



**For Immediate Release**

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## **LEAD California is bringing a change to higher education in California**

*After spending the last three decades creating and leading a statewide movement to connect California campuses and communities to each other, the nonprofit is unveiling a new identity that bridges its past with its future vision and values*

**Hayward, CA 2/22/2022** – At a virtual state-wide event today, Dr. Elaine Ikeda announced the launch of LEAD California, a thirty-five-year evolution of California Campus Compact. LEAD California is a statewide presidential membership organization with a mandate to LEAD California higher education and communities in working together to restore the public good.

Dr. Ikeda said, “Our growth and development as an organization led us to decide that it is time to leave the national Campus Compact organization. That independence will allow LEAD California to devote more time and energy to bring greater resources and support to our California institutions, students, and communities. We will continue our seminal work to foster student engagement in our democracy and lead higher education in fulfilling its public purpose. At the same time, equity will be at the center of LEAD California’s future work as we guide California higher education towards a better future for all.”

The nonprofit will remain a coalition of California’s leading colleges and universities from all sectors of higher education and all corners of the state. The new organization’s name, LEAD California, begins with the verb “lead,” which serves as a call to action for the organization’s staff, Board, member campuses, and communities. With equity, reciprocity, and trust at its core, that leadership will improve the lives of Californians throughout the state by leveraging the knowledge, resources, and assets of higher education.

Dr. Ikeda further explained what the change means to higher education and communities in California, “Our place-based equity focus, which means building community connections, addressing local concerns, and working alongside local assets, will ensure that institutions of higher education in California have the resources they need to graduate students who are well-equipped to be ethical leaders and compassionate citizens who build partnerships for positive change.”

Dr. James Harris, President of the University of San Diego and Chair of LEAD California’s Executive Board, spoke at the launch event. “The launch of LEAD California comes at a time when there is much work to do educating our students

to not only become future leaders in their chosen fields,” he said, “but to be civically engaged leaders—leaders who have developed the knowledge and compassion to work toward a just society, leaders who have the connections and resources to make working toward the common good part of their lives, and leaders who are deeply invested in their communities and the people who live there.”

Dr. Harris continued, “LEAD California has the unwavering commitment to provide its member campuses with the tools and training to graduate a workforce who will build community and deepen their roots right here in California and around the world.”

LEAD California’s vision is that all California institutions of higher education are able to be part of this undertaking, part of this movement. To make that happen, LEAD California will build the collective commitment and capacity of colleges, universities, and communities to advance civic and community engagement for a healthy, just, and democratic society.

LEAD California is inviting campuses from all over the state to join our movement, to take part in this moment of re-centering community engagement in California higher education.

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#### ABOUT LEAD CALIFORNIA

LEAD California is a statewide nonprofit membership organization supporting half a million university and college students, administrators, faculty, staff, and community members who, with our resources, expertise, training, and connections, are creating innovative ways to ensure a healthy, just, and democratic society. [leadcalifornia.org](http://leadcalifornia.org)