

AGENDA

2026 LERN Leadership Conference "Innovate. Elevate. Accelerate."

Monday, March 2

11:00 am - 5:30 pm EXCLUSIVE PRE-CON SESSIONS

6:00 pm - 8:00 pm Conference Check In and Complimentary networking reception, Meet-and-Greet

Tuesday, March 3

8 am Breakfast networking (Included for host hotel guests)

8:45 am – 10:00 am **Opening Session: The Next 5 Years**

- **Welcome, and Conference Logistics.** Brendan Marsello, Vice President for Program Development; and Travette Webster, Vice President for Communications & Diversity, LERN.
- **The Next 5 Years. Panel. Moderated by Greg Marsello.** What does the future of continuing education look like—and how can institutions prepare today for tomorrow's challenges and opportunities? This dynamic panel brings together leaders and innovators in the field to discuss the trends, disruptions, and strategies that will shape the next five years. From shifting learner demographics and workforce demands to advances in technology and delivery models, panelists will share diverse perspectives on where continuing education is headed.

10:15 am – 11:15 am Concurrent Sessions

- **"Enroll. Engage. Empower."** In the last 2 years, our Continuing Education program has seen remarkable growth in enrollment, revenue, and reach. Through improved marketing strategies and a continued and elevated commitment to customer service, our program connected with more learners than ever before. In 2024, our UGotClass enrollment grew by 84%, followed by an additional 35% increase in 2025. In this session, we'll share the story behind our success: the lessons we learned, the adjustments we made, and the strategies that helped us grow. *Katy Fagan; Temple University*
- Roundtable. **"Leadership Best Practices."** Effective leadership is essential to the success of continuing and community education programs. In this interactive roundtable, you'll discover the role of a leader and exchange insights with colleagues on the leadership practices that make the greatest impact. We'll discuss strategies for building strong teams, navigating change, managing resources, and fostering innovation. Enhance your leadership effectiveness and ensure your program's long-term success. *Greg Marsello, LERN Senior Advisor*

11:30 am – 12:30 pm Lunch (included in fee)

12:45 pm - 1:45 pm LERN CORE General Session

"Applying the LERN 4Ps for Lifelong Learning." In today's competitive landscape, successful non-credit programs don't just rely on great courses — they depend on effective marketing and enrollment strategies. This interactive session will explore how to apply LERN's proven 4Ps framework (Product, Price, Place, Promotion) specifically for continuing education and lifelong learning. *Brendan Marsello, LERN*

2:00 pm -3:00 pm Concurrent Sessions

- **"Earn and Learn Certificate Pathways: Partnering with Employers to Support Neurodiverse Students."** Oakton College has developed two non-credit certificate Earn and Learn programs in Hospitality and Early Childhood Education, designed to support neurodiverse students through classroom instruction paired with paid, hands-on experience. These programs expand equitable career pathways for an underrepresented population while also addressing urgent workforce needs. Attendees will learn how Oakton partnered with employers and transition programs to design structured, inclusive opportunities, and will leave with strategies to replicate similar certificate-based, employer-driven pathways at their own institutions. *Leah Kintner; Oakton College*
- **"Mission Meets Market: Partnering with Nonprofits to Boost Enrollment, Revenue, and Impact."** Discover how one continuing education program created a sustainable, win-win model by partnering with local nonprofits to deliver mission-driven courses. Learn how to identify and engage nonprofit partners, structure agreements that benefit both parties, and leverage your marketing reach to help them fulfill their mission while increasing your own enrollment and revenue. You'll leave with a replicable framework, sample outreach language, and promotional strategies to launch similar partnerships in your community—bringing high-quality, in-demand classes to your students while strengthening local organizations. *Fayth Ross; Truckee Meadows Community College*

3:15 pm - 4:15 pm Optional: Networking and Presenter Q&A

Wednesday, March 4

8 am Breakfast networking (Included for host hotel guests)

9:00 am – 10:00 am LERN CORE General Session

"Growing Your Program with New Initiatives." New initiatives are the key to keeping your program vibrant, relevant, and financially strong. Using LERN's New Initiatives Model, learn how to identify, design, and launch initiatives that meet emerging needs and generate new revenue. Explore proven strategies for assessing opportunities, managing risk, and aligning initiatives with your mission and resources. Leave with a step-by-step framework and practical tools to grow your program through innovation and intentional action. *Emma Baumann, South Central College; Greg Marsello, LERN Senior Advisor*



"50 Years of Service"

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2025 LERN Leadership Conference "Innovate. Elevate. Accelerate."

