

Day 1: Wednesday, April 22

Start Time	End Time	Event	Location
11:00 am	12:00 pm	Mentorship Program Lunch Check-in	Foyer/Conference Hallway
12:00 pm	2:00 pm	Mentorship Program Lunch (Program Participants only)	Granite Ballroom
2:00 pm	2:30 pm	Group Photo (AWHE Board and Institutional Representatives)	Outdoor patio – weather permitting
2:30 pm	4:00 pm	Board of Directors Meeting	TBD
3:00 pm	5:00 pm	Hotel Check-in/Conference Registration Check-in	Foyer
4:30 pm	7:00 pm	Welcome Kick-Off Mixer (Spirit Night)* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • *Heavy appetizers/cash bar will be available. • Join us for a fun photo booth and line dancing! Line dancing begins at 5:30 pm. • Be sure to represent your college/institution by wearing spirit gear! 	Granite Ballroom
7:00 pm		Dinner on your own	

Day 2: Thursday, April 23

7:00 am	8:00 am	Conference Check-in Exhibitor Set-up	Foyer/Conference Hallway
8:00 am	8:30 am	Breakfast Welcome Address AWHE Board President – Dr. Nikki Hage, Dean of Students, Arizona Western College AWHE Board Vice President – Dr. Arezu Corella	Cottonwood/Clarkdale/Sedona Ballrooms
8:30 am	9:15 am	Keynote – Dr. Kate Rose “When No One Hands You the Map: Creating a Wild Path to Empathetic Leadership and Radical Kindness”	Cottonwood/Clarkdale/Sedona Ballrooms
9:15 am	9:30 am	Break/Transition	
9:30 am	10:20 am	Breakout 1 – Building Teams that Last – Cultivating Leadership in Student Development Meghan Paquette and Tania Sheldahl	Granite Mountain
		Breakout 2 – The Future of Leadership is Human: Women Leading with Purpose and Presence Through Change Christine Hazen Molina	Verde A
		Breakout 3 – Badass Parents: Juggling Kids, Careers, and Chaos Cassandra Ott Kocon and Erin Englund	Verde B
		Breakout 4 – Compassionate Leadership: Transformative Practices for Building Teams and	Prescott

		Organizational Culture Erin Paradise	
		Breakout 5 – A Challenge to Change: Building Empathetic Classrooms that Transform Students and Ourselves Christine Leavitt	Arizona
		Breakout 6 – Leading with Heart in the Age of AI Janet Nix and Ustadza White	Chino
10:20 am	10:35 am	Break/Transition	
10:35 am	11:25 am	Breakout 1 – From Fear to Flourish: Nurturing Courage through Heart-led Leadership Layla Tenney	Granite Mountain
		Breakout 2 – Supercommunicators in Higher Education: Mastering Connection and Clarity to Lead Through Challenge and Change Charmaine Chidester	Verde A
		Breakout 3 – Stronger Together: Partnering for Inclusive Student Success Laura Corr	Verde B
		Breakout 4 – Heartfelt Leadership Using the Languages of Appreciation Jessica Jones	Prescott
		Breakout 5 – From Purpose to Progress: Heart-led Career Planning in Higher Ed Chelse Thomas and Tracy DeSoto	Arizona
		Breakout 6– Unlocking Fun and Connection at Work: How to Make Your Professional Space More Engaging Chelsea Burke	Chino
11:25 am	11:40 am	Break/Transition	
11:40 am	1:10 pm	Lunch Program Mentorship Program	Cottonwood/Clarkdale/Sedona Ballrooms
1:10 pm	1:25 pm	Break/Transition	
1:25 pm	2:15 pm	Breakout 1 – Strategies for Difficult Conversations in Uncertain Times Laura Novotny and Jackie Rindone	Granite Mountain
		Breakout 2 – Mastering Leadership: Prioritizing Through the Glass Ball Theory Julie Koepp	Verde A
		Breakout 3 – Building Up Your First-Gen Week Programming Madyson Sklar, Fadumo Jaji-Aweis, and Idman Ibrahim	Verde B

