



Creating a Resilient Presidency



The Council of
Independent Colleges

**ENGAGING
COMMUNITIES**

2025 Presidents Institute

January 4–7, 2025 ● JW Marriott San Antonio Hill Resort & Spa ● San Antonio, Texas



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Presenters

Jorge Burmicky, Assistant Professor of Higher Education Leadership and Policy Studies, Howard University (DC)

Mike Maxey, President Emeritus, Roanoke College (VA); Senior Consultant and Senior Academic Coach, Academic Search

Kevin R. McClure, Murphy Distinguished Scholar of Education and Associate Professor of Higher Education, University of North Carolina Wilmington

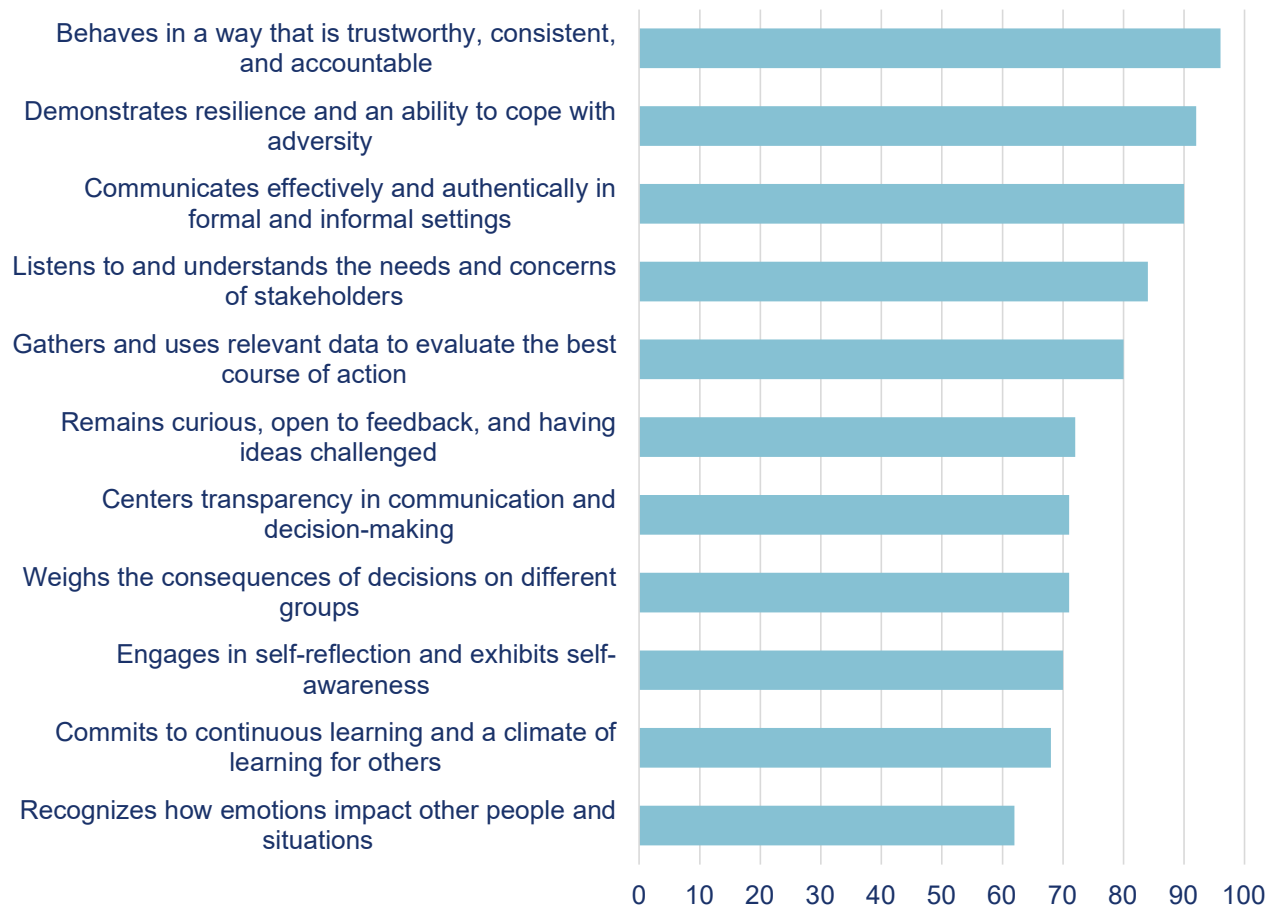
Study Rationale

- The question of what it means to be an effective president is as relevant as ever
- Previous studies of presidential competencies are a decade or more old
- The position is always difficult, but the context and specific challenges shift
- Chance to continue updating and enhancing search processes, leadership preparation, board education

Study Features & Methodology

- Over 700 current presidents surveyed online with questions in the following areas:
 - Leadership Qualities or Abilities
 - Institutional Management Skills
 - Knowledge Areas to Be Effective
 - Knowledge Areas Leadership Programs Should Prioritize
- Four focus groups with current presidents at AASCU and CIC president meetings

**Figure 1.
Items Most
Frequently
Rated as Very
Relevant in
Leadership
Qualities or
Abilities**



Demonstrating Resilience

- Coping with adversity and demonstrating resilience was frequently rated as very important by survey respondents (92%)
- Focus group participants discussed how their resilience is a product of leaning on teams and networks of friends, family, mentors, and faith communities. Not a solo project, but rather a product of *relationships*.

“Isolation is very real in this role...my situation is unique because I’m in a very small institution in a very small world community...so having that network to reach out to in times of need is critical.”

Notable Differences by Gender and Race

Women were much more likely than men to indicate that demonstrating a commitment to equity-mindedness and weighing the consequences of decisions on different groups are very relevant.

Presidents of Color were more likely than White presidents to indicate help-seeking and recognizing how emotions impact other people as very relevant.

