



Heterodox Academy | June 22-24, 2026 | Mountain West Regional Conference

How It's Done: Practical Strategies for Building Trustworthy Higher Education Institutions

University of Wyoming
Gateway Conference Center

Monday, June 22 Opening & Capacity-Building			
1:00 - 2:00 PM Gateway Center Atrium	Registration and Check In		
2:00 - 3:15 PM Salons A & B	<p><i>PLENARY PANEL</i></p> <p>What Do You Want to Build? Visions of University Reform</p> <p>Heidi Ganahl - Former Regent, University of Colorado Ed Seidel - President, University of Wyoming Pamela Carriveau - Provost and Vice President, Black Hills State University</p> <p>This panel brings together higher education leaders to discuss competing visions of university reform. Panelists will discuss what, if anything, needs to change in American higher education, what universities are already doing well and should preserve, and what kinds of institutional cultures, programs, and initiatives can strengthen universities' missions.</p>		
3:15 - 3:30 PM	Break		
3:30 - 5:00 PM Salons A & B	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p><i>CONCURRENT SESSION - SALON A</i></p> <p>Slow Change: Laying the Groundwork through building Connections</p> <p>Jennifer Harmon - University of Wyoming Catherine Johnson - University of Wyoming Matt Recla - Boise State University Bethany Boucher - Heterodox Academy Jason McConnell - Black Hills State University</p> <p>While much of the conversation on reform in higher education focuses on large, institutional change, this panel will focus on the slow, small steps individuals can and have made at their universities to promote HxA</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p><i>CONCURRENT SESSION - SALON B</i></p> <p>Interventions that Worked</p> <p><i>Campus Dialogues</i> Matt Burgess - University of Wyoming</p> <p><i>Communicating through Political Pressures</i> Bryan Gentry - University of South Carolina</p> <p><i>Achieving Viewpoint Diversity</i> Justin McBrayer - Heterodox Academy</p> <p><i>Protecting Disciplines and Collections from Calls for Erasure</i> Spencer Pelton, Wyoming State University</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p><i>CONCURRENT SESSION - SALON A</i></p> <p>Slow Change: Laying the Groundwork through building Connections</p> <p>Jennifer Harmon - University of Wyoming Catherine Johnson - University of Wyoming Matt Recla - Boise State University Bethany Boucher - Heterodox Academy Jason McConnell - Black Hills State University</p> <p>While much of the conversation on reform in higher education focuses on large, institutional change, this panel will focus on the slow, small steps individuals can and have made at their universities to promote HxA</p>	<p><i>CONCURRENT SESSION - SALON B</i></p> <p>Interventions that Worked</p> <p><i>Campus Dialogues</i> Matt Burgess - University of Wyoming</p> <p><i>Communicating through Political Pressures</i> Bryan Gentry - University of South Carolina</p> <p><i>Achieving Viewpoint Diversity</i> Justin McBrayer - Heterodox Academy</p> <p><i>Protecting Disciplines and Collections from Calls for Erasure</i> Spencer Pelton, Wyoming State University</p>
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	values. Panelists will share specific strategies and stories from their own experiences that illustrate the meaningful work that takes time.	Academic professionals share success stories and evidence-based strategies for creating meaningful culture change on campus.
5:00 - 6:00 PM Atrium	Networking Reception	
6:00 - 7:30 PM Salons A & B	Dinner & “Modest Proposals” Dinner featuring a series of two-minute lightning talks offering creative and thought-provoking proposals for higher ed reform.	
Tuesday, June 23: Reform in Action		
9:00 - 10:30 AM Salons A & B	<p><i>CONCURRENT SESSION - SALON A</i></p> <p>Legal Strategies for Institutional Repair</p> <p>Ryan Ansloan - Foundation for Individual Rights & Expression Steve McGuire - American Council of Trustees and Alumni Tara Evans - University of Wyoming</p> <p>Panelists discuss legal and policy issues related to university purpose and principles, free expression rights, and policies that can structurally protect free inquiry and expression.</p>	<p><i>CONCURRENT SESSION - SALON B</i></p> <p>Centers of Practice</p> <p>Taylor Jaworski - Bruce D. Benson Center for the Study of Western Civilization at University of Colorado Boulder Martín Carcasson - Center for Public Deliberation at Colorado State University at Colorado State University Mary Kate Cary - John and Sandy Miller National Academy for Free Expression and Pluralism at University of Denver Charles Sims - Center for Energy, Transportation, and Environmental Policy at University of Tennessee</p> <p>Leaders of university centers discuss establishing and sustaining centers, remaining nonpartisan, balancing public-facing and scholarly missions, and navigating internal and external pressures.</p>
10:45 AM - 12:00 PM Salons A & B	<p><i>CONCURRENT SESSION - SALON A</i></p> <p>Faculty and Organizational Development to Protect Open Inquiry</p> <p><i>Free Inquiry and Expression: Principles into Classroom Practice</i> Leila Brammer - University of Chicago Forum for Free Inquiry and Expression <i>How an AI-Powered Platform Fosters Rigorous, Evidence-Based Dialogue Among Students on Controversial Topics</i> Simon Cullen - Heterodox Academy</p>	<p><i>CONCURRENT SESSION - SALON B</i></p> <p>Engaging Citizenship in the Classroom</p> <p>Scott Moorcraft - Boise State University Matt Moreali - Southern Oregon University Steven Pittz - University of Colorado-Colorado Springs</p> <p>Preparing students for thoughtful and intentional engagement as citizens is a core function of higher education, and a</p>