		Breakout 4 – In the Middle of It All: Heart-led Leadership I Times of Transition Danielle Crosby	Prescott
		Breakout 5 – Beyond Access: Rethinking Higher Education for Immigrant Women Irina Del Genio	Arizona
		Breakout 6– Sweeping the Leg (or Not): Cobra Kai’s Lessons in Heart-led Leadership Sandra Brightwell	Chino
2:15 pm	2:30 pm	Break/Transition (Snack Break)	
2:30 pm	3:20 pm	Breakout 1 – Mindfulness and Well-Being Through Creative 3-D Art Helen Stephenson	Granite Mountain
		Breakout 2 – Challenging Othering: Resiliency and Persistence Among Latina Scholars Kenya Jimenez	Verde A
		Breakout 3 – From Head to Heart: Leading Transformational Change Janelle Chiasera	Verde B
		Breakout 4 – Your Are Enough: Anxiety is a Liar Debbie Chapman	Prescott
		Breakout 6– Training with the Heart: Building Faculty Development that Supports, Connects and Sustains Valerie Akbulut	Chino
3:20 pm	3:35 pm	Break/Transition	
3:35 pm	4:25 pm	AWHE Chapter Lead Round Table Hosted by AWHE Chapter Relations	Verde A
		Bingo	Granite Mountain
4:25 pm	5:00 pm	Happy Hour/Mixer	Foyer
5:00 pm	6:30 pm	Awards Dinner	Cottonwood/Clarkdale/Sedona Ballrooms
Day 3: Friday, April 24			
8:00 am	9:20 am	Buffett Breakfast	Cottonwood/Clarkdale/Sedona Ballrooms
8:30 am	9:20 am	Keynote – Tasha Telles “Creating an Ecology of Bravery: Challenging and Changing Standards”	Cottonwood/Clarkdale/Sedona Ballrooms
9:20 am	9:35 am	Break/Transition	
9:35 am	10:25 am	Breakout 1 – Fueling Your Passion – Writing Your	Granite Mountain

		Next Chapter Arezu Corella and Kasey Urquidez	
		Breakout 2 – Blooming Where You Are Planted: How to Bring Health and Wellness Into Our Daily Environment Caryn Isom Fraser and Asia Branham	Verde A
		Breakout 3 – Imposter Syndrome Reframed: From Self-Doubt to Superpower Heather Leavitt	Verde B
		Breakout 4 – Be An Informed Consumer of Healthcare: Understanding Health Information Regina Kraus	Prescott
		Breakout 5 – Three Chefs in the Kitchen: How We Enhanced Our Collaboration Through AI Kim Mathie and Amanda Harrell	Arizona
		Breakout 6– Rollercoaster of Change: Overcoming Obstacles with Understanding to Rise to Challenges Honna Moffatt	Chino
10:25 am	10:40 am	Break/Transition	
10:40 am	11:30 am	Breakout 1 – Designing Belonging: Tools for Connection in Higher Education Carly Croman	Granite Mountain
		Breakout 2 – Coaching with Heart: Facilitating Individual Learning and Organizational Change Kate Schmidt and Caron Sada	Verde A
		Breakout 3 – Leading from Within: The Power of Knowing and Growing Your Unique Leadership Style Peggy Francis	Verde B
		Breakout 4 – It’s Always Sunny in Academia? Workplace Bullying of Professional Staff in Higher Education Tara Burke	Prescott
		Breakout 5 – When You Don’t Agree: Heart-led Leadership in the Middle Jennifer Koehmstedt	Arizona
		Breakout 6– The Seed of HOPE Grows into WORTH Lynanne Lasota	Chino
11:30 am	11:45 am	Break/Transition	
11:45 am	1:00 pm	Lunch Announcements Raffle	Cottonwood/Clarkdale/Sedona Ballrooms

1:00 pm		Conference End/Departure	
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Session Descriptions

Thursday, April 23 9:30 AM Breakout Rooms

Breakout 1: Building Teams that Last – Cultivating Leadership in Student Development (Granite Mountain)

Presenters: Meghan Paquette and Tania Sheldahl

Attendees will learn approaches to mentoring emerging leaders, fostering collaboration across departments, and equipping staff with the leadership skills needed to support students holistically. Participants will leave with concrete ideas and tools to strengthen leadership capacity within their own institutions.

Breakout 2: The Future of Leadership is Human: Women Leading with Purpose and Presence Through Change (Verde A)

Presenters: Christine Hazen Molina PCC, SCPC, CCP, CCMMP

Women in higher education bring unique strengths to leadership — empathy, resilience, and the ability to create meaningful connections. Yet in times of rapid change, these strengths are often tested by competing pressures, systemic barriers, and heightened expectations. This interactive session equips women leaders at all levels with practical, heart-led strategies to navigate uncertainty while staying grounded in purpose and presence. Through Emotional Intelligence practices and real-world case examples, participants will discover how to harness their authentic leadership strengths to drive change, inspire confidence, and build thriving teams.

