



2026 UEDA Washington Conference

April 15-16, 2026

Virginia Tech Executive Briefing Center, Arlington, VA

Day 1: April 15, 2026

9:00AM-10:00AM	Welcome Keynote
10:00AM-10:15AM	Break
10:15AM-11:00AM	<p>National Priorities, Local Impact: A Conversation with Federal Innovation Leaders</p> <p>Erwin Gianchandani, Assistant Director of the Directorate for Technology, Innovation and Partnerships National Science Foundation</p> <p>This fireside chat features federal leaders at the forefront of the nation's technology and economic strategy. Participants will gain insights into the current and upcoming initiatives from the NSF and other federal agencies, with a specific focus on strengthening the synergy between federal research funding, university talent, and regional industry needs.</p>
11:00AM-11:45AM	<p>Reciprocity in Action: Solving Real Challenges Together</p> <p>Economic development leaders in higher education are navigating increasingly complex challenges — advancing industry partnerships, strengthening commercialization outcomes, aligning with institutional leadership, and responding to shifting regional priorities. Many of these issues are shared across campuses, yet they are often addressed in isolation.</p> <p>This interactive session uses a structured reciprocity ring exercise to surface real challenges from participants and activate the collective experience of the room. Attendees will have the opportunity to present a current issue they are facing and receive targeted insight, ideas, and connections from peers who have navigated similar situations.</p>



	<p>Designed as a highly engaging working session, this format emphasizes practical problem-solving and professional exchange rather than presentation. Participants should come prepared with a specific challenge or opportunity and expect to leave with actionable guidance, new relationships, and expanded capacity to support fellow members long after the conference concludes.</p>
11:45AM-12:15PM	Lunch (provided)
12:15PM-1:00PM	<p>Economic Development Partnerships in Action: The City of Alexandria and Virginia Tech Innovation Campus</p> <p>Stephanie Landrum, President & CEO, Alexandria Economic Development Partnership</p> <p>Located in the Greater Washington, D.C. innovation corridor, the Virginia Tech Innovation Campus represents a deliberate effort to integrate graduate education, industry engagement, and place-based economic strategy. In partnership with the City of Alexandria, the campus is advancing shared goals around technology commercialization, workforce development, and long-term economic growth.</p> <p>Session participants will explore how the city and university structured their partnership and governance approach, strategies for aligning academic program growth with regional industry needs, and coordinated investments in infrastructure, placemaking, and innovation assets.</p>
1:00PM-1:15PM	Break
1:15PM-2:00PM	<p>From Outcomes to Influence: A Masterclass in Impact Storytelling</p> <p>Strong results alone do not secure long-term support—especially in shifting legislative and funding environments. University economic development leaders must translate outcomes into institutional influence that endures beyond a single initiative or budget cycle.</p> <p>In this masterclass, communications strategist Denise Kennedy from Anthology Communications introduces a practical framework for moving beyond dashboards to uncover the strategic narrative within complex metrics.</p>



	<p>Participants will learn how to prioritize key decision-makers, align reporting with state and institutional strategy, and communicate impact in ways that strengthen credibility.</p> <p>Jessica Gnad of Kansas State University shares how K-State aligned its messaging with the Kansas Board of Regents and the Kansas Department of Commerce around a shared statewide strategy. The reporting discipline, partnership governance, and cross-sector alignment developed through that work positioned K-State as a trusted implementation partner in subsequent statewide efforts.</p> <p>This session demonstrates how disciplined impact storytelling and strategic alignment build durable institutional influence, equipping universities to lead, adapt, and maintain relevance across changing political and funding landscapes.</p>
<p>2:00PM-2:45PM</p>	<p>Measuring What Matters: Using IMPLAN to Strengthen Your Economic Impact Story</p> <p>Universities are increasingly expected to demonstrate their economic contribution with clarity and credibility. From legislative briefings to board presentations and community engagement, being able to quantify institutional impact is essential to advancing strategy and support.</p> <p>This session will feature IMPLAN and explore how institutions can use economic impact modeling to measure, interpret, and communicate their role in regional growth. The discussion will examine practical applications of IMPLAN data, including how to assess direct, indirect, and induced effects; evaluate research and capital investments; and translate findings into messages that resonate with policymakers, industry partners, and institutional leadership.</p> <p>Participants will gain insight into how peer institutions are using impact analysis to inform decision-making, support funding conversations, and strengthen their economic development narrative. Whether your campus already conducts impact studies or is considering launching one, this session</p>