Presidents of Color vs White presidents and women vs males were more likely to respond they needed mastery of specific knowledge areas to be effective at their institution.



Conversation with Michael Maxey

- What does resilience mean to you and how does it apply to your presidency?
- What is your “go-to” source for finding and sustaining resilience?
- How do you model or build resilience in those you work with most closely?



Q&A



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- A year-long, peer-led, small cohort program that supports the personal revitalization of experienced CIC member presidents to foster longer, happier, more effective presidencies. *Spouses/partners included.*
- Phase One: Take stock of personal wellness (physical, emotional, spiritual) and build a personalized, practical action plan for personal sustainability in the job.
- Phase Two: Explore alignment between your renewed self and institutional leadership needs; infuse renewal throughout the institution; and to eventually “end well”.



- Summer Gathering: June 22-25, 2025 in Carlsbad, California (just north of San Diego); Winter Gathering: June 3-4, 2026 at the 2026 Presidents Institute in Orlando, Florida.
- Co-Directors: Michael Le Roy and Celeste Schenck
- Deadline: Tuesday, January 21, 2025. Letter of application and brief letter of support from board chair. Selection decisions by February 11, 2025.

CIC is grateful to Lilly Endowment Inc. for its ongoing support of the Presidential Renewal program.



“The Summer Seminar was the most supportive environment that my husband and I have experienced in our roles as president and spouse. The facilitators set a humane pace, inviting us into deep reflection while embodying the habits of sustainability and health that we were all longing for. I arrived in need of friendship, safety, and laughter, and I found all three. I left with clarified goals for myself and my presidency, and friends to accompany me.”

-Rebecca Stoltzfus, President, Goshen College (IN)

“When applying for the CIC Presidential Renewal Program, I didn’t fully know what to expect.... Looking back on the experience I am thankful. I have a new group of thought partners. I gained new skills and ways of not only thinking about how to sustain multiple facets of my life but actually moving from a mindset of productivity to sustainability. I encourage any president who is finding it challenging to recharge to give CIC the opportunity to support them.”

-Richard Dunsworth, President, University Of The Ozarks (AR)



**Thank you for attending
this session!**