Breakout 3 – Badass Parents: Juggling Kids, Careers, and Chaos (Verde B)

Presenters: Cassandra Ott-Kocon and Erin Englund

Join us, two new parents, as we facilitate a conversation about the struggles and wins of raising little ones while working. During our time, we will lead discussions around returning to work, the importance of flexibility in the workplace, career progression or lack thereof, finding community, and more. Targeted advice and guidance will be collected from strong leaders in higher education in advance to be shared with the group. Attendees will walk away with strategies to both attain their career goals and prioritize their families.

Breakout 4: Compassionate Leadership: Transformative Practices for Building Teams and Organizational Culture (Prescott)

Presenter: Erin Paradise

This presentation is an interactive discussion that explores the science of compassion and how it applies to leadership. Participants will learn the benefits of compassion, strategies for building empathy and connection, and how leaders can influence roles, routines, networks, and culture. Together, we will set personal and professional actionable goals to build more compassionate teams and organizations to support ourselves, our colleagues, and our students.

Breakout 5: A Challenge to Change: Building Empathetic Classrooms that Transform Students and Ourselves (Arizona)

Presenters: Christine Leavitt and Valerie Akbulut

Discover how heart-led, empathetic classrooms can spark transformation for both students and educators. Walk away with fresh ideas to blend compassion, flexibility, and mentorship with practical strategies to balance rigor with empathy and reimagine teaching as heart-led leadership in action.

Breakout 6: Leading with Heart in the Age of AI (Chino)

Presenters: Ustadza White and Dr. Janet Nix

AI is everywhere, but what if it could strengthen how we lead with heart? This session blends lessons from the Authentic Leadership program with a personal journey of using AI to foster trust, transparency, and connection. Attendees will walk away with actionable ideas to bring authenticity and technology together in their own leadership.

Thursday: 10:35 am Breakout Rooms

Breakout 1: From Fear to Flourish: Nurturing Courage through Heart-led Leadership (Granite Mountain)

Presenter: Layla Tenney

In times of uncertainty, fear often shadows leadership — but it can also be the starting point for courage and growth. In this interactive session, participants will explore how to reframe fear, practice heart-led leadership through vulnerability and care, and create a personalized “Courage Compass” to guide their journey. Attendees will leave with renewed confidence, practical tools, and a vision for flourishing in their leadership roles.

Breakout 2: Supercommunicators in Higher Education: Mastering connection and clarity to lead through challenge and change (Verde A)

Presenter: Charmaine Chidester

Strong communication is more than transmitting information – it’s about creating understanding. Participants will leave with tools to improve listening, ask better questions, and turn everyday conversations into opportunities for collaboration and change.

Breakout 3: Stronger Together: Partnering for Inclusive Student Success (Verde B)

Presenters: Laura Corr

Participants will leave this workshop with actionable strategies to collaborate across campus, strengthen inclusivity, and address common challenges in supporting students with disabilities. They will gain practical tools for integrating accessibility into teaching and student services and be empowered to help cultivate a campus culture where every learner can thrive.

Breakout 4: Heartfelt Leadership Using the Languages of Appreciation (Prescott)

Presenters: Jessica Jones

Attendees will learn why showing appreciation at work is important before reviewing the 4 languages of appreciation at work and what each language can look like. Attendees will take a brief assessment to help identify their primary language of appreciation before discussing how to integrate the power of appreciation authentically into their work.

Breakout 4: Be An Informed Consumer of Healthcare: Understanding Health Information (Prescott)

Presenters: Regina Kraus and Sandra Brightwell

Attendees will learn how to best maintain their medical information, who can access medical information, and how to assist those that you care for.

Breakout 5: From Purpose to Progress: Heart-Led Career Planning in Higher Ed (Arizona)

Presenters: Chelse Thomas and Tracy DeSoto

This session invites participants to reimagine professional growth as a collaborative, values-driven process. Through storytelling, practical frameworks, and examples from academic program leadership, attendees will leave with tools to support career resilience and purpose-driven planning.

Breakout 6: Unlocking Fun and Connection at Work: How to Make Your Professional Space More Engaging (Chino)

Chelsea Burk

The content focuses on providing background as to the importance of bringing fun and connection to the workplace and real-life examples of the implementation of this idea. Attendees will be guided through developing a unique program tailored to their workspace, and leave with ready-to-use materials for initiatives like a Book Challenge, which they can adapt for their needs.

Thursday: 1:25 pm Breakout Rooms

Breakout 1: Strategies for Difficult Conversations in Uncertain Times (Granite Mountain)

Presenters: Laura Novotny and Jackie Rindone

Already difficult conversations can be even more of a difficulty when facing uncertain times. In this session, we will provide frameworks in Compassionate Directness, SPIKES protocol, and BRIGHT approaches to help reframe your approaches to the difficult conversations you have (whether with a colleague, supervisor, or leader). You will have the opportunity to apply these approaches to your own difficult conversations while acknowledging levels of

uncertainty and self-compassion.

