



AMERICAN ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **Higher Education Veteran Dr. Linda M. Bleicken Named President of the American Academic Leadership Institute**

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (October 28, 2016)** – The American Academic Leadership Institute (AALI), an organization dedicated to the development and support of leadership in private and public higher education, announced today that Linda M. Bleicken will become the Institute’s next president, effective July 1, 2017. AALI partners with the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) to prepare future presidents through the Executive Leadership Academy (ELA) and future vice presidents through the Senior Leadership Academy (SLA) and the Becoming a Provost Academy (BAPA).

Currently in her eighth year as president of Armstrong State University in Savannah, Georgia, Bleicken brings a wealth of higher education experience to her new position. “After conducting an extensive search, we are excited to have Dr. Bleicken join AALI. She brings with her a depth of understanding needed to continue to identify, train, and equip future campus leaders. Her enthusiasm for leadership development will be critical to AALI’s efforts to meet the future leadership needs of American higher education,” stated Dana Hoyt, Chair of the AALI Board of Directors.

CIC President Richard Ekman said of Bleicken’s appointment, “The issues that colleges and universities will face in the years ahead require imaginative and courageous leadership and Linda Bleicken, through her extensive experience, is exactly the right person to lead AALI’s efforts to prepare the next generation of higher education’s leaders.

“This is a time of unprecedented change, a condition that will continue to define the leadership landscape of higher education. Linda Bleicken has the knowledge, expertise and experience to effectively lead AALI in this environment,” added AASCU President Muriel Howard.

An accomplished leader, Bleicken has served as the president of Armstrong State University, a public four-year institution in Savannah, Georgia, since 2009, when she became the first female

president since the university's founding in 1935. "I am delighted to join the American Academic Leadership Institute and to have the opportunity to give back to a profession that has given me so much over the years," said Bleicken. "The need for effective leadership in higher education has never been greater."

As president, she spearheaded the creation of a new strategic plan that reaffirmed Armstrong's commitment to student success and established key goals for the institution. In addition, she oversaw a \$100 million new construction and renovation project.

Bleicken will replace retiring AALI president Thomas Kepple, who has led the organization since his retirement in 2013 from the presidency of Juniata College in Pennsylvania. "I'm delighted to have Linda Bleicken succeed me as president. Her experience as a nationally known and enormously successful president at Armstrong tied with her teaching experience in management and an engaging personality make her the perfect choice to lead AALI," said Kepple.

Prior to joining Armstrong, Bleicken developed her leadership skills at Georgia Southern University in Statesboro, Georgia, where she served in various roles for 19 years, including as provost and vice president for academic affairs, vice president for student affairs and enrollment management, and associate dean of the College of Business Administration.

Active on state and national levels, Bleicken serves on the board of directors for AASCU, where she represents Georgia on the Council of State Representatives and is a member of the legislative team that advocates for national education policy initiatives, such as student financial aid and funding for higher education. She also serves on the board of directors of the Millennium Leadership Institute, headquartered in Washington, DC and recently completed a four-year term on the NCAA Division II President's Council. She is the former chair of the board of directors of the Peach Belt Conference and past president of the Ossabaw Island Foundation.

Originally from Iowa, Bleicken earned a PhD and MS in management from Georgia State University in Atlanta, as well as a bachelor's degree in marketing, magna cum laude, from Georgia State University.

#### **ABOUT THE AMERICAN ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE:**

Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the American Academic Leadership Institute (AALI) is committed to the broad development and support of leadership in higher education by creating and implementing programs and other forms of assistance that enable academic leaders in various administrative positions to be successful in their roles and to advance to higher positions of responsibility. AALI prepares leaders for private and public higher education through programs operated in partnership with CIC and AASCU. The Becoming a Provost Academy (BAPA), with AASCU, and the Senior Leadership Academy (SLA), with CIC, prepare mid-level administrators for vice presidencies. The Executive Leadership Academy (ELA), conducted with both AASCU and CIC, prepares vice presidents for presidencies. Since its inception in 2009, more than 50 of ELA's participants have been appointed as presidents of both private and public

institutions. AALI is supported by Academic Search, Inc. For more information, visit [americanali.org](http://americanali.org).

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