	<p><i>Building a Culture of Free Inquiry Through Faculty and Organizational Development</i> Martha McCaughey - University of Wyoming Free Expression, Intellectual Freedom, & Constructive Dialogue Program</p> <p>This session highlights successful initiatives, programs, workshops, and tools that help faculty uphold academic freedom and free expression, exercise sound judgment when addressing controversial topics, and maintain classrooms that support open inquiry.</p>	<p>prerequisite for public trust. This panel highlights faculty who are preparing students to engage critically as citizens in a diverse republic, as well as those who are envisioning curricular shifts to fulfill this goal more effectively. This session will provide ideas and practices for implementation on your own campus in the areas of free speech, constructive dialogue, a civics curriculum, and more.</p>
<p>12:00 - 1:15 PM Salons A & B</p>	<p>World Café Lunch Facilitated small-group conversations focused on questions about higher ed institutional culture</p>	
<p>1:15 - 1:30 PM</p>	<p>Break</p>	
<p>1:30 - 5:30 PM Salons A & B</p>	<p><i>CONCURRENT WORKSHOP - SALON A</i> A Deep Dive with Leaders of the University of Chicago Forum for Free Inquiry & Expression An extended workshop exploring academic freedom, institutional neutrality, and public trust, led by Leila Brammer, Director of Curriculum and Tom Ginsburg, Faculty Director, Forum for Free Inquiry and Expression at University of Chicago</p> <p>Schedule: 1:30–2:30 PM Academic Freedom: History and Current Tensions (focus on tensions in the Mountain West) 2:35–3:35 PM Institutional Neutrality and the Chicago Tradition (with case study) 3:50–5:00 PM Academic Freedom, the State, and Public Trust 5:00–5:30 PM Reflections, Next Steps, and Discussion</p>	<p><i>CONCURRENT WORKSHOP - SALON B</i> Dialogue, Debate, and Deliberation: Three organizations demonstrate distinct approaches to dialogue, deliberation, and debate through participatory sessions focused on universities.</p> <p>Schedule: 1:30-2:45 PM <i>Free Speech on Campus</i> Martin Carcasson - Center for Public Deliberation at Colorado State University 2:50-4:05 PM <i>Has Higher Education Shifted from Learning to Earning—and What Does That Mean for Opportunity?</i> BridgeUWYO Student Leaders 4:15-5:30 PM Steamboat Institute Debate <i>Resolved: institutional neutrality is necessary to preserve the university as a forum for open inquiry rather than an actor in political disputes</i> Jonathan Turley, George Washington University Law School Todd Wolfson, American Association of University Professors</p>
<p>5:30 - 6:00 PM</p>	<p>Break</p>	

<p>6:00 - 7:30 PM Salons A & B</p>	<p><i>DINNER & KEYNOTE ADDRESS</i> The Spirit of Liberal Freedom Steven Pittz - Director of the Center for the Study of Government and the Individual, University of Colorado at Colorado Springs</p>
<p>7:30 - 8:30 PM Atrium</p>	<p>Reception and Book Signing with Steven Pittz <i>Recovering the Liberal Spirit: Nietzsche, Individuality, and Spiritual Freedom</i> - Steven Pittz</p>
<p><i>Wednesday, June 24: Take-Aways</i></p>	
<p>9:00 - 10:30 AM Salon A</p>	<p><i>PLENARY SESSION</i> Principled Governance Scott Beaulier, University of Wyoming Pamela Carriveau, Black Hills State University Nicole Cousins, University of Colorado Boulder</p> <p>University leaders discuss the principles they seek to uphold, the challenges that test those principles, and how governments can better support principled governance in higher education.</p>
<p>10:45 AM - 12:00 PM Salon A</p>	<p><i>KEYNOTE ADDRESS</i> Closing Reflective Conversation: Learning from Our Academic Insiders John Tomasi - President, Heterodox Academy</p>