's personal development and leadership through collaboration with various academic groups on campus to help build community, a sense of belonging, and overall student success for the participants. This innovative framework supports the academic journey of women of color and prioritizes their identity development, which is crucial for overall well-being and success in a challenging educational environment. The session will address the specific ways in which peer-to-peer mentorship can aid in eliminating the gap in retention between women of color and their white counterparts.



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11:25 AM - 12:10 PM
BLOCK TWO

Engaging Students as Stakeholders - The Power of International Students' Storytelling in Creating a Supportive Campus Culture

Lecture & Discussion| Focus: Leadership

Sehyun Liz Hwang

Glacier Room

This session will introduce strategic ways of actively involving international students as stakeholders in data-driven campus conversations. We will showcase the ways student involvement has a powerful impact on improving overall experiences, student services, strategic communications, and well-being. With examples from the University of Minnesota to engage international students in storytelling to campus units and building campus-wide support, participants will be able to understand the importance of student voices in identifying and charting pathways towards a supportive community at their campus.

The Original Wounds of Colonization: Trauma Responses of White Bodies on Campus

Lecture & Discussion| Focus: Justice

Christina Holmgren, Jayne K. Sommers, Laura Livalska

Alumni Room

Individuals exposed to trauma can internalize harmful behaviors and patterns, often resulting in a defensive stance toward others and a lack of emotional connection. Evidence of these effects of trauma abounds in individual and institutional responses to current challenges facing higher education. This workshop posits the history of colonization and enslavement as the original wound and discusses the ways that epigenetic trauma has been passed down through white bodies and institutions.



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BLOCK TWO

Inclusive Futures: Third-Wave Theories for Adapting Student Development Practice

Lecture & Discussion | Focus: Justice

Kaia Swenson, Elizabeth Oleson, Oluwaseun Adekeye

Voyageur Room

This session will introduce strategic ways of actively involving international students as stakeholders in data-driven campus conversations. We will showcase the ways student involvement has a powerful impact on improving overall experiences, student services, strategic communications, and well-being. With examples from the University of Minnesota to engage international students in storytelling to campus units and building campus-wide support, participants will be able to understand the importance of student voices in identifying and charting pathways towards a supportive community at their campus.



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1:45 PM - 2:30 PM
BLOCK THREE

Is Higher Education Safe in Minnesota in 2025?

Roundtable Discussion| Focus: Leadership

Steven McCullar

Alumni Room

Nationally, Higher Education has been under an unprecedented rollercoaster during the first few months of 2025. Many times, the phrase “I am glad I work in Minnesota” is said with the idea that what is happening around the country will not impact us do to the states “Blue” political nature. What could higher education in Minnesota be facing?

**Dash’s Cache: Adaptation of A Small Campus Food Pantry
Through Sustainability Efforts**

Lecture & Discussion| Focus: Sustainability

Patricia Hartshorn

Glacier Room

Inability to meet basic needs such as food insecurity is one of the most common contributing challenges to student persistence (Landry et al., 2024). Many college campuses have attempted to address such challenges by establishing food pantries or other institutional efforts. A small private liberal arts college in the Midwest has employed similar methods. This presentation shares the assessment of existing practices during 2024 at Goshen College’s food pantry, the identified barriers and challenges to effectively meet students’ needs, and the sustainability efforts taken to reimagine the existing food pantry into a network for addressing basic needs.



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BLOCK THREE

Essential Mental Health Training: A Space for Healing and Practice

Training| Focus: Persistence

Steven D. Parker

Voyageur Room

Mental health issues persist among higher education professionals (Ratanasiripong et al., 2024). Depression, anxiety, suicidality, and social aggressions (e.g., micro-aggression, macro-invalidation) are on the rise due to an array of factors including national, state and community environments at this time. To equip professionals of higher education, this training will provide hands-on training centered on techniques to manage adverse mental health issues within self and students.



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AWARD WINNERS

Award of Excellence

Creating a Mentor-Centered Community: The Importance of Peer to Peer Mentorship for Undergraduate Women of Color

Sydney Elizabeth Robinson

Award of Best Graduate Student Proposal

Inclusive Futures: Third-Wave Theories for Adapting Student Development Practice

Kaia Swenson, Elizabeth Oleson, Oluwaseun Adekeye





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