



UTAH SYSTEM OF
HIGHER EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TAB F

September 17, 2021

New Leadership Academy: Building Capacity in the USHE System for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

As the Utah Board of Higher Education and system leaders impact over 221,000 students and 42,000 employees, the higher education system has the unique responsibility to ensure its leaders, and its higher education leaders of tomorrow, lead from a place of equity to ensure opportunities exist for all Utahns, especially those from historically marginalized groups.

Thanks to the collective leadership and vision of the University of Utah's Vice President for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Dr. Mary Ann Villareal, Dr. Amy Fulton, and Assistant Commissioner for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Laís Martinez, comes an opportunity for further strengthening USHE EDI capacity by providing opportunities for investment in the system and its leaders through the New Leadership Academy (NLA) leadership development program.

About New Leadership Academy

NLA changes the expectations that surround leaders, leadership, and leadership development across higher education. The learning strategies informing the program's curriculum are premised on a recognition that the demographic, democratic, and discursive foundations on which modern higher education has been built are changing. As colleges and universities respond to these environments, leaders will require specialized knowledge and tools, as well as the personal and professional courage to be effective in what are clearly complex and highly contested environments.¹

NLA is a partnership between the University of Utah and the [*American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education*](#). Prior to coming to the University of Utah, NLA was hosted by the [*National Forum on Higher Education for the Public Good*](#) at the University of Michigan.

Goals

By providing systemwide leadership development programming centering EDI, this effort will expand leadership capacity in higher education in Utah so that issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion are routinely and systemically considered by higher education leaders, ultimately resulting in a transformation of the system to best serve all students, staff, and faculty, especially those who come from

¹ <https://diversity.utah.edu/nla/>
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historically marginalized groups. This leadership development work will add depth to the lens and landscape from which college leaders are operating, to center equity, diversity, and inclusion.

These goals will be achieved by:

1. Curating NLA curriculum to meet the specific leadership development needs and timeframe of the Utah Board of Higher Education members. Curriculum delivery will take place in a hybrid curriculum delivery model of virtual presentations and intensive in-person sessions, including reflections, workshops, and case study simulations.
2. Delivering NLA curriculum to other relevant leadership groups within the state system, which could include the Utah System of Higher Education senior leaders, Council of Presidents, and groups of institutional leadership teams across the state, starting with technical colleges.
3. Documenting the collaborative process from design to delivery to create a model of best practice to be shared with other states.

Benefits of leveraging the NLA curriculum

Using the NLA curriculum to encourage the development of an equity lens in Utah's higher education leaders would significantly support the work of the institutional Chief Diversity Officers *and* deeply-committed campus EDI practitioners at all levels—including Chief Student Affairs Officers, Chief Academic Officers, financial aid directors, multicultural office directors, Dream Center directors, institutional presidents, and so many others—who have often had to operate from the margins due to barriers inherent in the system, devoting countless hours to EDI work due to their unwavering commitment to supporting students.

Leveraging the NLA curriculum would also support the Board and leadership in the Commissioner's office by providing nationally-recognized curriculum on the ways in which the Board and Commissioner's office can tangibly create greater opportunity for USHE's students, staff, and faculty by expanding the four levers of the Board (funding, research/data, advocacy/collaboration, and policy/audit) to the following equity-centered approach (inspired by the [USHE Equity Lens Framework](#)):

- a. *Stakeholder & Board/System-driven* Advocacy/Collaboration
- b. *Equity-designed* Research/Data
- c. *Inclusive & Anti-Racist* Policy/Audit
- d. Funding

Commissioner's Recommendation

The Commissioner recommends the Board prioritize and support the partnership with the New Leadership Academy and the University of Utah to provide EDI leadership development to system leaders.