	will provide practical guidance on using data strategically rather than simply reporting it.
2:45PM-3:00PM	Break
3:00PM-4:00PM	<p>From Blueprint to Reality: Help Us Re-Imagine a University Center Program</p> <p>EDA cut funding to the University Center program last summer. But, it doesn't mean we should accept the termination without deliberation. We've prepared a concept plan for a newly imagined University Center program designed to leverage and more sustained impact. We need your voice in helping us to refine the idea and to build advocacy for reinstatement of the funding.</p> <p>Join us for an interactive roundtable discussion where we'll collaborate on the ideas and rebuild it for the future. This focus group discussion will allow you to help us design "What's Next" for university center funding and to help us consider ways to leverage resources from other federal agencies to make the program more impactful. We'll dive into the proposed revisions for the program, debate the new program structures, and brainstorm how to better serve our campus community. The draft concept paper will be available to any conference registrants.</p> <p>What to Expect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Breakdown: A quick-fire summary of the current white paper. • The Deep Dive: Facilitated breakout groups to tackle specific program revisions. • The Synthesis: A collective "pitch" session to refine the Center's new direction. <p>Facilitator: Ken Poole, UEDA Executive Director</p> <p>View the concept paper excerpt</p>
4:00PM	Adjourn



Day 2: April 16, 2026

<p>9:00AM-10:00AM</p>	<p>Federal Policy & the Innovation Economy: What University Leaders Need to Know Now</p> <p>Megan McKeown, Director of Governmental Affairs at the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU)</p> <p>As federal priorities shift and Congress reexamines the role of research institutions in national competitiveness, university economic development leaders must stay closely attuned to the policy environment shaping industry partnerships, technology commercialization, and regional innovation strategies.</p> <p>Join us for a timely briefing on the current political landscape in Washington. This session will explore how lawmakers and congressional staff are viewing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University–industry collaboration • Technology transfer and intellectual property • Federally funded research and commercialization outcomes • Regional innovation, workforce alignment, and domestic competitiveness <p>Participants will gain insight into how higher education institutions are being positioned in federal conversations around economic growth, national security, supply chains, and technological leadership — and what that means for campus-based economic development strategy.</p> <p>The session will include time for discussion and audience questions, offering an opportunity to better align institutional messaging and engagement with current congressional priorities.</p> <p><i>**Tell us – what priorities and questions does your institution have that would be helpful to explore in this session? Share more here:</i></p> <p>https://forms.office.com/r/4ND4hNNYpb</p>
<p>10:00AM-10:15AM</p>	<p>Break</p>



<p>10:15AM-11:00AM</p>	<p>Federal Landscape Town Hall: Peer Exchange on Policy, Partnerships, and Positioning</p> <p>Following the policy briefing and before our session on strategic positioning, this facilitated town hall creates space for candid conversation among peers navigating similar pressures and opportunities.</p> <p>This discussion is designed for open exchange — what are you hearing from your federal delegation? Where are you seeing shifts in tone, oversight, or expectations? How are policy conversations affecting your research enterprise, industry partnerships, commercialization strategy, or regional engagement efforts?</p> <p>Rather than a presentation, this session invites practitioners to share observations, concerns, and emerging practices in real time. It offers an opportunity to compare notes across institutions, identify common themes, and surface practical approaches to engaging policymakers and stakeholders effectively.</p> <p>Come prepared to contribute perspective, ask questions, and learn from colleagues operating at the intersection of higher education, innovation, and federal policy.</p>
<p>11:00AM-11:45AM</p>	<p>Positioning University Impact in Today’s Federal Landscape</p> <p>The federal policy environment is shifting, and institutions advancing research, industry partnerships, and regional growth must understand how their work is being interpreted in Washington.</p> <p>This session will provide a grounded overview of the current federal landscape and what is driving priorities across the Administration and Capitol Hill. The discussion will focus on how university-based economic development, technology commercialization, workforce strategy, and industry collaboration align with those priorities — and where messaging gaps may exist.</p> <p>Participants will gain practical insight into how to frame their institution’s work in ways that resonate with policymakers, how to anticipate common questions or concerns, and how to communicate impact with clarity and credibility. Designed for leaders engaging federal decision-makers, this session will</p>



	emphasize strategy, positioning, and effective outreach in a complex policy environment.
11:45AM-12:00PM	Closing
12:00PM	Adjourn

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