



NATIONAL CENTER FOR  
FAMILY PHILANTHROPY

## **Consensus and Complexity: A Retreat for New Family Foundation CEOs**

**February 11-13, St. Pete Beach, Florida**

### **WORKING DRAFT AGENDA**

*Serving in the leadership staffing role for a family foundation can be one of the best jobs you'll ever have, but it is not without challenges and complications. This first-of-its-kind NCFP peer retreat provides a unique opportunity for new family foundation CEOs to reflect on the initial months and years of their service, connect with a community of dedicated colleagues and explore actionable strategies to lead a successful philanthropic effort.*

### **Tuesday, February 11**

**2:45pm Registration and check-in**

**3:00–4:30pm Opening and Introductions**

- Goals and structure of the retreat
- Participant share their personal stories and background, describing their current situation and reflecting on the question: “What is keeping you up at night?”

**4:30–5:30pm Planning for Our Time Together**

- Feedback from the participant questionnaire: what did you tell us your priorities are?
- Feedback from the introductions: What did we hear in these stories?
- Where do we as a group want to spend our time the next two days?

**5:30–7:30pm A Dinner Conversation with Veteran CEOs**

New NCFP President Nick Tedesco will lead an interactive and candid conversation with a panel of three veteran family foundation CEOs discussing their personal experiences and lessons learned, including both “a ha” moments and biggest mistakes. Panelists will reflect and react to challenges and situations referenced in the opening introductions, and will be available as faculty throughout the retreat to brainstorm solutions and options for managing difficult situations and family dynamics.

*Speakers:*

- Nick Tedesco, President and CEO, National Center for Family Philanthropy (moderator)
- Alexa Cortes Culwell, Founder/Managing Director, Open Impact, Founding (and former) CEO, Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation, Former CEO, Stupski Foundation
- Jim Parsons, President Emeritus, The Brinson Foundation
- David Weitnauer, President, R. Howard Dobbs, Jr. Foundation

**7:30pm                      The Soul and Spirit of Family Philanthropy**

Over wine and cheese, participants will reflect on the dinner conversation and discuss the three advance readings from NCFP's report, *The Family Foundation CEO: Crafting Consensus out of Complexity*. What concepts and lessons resonated most strongly with you? Were there roles or activities described in the readings that you find challenging in your foundation?

**8:30pm                      Adjourn**

Before adjourning for the night, consider taking a walk on the beach or continuing the conversation over cocktails at the hotel lounge.

## **Wednesday, February 12**

**7:30–8:30am              Breakfast Available (no agenda)**

**8:30–10am                Charting the Key Characteristics of the CEO Journey**

Retreat co-facilitators Ginny Esposito and Nick Tedesco will recap the previous day's discussions and provide observations on the key roles and responsibilities of CEOs at different stages of development. Mentors and participants will be invited to share their own observations and challenges.

**10:00–10:30am        Networking Break**

**10:30–12:30pm        Skill Building Session #1**

Topics will be designed based on the Participant Questionnaire but may include family dynamics and facilitation, governance, working with your board chair, coming to consensus, managing staff, working with a diverse board, etc.

**12:30–1:45pm        Networking Lunch: Key Themes from morning conversation**

Faculty mentors will lead small-group discussions on each of key themes/challenges discussed in the CEO Journey discussion from the morning.

**1:45–3:30pm            Break and Networking**

Catch up on pressing emails, continue a conversation with a colleague at the patio or pool, or take a walk on the beach (or all of the above!).

**3:30–5:30pm Skill Building Session #2**

Topics will be designed based on the Participant Questionnaire but may include family dynamics and facilitation, governance, working with your board chair, coming to consensus, managing staff, working with a diverse board, etc.

**5:30–6:00pm Cocktails and Networking**

**6:00–7:30pm Dinner Speaker: Leadership in Family Philanthropy**

Whether within your family, staff, or community, leadership is at the heart of the family foundation CEO role. Finding ways to continue to grow as a leader while managing stress and avoiding burnout is an essential but difficult skill. Our dinner speaker will share tips and suggestions—and inspiration for your personal journey.

**7:30pm Adjourn**

Before adjourning for the night, consider taking a walk on the beach or continuing the conversation over cocktails at the hotel lounge.

## **Thursday, February 13**

**7:30–8:30am Breakfast Available**

**8:30–9:00am Unfinished Business: What Else is on Your Mind?**

The group will identify areas that have not been adequately explored, and/or topics that they'd like to continue discussing in small groups.

**9:00–11:00am Breakout Groups**

Faculty mentors will lead small-group discussions on newly identified issues or to revisit conversations from the previous day needing further discussion.

**11am–12:00pm Next Steps: Heading Back Home**

Participants will develop and share personal action plans that they can take back home to their work: What are the three biggest lessons you have learned from this retreat? What are three practices or strategies you will commit to implementing when you return home? What other resources do you need and within the group would you like to call upon for future guidance or peer support?

**12:00–1:30pm Lunch and Networking/Optional NCFP Webinar**

Participants are invited to continue conversations with peers over lunch or to join a group viewing of NCFP's February webinar, "[Family Philanthropy: Tying Grantmaking Practices to Shared Values.](#)"