Breakout 2: Mastering Leadership: Prioritizing Through the Glass Ball Theory (Verde A)

Presenter: Julie Koepp

In this session, attendees will learn how to prioritize effectively using the Glass Ball Theory, distinguishing between tasks that are “fragile” and those that are “rubber.” Leaders will gain practical tools to make smarter decisions, balance urgent with important tasks, and protect their key responsibilities while fostering growth.

Breakout 3: Building Up Your First-Gen Week Programming (Verde B)

Presenters: Madyson Sklar, Fadumo Haji-Aweis, and Idman Ibrahim

In this session, we will share how our students’ voices directly inform program design and how First-Gen Week has become a catalyst for cross-campus collaboration, breaking down siloes between advising, faculty, and student affairs. Participants will reflect on what is (or is not) happening at their own institutions to uplift first-generation students and consider ways to embed identity-affirming practices beyond symbolic gestures.

Breakout 4: In the Middle of It All: Heart-Led Leadership in Times of Transition (Prescott)

Presenter: Danielle Crosby

Middle managers are often “in the middle of it all” and stand at the crossroads of organizational change, tasked with implementing leadership’s vision while supporting staff through uncertainty. This session offers practical strategies for balancing both roles with clarity and compassion. Attendees will learn how to apply heart-led leadership to build trust, communicate effectively, and guide their teams through transitions with resilience.

Breakout 5: Beyond Access: Rethinking Higher Education for Immigrant Women (Arizona)

Presenter: Irina Del Genio

Immigrant women bring resilience, talent, grit, and diverse perspectives to U.S. higher education, yet they often face significant barriers on their path to success. This session will identify the most common obstacles immigrant women encounter in accessing and persisting in higher education and showcase examples of effective college programs and partnerships that promote academic achievement and workforce integration. Participants will leave with actionable ideas for building or enhancing support systems- such as language programs, childcare, advising, and mentoring- within their own institutional contexts.

Breakout 6: Sweeping the Leg (or Not): Cobra Kai’s Lessons in Heart-Led Leadership (Chino)

Presenter: Sandra Brightwell

Learn about the journey of leadership from the lens of good mentorship and bad mentorship as illustrated in the TV series Cobra Kai. How can we learn from the Mr. Miyagi's and the John Kreese's of the world? How do we gain and maintain balance in our lives as did Daniel-san?

Thursday: 2:35 pm Breakout Rooms

Breakout 1: Mindfulness and Well-Being Through Creative 3-D Art (Granite Mountain)

Presenter: Helen Stephenson

This session explores the benefits of creativity by transforming old jewelry into unique 3-D artworks within picture frames. Hands-on activities can reduce stress, enhance focus, and promote mindfulness and self-expression.

Attendees will leave with a completed artwork and strategies for using creativity as a tool for emotional well-being and stress management. No prior artistic experience is required; all materials will be provided. Participants are encouraged to bring jewelry pieces of personal significance.

Breakout 2: Challenging Othering: Resiliency and Persistence Among Latina Scholars (Verde A)

Presenter: Kenya Jimenez

This session will explore ways Latina Scholars navigate experiences of othering in the academy whether as graduate students, staff, or faculty. These experience may look like exclusion, lack of mentorship, and academic hazing. Discussion will center around how cultural identity and family values in the Latino Community are sources of resiliency that highlight how Latina Scholars challenge systemic barriers while cultivating leadership capacity.

Breakout 3: From Head to Heart: Leading Transformational Change (Verde B)

Presenter: Janelle M. Chiasera, PhD

In this session, you will discover how the "see-feel-change" approach differs from traditional "analyze-think-change" methods, and why the former is essential for leading in uncertain times. Together, we'll apply Kotter's Eight-Stage Change Model to real-world contexts, explore practical strategies for inspiring emotional commitment, and reflect on ways to strengthen your own heart-led leadership. You'll leave with concrete action steps to guide change with authenticity, compassion, and resilience.

Breakout 4: You are enough; Anxiety is a liar (Prescott)

Presenter: Dr. Debbie Chapman

The content presented will center around showing women that we all struggle with the same fear and anxiety of not being enough. It doesn't matter how successful a person is on the outside, the inner woman still feels like she has to prove herself over and over and over again. It is time to grow past the fear of not being enough and lean into the truth that we can do it and we can lead with confidence because we are enough.