10:15 am -11:15 am Concurrent Sessions

- **"From Chaos to Community: Designing Camps That Sell Out and Stand Out."** Camps are often dismissed as "organized chaos", fun but unfocused. What if your camp became an intentional space for growth, connection, and culture-building? Since launching in 2018, our community camp has filled every year, selling out next summer's program in just 72 hours. In this session, Isaac Brubaker shares how Social Emotional Learning, staff training with Gallup's StrengthsFinder, and a focus on friendships and courage transformed camp into a thriving program that develops both campers and staff. Leave with practical tools to refine your camp (or build one from the ground up) with lasting impact. *Isaac Brubaker; Stevenson High School PREP*
- **"Making UGC Work."** UGotClass offers a wide range of online learning opportunities—but how do you make it truly work for your program and your learners? This session will focus on strategies to effectively integrate U Got Class into your offerings, from selecting the right courses to marketing them successfully and engaging your audience. Participants will learn practical tips for maximizing enrollment, aligning courses with community needs, and using UGotClass as a revenue-generating and mission-driven resource. We'll share real-life examples, proven marketing approaches, and best practices for making the most of this flexible platform. *Brendan Marsello; LERN & Katy Fagan; Temple University*

11:30 am – 12:30 pm Lunch (included in fee)

12:45 pm -1:45 pm GENERAL SESSION

"From First Date to Job Offer: Playing Matchmaker Between Students and Employers." When billion-dollar companies are competing for your graduates, you know something's working. At Rock Valley College's CNC Machining Program, students average over three job offers by graduation, and there's a waiting list of employers eager to join our on-campus interview days. Our approach is simple: play matchmaker. We introduce students and employers early, build familiarity through tours and hands-on engagement, and seal the deal with structured interview events. In this session, you'll get our full "First Date to Job Offer" playbook — so you can create a program that has employers requesting seats at the table. *Peter Held; Rock Valley College*

2:00 pm -3:00 pm Concurrent Sessions

- **"So you think you should podcast?"** Podcasting has quickly become one of the most powerful and accessible tools for reaching audiences, building credibility, and strengthening brand identity. For contract training programs, podcasts can serve as an innovative way to showcase expertise, highlight success stories, and connect with both current and potential clients. This session will explore how to leverage podcasting to promote your contract training services and create lasting impact. Participants will learn how to plan and produce podcasts that engage target audiences. *JD Shinn; Chemeketa Community College*

- **Roundtable. "Operational Excellence."** Behind every successful continuing education unit is a finely tuned operation. Strong processes and efficient staff practices are the backbone of successful continuing education operations. Yet many CE units struggle with redundant tasks, unclear procedures, and limited resources. In this interactive forum, participants will collaborate to identify process bottlenecks, share efficiency strategies, and develop practical improvements that save time and increase effectiveness. *Travette Webster; LERN*

3:15 pm - 4:15 pm Optional: Networking and Presenter Q&A

Thursday, March 5

8 am Breakfast networking (Included for host hotel guests)

9:00 am – 10:00 am Concurrent Sessions

- **"Big Impact, Small Budget: Tools That Save Time, Money, and Headaches."** Community education programs don't need big budgets or full design teams to market effectively. With the right tools, one person can streamline your workflow, create professional graphics, and connect with your audience. In this session, Isaac Brubaker shares how he simplified marketing by moving from Adobe InDesign to Canva, using Benchmark for email campaigns, and leveraging ChatGPT for polished course titles and descriptions. Discover how these tools save time, cut costs, and boost engagement so you can focus on building programs, not just promoting them. *Isaac Brubaker; Stevenson High School PREP*
- **Roundtable. "Engaging Lifelong Learners."** Attracting new learners is important — but retaining them is what sustains continuing education programs. In this collaborative forum, participants will explore how to create exceptional learner experiences that build loyalty, encourage re-enrollment, and strengthen long-term engagement. Attendees will dive into designing a first-class customer service experience for adult learners, moving one-time participants into ongoing, multi-course pathways, and building community and loyalty in digital and online learning environments. *Travette Webster & Brendan Marsello; LERN*

10:15 am – 11:30 am CLOSING SESSION

- **"Top 13 ways to Make LERN Best Practices Work."** LERN's best practices are proven strategies that help continuing and community education programs operate more efficiently, increase revenue, and better serve their learners. But how do you put them into action in ways that make a real difference? This session highlights the top 13 ways to implement LERN best practices effectively, with practical tips you can apply right away. Attendees will walk away with a clear roadmap for integrating these best practices into daily operations—whether in marketing, program development, customer service, or financial management. *Travette Webster, Brendan Marsello, Greg Marsello; LERN*