24 Emerging UA Leaders Selected for Academic Leadership Institute

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The newest cohort of the Academic Leadership Institute includes 24 of the UA’s future campus leaders. The 2017-2018 fellows [1] will start sessions in August.

The Academic Leadership Institute, a partnership between the Office of the Provost [2] and the Division of Human Resources [3], is a yearlong professional development program in which current and emerging campus leaders participate in discussions and workshops to help them develop their leadership skills.

The eighth cohort of the Academic Leadership Institute includes academic and administrative department heads, associate and assistant deans, and other emerging leaders, who represent many campus departments, colleges and offices like the School of Anthropology, the Eller College of Management, Steward Observatory, Residence Life and more.

Nicholas Sweeton, executive director of Residence Life and University Housing, and part of the newest cohort, thinks that being part of the program will help him align the goals of the area that he oversees with the goals of the overall University.

"I believe ALI will help me understand in greater detail the forces that shape the University, and in turn influence how decisions are made," Sweeton said. "ALI will also help me build my reputation on campus and form deeper connections with other participants."

Marla Franco, director of Assessment and Research in the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, Academic Initiatives and Student Success, is currently leading the efforts towards preparing the UA to achieve the federally recognized status of Hispanic Serving Institution and says that there couldn't be a more perfect time for her to experience the Academic Leadership Institute so that she's prepared for working alongside stakeholders and UA leaders.

"Cultivating strong partnerships with others and building networks of support and influence will be so important to the work that's about to happen," Franco said. 

A recommendation letter from a director, dean or department head is required in applying for the program.

Thomas Miller, vice provost for faculty affairs and co-head of the Institute with Allison Vaillancourt, vice president of business affairs and human resources, says the process is competitive due to the fact that applicants have "already been identified by their heads, directors and deans as outstanding candidates for the program."

With a large number of faculty and campus leaders getting ready to retire, the program will
help prepare successors for those positions, Miller said.

"The next generation of faculty and staff leaders needs to be prepared to advance interdisciplinary innovations to respond to a wide range of changes, including the demographic shifts that will make minorities a majority in Arizona within a decade, the economic shifts that require increased attention to applied research and business partnerships, and instructional innovations that include online and active learning reforms," Miller said. "These transformations call for creative and engaged leadership at all levels, and ALI is vital to meeting that need."

During the program, participants undergo individual assessments and attend interactive workshops, informative presentations and networking opportunities. Fellows also develop plans for the year based on feedback they receive from a survey taken by their co-workers evaluating fellows' leadership qualities.

Besides the leadership training, one of the long-term benefits participants experience after the program are the networking connections made with colleagues across campus, which allows for more interdisciplinary collaboration.

"I'm looking forward to the networking opportunities, but more than that, I'm hoping for real connections and shared vision with other UA leaders," said Christopher Scott, director and research professor at the Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy. "Together, there's very little we can't achieve."

The 2017-2018 fellows are:

- Maribel Alvarez, Jim Griffith Public Folklore Chair, The Southwest Center; Associate Professor, School of Anthropology; Executive Director, Southwest Folk Alliance
- Dana Bleau, Executive Director of International Faculty and Scholars, Global Initiatives
- Ravneet Chadha, Associate Director of Business Intelligence, University Analytics and Institutional Research
- Jim Field, Professor and Assistant Dean, College of Engineering
- Melissa Fitch, University Distinguished Professor, Department of Spanish and Portuguese
- Marla Franco, Director of Assessment and Research, Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, Academic Initiatives and Student Success
- David Glickenstein, Associate Professor and Associate Head for Graduate Program, Department of Mathematics
- Ginger Hunt, Director of Online Learning and Instructional Design, James E. Rogers College of Law
- Jane Hunter, Director of Academic Resources and Special Projects, Associate Professor of Practice, Office of Academic Affairs
- Rajesh Khanna, Associate Professor, Department of Pharmacology
- Sara Knepper, Director of Academic Advising, College of Education
- Benjamin Lee, Professor and Chief, Division of Urology
- Joann MacMaster, Director of Business Development, Tech Launch Arizona
- Pilar A. Martinez, Senior Director for Strategic Communications, University Communications
- Catherine Merrill, Project Manager of the Giant Magellan Telescope Primary Mirror Segments, Steward Observatory
- Sairam Parthasarathy, Professor of Medicine, College of Medicine ? Tucson
- **Sangita Pawar**, Assistant Dean of Research, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
- **Andrea Romero** [16], Fitch Nesbitt Professor of Family Studies and Human Development, Norton School of Family and Consumer Sciences
- **Christopher Scott** [17], Director and Research Professor, Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy; Professor, School of Geography and Development; Director, Consortium for Arizona-Mexico Arid Environments
- **Nicholas Sweeton**, Executive Director, Residence Life and University Housing
- **Stephanie Troutman** [18], Assistant Professor of Emerging Literacies and Director of Southern Arizona Writing Project, Department of English
- **Karna Walter** [19], Assistant Dean for Student Engagement, Honors College
- **Christina Wesanen-Neil** [20], Senior Director of Leadership and Career Education, Leadership and Career Education office.
- **Praise Zenenga**, Associate Professor and Program Director, Africana Studies

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**Links:**

[1] http://ali.arizona.edu/fellows/2018  
[8] https://law.arizona.edu/ginger-s-hunt  
[11] https://www.coe.arizona.edu/content/yerger-sara-m  
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