

Dr. Carol S. Spalding selected as Top President of the Year in Higher Education by IAOTP

The International Association of Top Professionals (IAOTP) will honor Dr. Carol S. Spalding at their Annual Awards Gala in NYC at the Plaza Hotel

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, August 27, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Dr.](#)

[Carol S. Spalding](#), President of Rowan-Cabarrus Community College (Rowan-Cabarrus) in North Carolina, was recently selected as Top President of the Year in Higher Education for 2026 by the International Association of Top Professionals (IAOTP) for her outstanding leadership, dedication, and commitment to the industry. The International Association of Top Professionals (IAOTP), a leading global professional organization known for its prestigious annual [awards gala](#) and exclusive vetting process, honors only the most accomplished and influential professionals each year.



Being selected as an award recipient within the IAOTP is a prestigious achievement; only a select group of distinguished professionals earn this elite membership each year. Honorees are chosen for their professional excellence, academic accomplishments, leadership capabilities, longevity in their field, meaningful affiliations, and contributions to their communities. All recipients are invited to attend IAOTP's annual awards gala at the end of the year, a celebration dedicated to honoring the achievements of these top professionals.

www.iaotp.com/award-gala

With over four decades of experience in the industry, Dr. Spalding has certainly proven herself an expert in the field. As a dynamic, results driven leader, Dr. Spalding is the President of Rowan-Cabarrus Community College (Rowan-Cabarrus) in North Carolina, where she

prominently flourishes as a leader in higher education and workforce development. Since 2008, she has set impressive goals and executed evolving plans that have metamorphosed the institution's impact on its community. Among her most notable accomplishments have been the successful passage of four bond issues, which provided critical resources for future growth and innovation on four campuses. In addition, she advanced Rowan-Cabarrus Community College as a leading pilot site for a statewide enterprise resource planning project demonstrating the institution's expertise and commitment to the excellence in technology integration. The College's vigorous online program was honored as the best online program in 2026 by the national Instructional Technology Council, an affiliated council of the American Association of Community Colleges during Dr. Spalding's tenure.



Prior to her current role, Dr. Spalding served as the first president of the Open Campus at Florida Community College at Jacksonville, now Florida State College at Jacksonville (FSCJ) from 1986 to 2008. During this period, she was instrumental in expanding access to education through development and expansion in online learning and furthering workforce programs that addressed the diverse and changing needs of adult learners with a focus on associate degree completion for the US Navy. She also served as interim college president. Dr. Spalding's earlier roles at FSCJ included instructor, and coordinator of grant funded programs from 1975 to 1978. As the Director of Continuing Education between 1978 and 1986, she led various programs, such as developing a speakers' series of remarkable educators to address emerging issues and community engagement, inspiring students, faculty members and the community alike.

Areas of expertise include, but are not limited to higher education, leadership development, economic development, community outreach, program development, curriculum and instructional design, teaching, staff development, strategic planning, organizational development, conflict resolution, grant writing, research, and student development.

Prior to her career, Dr. Spalding earned her Bachelor of Arts in International Relations from the University of Louisville followed by her Master's Degree in Human Resource Management from Pepperdine University. In 2003, she earned her Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership from Columbia University.

Throughout her illustrious career, Dr. Spalding has received many awards and accolades and has been recognized worldwide for her accomplishments. In both Florida and North Carolina, she and her teams received Partner of the Year honors for collaborative public-private initiatives: the Florida Department of Education's 2003–2004 "Florida's Best" Award for the Jacksonville Visioning project, and the North Carolina Community College System's 2019 Partner of the Year Award for the successful funding and completion of the Dr. Carol S. Spalding Advanced Technology Building at the North Carolina Research Campus, in partnership with the county, city, a bond issue and private philanthropy. This year she will be considered for The Empowered Woman Award and a feature in TIP (Top Industry Professionals) Magazine. She will be honored at IAOTP's annual awards gala at the iconic Plaza Hotel in New York City next December for her selection of Top President the Year in Higher Education for 2026.

In addition to a successful career, Dr. Spalding is an active member of numerous professional and civic organizations including the American Association of Community Colleges, the North Carolina Community College President's Association, and Rotary Club member. She served on the Board of Directors of the American Association of Community Colleges. As a leader, Dr. Spalding was the Chair of the National Association of Community Leadership Organizations and President of the League of Women Voters in Jacksonville. From 1983 to 2008, Dr. Spalding's produced and hosted her own cable television program "Politics is Your Business," with the League of Women Voters. The show promoted dialogue on policy issues affecting the community.

The President of the International Association of Top Professionals (IAOTP), Stephanie Cirmi, stated: "Choosing Dr. Spalding for this honor was an easy decision for our panel to make. She is inspirational, influential, and a true visionary and thought leader. We cannot wait to meet her and celebrate her accomplishments at this year's gala."

Looking back, Dr. Spalding attributes her success to a sense of curiosity, a talent for hiring key staff, learning systems thinking, marrying well, and to the mentors she had along the way. When not working, she enjoys spending time planning and traveling to new international destinations and visiting family around the country. In the future, she remains committed to the future of community colleges and to providing growth opportunities for others within the field. Her advice to aspiring professionals is to build a network of professional friends, pursue professional development, stay open to possibilities, persevere through challenges and be willing to change course in pursuit of purpose and fulfillment.

For more information please visit: <https://www.drcarolsspalding.com/>

About IAOTP

The International Association of Top Professionals (IAOTP) is an international boutique networking organization that selects the world's most distinguished and accomplished professionals across a wide range of industries. These elite professionals are provided

opportunities to collaborate, share insights, serve as keynote speakers, and inspire others within their fields. Membership is not open to the general public. Candidates must be personally invited by the President or nominated by an esteemed honorary member following a brief interview.

IAOTP's experts have provided thousands of top-tier professionals worldwide with the recognition and credibility they deserve, helping them strengthen their personal brands and expand their influence. The organization prides itself on being a one-of-a-kind boutique network that handpicks only the most exceptional individuals and brings them together on a premier platform designed to foster meaningful connections and professional growth. IAOTP remains one of the most elite and highly respected professional recognition organizations in the world. For more information on IAOTP, please visit

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