Breakout 6: Training with Heart: Building Faculty Development that Supports, Connects, and Sustains (Chino)

Presenter: Valerie Akbulut

This session explores how heart-led leadership can reshape faculty development into meaningful, supportive training that fosters connection and well-being no matter the teaching format. Attendees will learn practical strategies to design flexible, accessible programs that help faculty feel valued, engaged, and ready to grow.

Friday: 9:35 am Breakout Rooms

Breakout 1: Fueling Your Passion—Writing Your Next Chapter (Granite Mountain)

Presenters: Dr. Arezu Corella and Dr. Kasey Urquidez

Our session will share authentic stories of resilience and reinvention through career shifts, offering strategies to navigate transitions with courage, compassion, and purpose. Participants will explore how to align their next chapter with their values, build supportive networks, and create a mini action plan to prepare for and embrace change. Attendees will leave with practical tools to reframe change into opportunities for growth and to lead themselves with heart in uncertain times.

Breakout 2: Blooming where you are planted: How to bring health and wellness into our daily environment. (Verde A)

Presenters: Caryn Isom Fraser and Asia Branham

Attendees will acquire and synthesize skills and techniques designed for developing and enhancing daily health, using fun and informative activities that also address important mental and physical health. Attendees will also participate in play and wellness activities they can personally use at work and in all parts of life.

Breakout 3: Imposter Syndrome Reframed: From Self-Doubt to Superpower (Verde B)

Presenter: Heather Leavitt

Imposter syndrome doesn't have to hold you back — it can be a source of strength. This interactive session explores how to reframe self-doubt as a driver of empathy, growth, and authentic leadership. Participants will gain practical strategies to shift their mindset and learn mentoring approaches to support others navigating similar

challenges.

Breakout 4: Be An Informed Consumer of Healthcare: Understanding Health Information (Prescott)

Presenter: Regina Kraus

Attendees will learn how to best maintain their medical information, who can access medical information, and how to assist those that you care for.

Breakout 5: Three Chefs in the Kitchen: How We Enhanced Our Collaboration through AI (Arizona)

Presenters: Kim Mathie and Amanda Harrell

Two university professionals discovered that using AI didn't diminish their collaboration—it enhanced it. By treating AI as a creative partner while drawing on each other's complementary strengths (marketing expertise + AI implementation knowledge), they created frameworks that help resource-strapped teams navigate uncertainty. Learn how collaborative leadership in the age of AI means humans working better together, and how you can model this approach in your own work.

Breakout 6: Rollercoaster of Change: Overcoming Obstacles with Understanding to Rise to Challenges (Chino)

Presenter: Hanna Moffatt

Change can feel like a wild ride, but learning how to meet teams where they are on that journey makes all the difference. In this session, attendees will explore practical strategies to recognize and support team members' responses to change, foster open communication, and guide them through obstacles with empathy and intention. By the end, participants will leave with actionable tools to lead with heart, strengthen team resilience, and rise together to meet new challenges.

Friday: 9:35 am Breakout Rooms

Breakout 2: Coaching with Heart: Facilitating Individual Learning and Organizational Change (Verde A)

Presenters: Kate Schmidt and Caron Sada

During this interaction session, participants will be able to differentiate between the terms Management and Leadership; develop coaching skills using the Art and Science of Culture Change framework, allowing the participant to reflect on their leadership styles and their roles in fostering organizational change.

Breakout 3: Leading from Within: The Power of Knowing and Growing Your Unique Leadership Style (Verde B)

Presenter: Peggy Francis

This interactive workshop on Servant Leadership emphasizes balancing empathy and accountability. Participants will explore their leadership styles, identify growth areas, and develop action plans to strengthen relationships and increase outcomes in personal and professional contexts. The session includes a leadership quiz, personal action plan, group discussion, meta-cognitive exercises, and a deep dive into areas that block us from truly stepping into our power.

Breakout 4: It's Always Sunny in Academia? Workplace Bullying of Professional Staff in Higher Education (Prescott)

Presenter: Tara Burke

Attendees will learn about the prevalence and impacts of workplace bullying on professional (university) staff based on research conducted at an R1 institution in the American Southwest. Attendees will come to understand why workplace bullying is prevalent in HEIs, the structures that exist to “manage” workplace bullying, and learn how some bullied employees survived their ordeals and came to thrive at work. Lastly, attendees will hear several recommendations for practice at the individual, departmental, and institutional levels.

Breakout 6: The Seed of HOPE Grows Into WORTH (Chino)

Presenter: Lynanne Lasota

This session guides each participant through a path of hopelessness to find ways of bringing hope to yourself and others. The goal of this session is to design a plan that works for you to find a lasting escape from the cycle of hopelessness.