



Achieving the Dream™

2019 Leah Meyer Austin Award Application Instructions and Review Rubric

Due November 8, 2018

Award Overview

The Leah Meyer Austin Award (LMA Award) annually recognizes an Achieving the Dream Institution that has demonstrated outstanding progress in designing a student-focused culture that permeates all levels and structures of the organization. Successful institutions pursue a cohesive strategy comprised of aligned whole-college solutions that support and promote the success of all their students, resulting in significant and sustainable institutional improvement. They take bold action to design policies, processes, and programs that reinforce each other to achieve the institution's student success and equity goals. Winners have dynamic and committed leadership who cultivate a culture of evidence, develop policies and practices that empower faculty and staff to lead and engage in the work, and pay particularly close attention to the needs of underrepresented and underserved students.

How to Apply

Invited applicants should submit the three following components to austinaward@achievingthedream.org by 5:00 p.m. EST, November 8, 2018.

- Institutional contacts
- Narrative questions
- Evidence section

Questions

Contact Achieving the Dream staff at austinaward@achievingthedream.org.



Application Questions

Please submit your completed application using the detailed requirements below to austinaward@achievingthedream.org.

1. Institutional Contacts

Complete contact information including phone and email addresses for three key contacts (application contact, President/CEO, and key communications contact)

2. Overview Statement and Narrative Questions

Overview Statement: (maximum 500-word summary) Provide an overview describing why your institution should be considered for the Leah Meyer Austin Award. Briefly describe what has led to increased student success at the institution, with particular attention to the success of underrepresented and underserved students and indicate how your institution has tried to close achievement gaps. Furthermore, indicate which of the seven areas of the Institutional Capacity Assessment Framework your institution has focused on in building capacity, why and how this is related to your student success agenda. It is not necessary to connect to all seven capacity areas.

Narrative Questions: Please answer all of the questions in this section. Strong applications will clearly reference evidence throughout narrative responses, with references to specific chart/table numbers in the Evidence Section where appropriate.

- a. Outline your institution's student success vision and priorities/goals and how these are integrated into one clear student success agenda. In your response, you must include: How the institution selected these priorities, how these priorities are communicated across the college community, and how they are embedded in the college's decision-making and resource allocation processes as well as how they are aligned with the college's strategic plan. (Maximum 400 words)
- b. Describe your institution's accomplishments in reaching your student success priorities/goals to-date and at what scale. Please reference relevant evidence provided in the Evidence Section and explain any fluctuations in the referenced data. Strong applications will also discuss how these improvements were achieved. For example, you may wish to include information on faculty and staff engagement, community partnerships, strength of leadership, or innovations in teaching and learning. (Maximum 600 words)
- c. Explain any challenges your institution has faced and how you have addressed these or are working to address them. Note: While we are looking for institutions that have worked innovatively to overcome obstacles to accomplish their student success goals, we recognize that this process is by no means easy. Strong institutions are able to identify their weaknesses and challenges and are bold enough to address them. For example, you may wish to include information on state policy challenges, challenges moving pilots to scale or integrating initiatives, leadership transitions, financial or resource challenges as well as your plans for overcoming these challenges. You may



also wish to reflect on the key findings from your Institutional Capacity Assessment Tool (ICAT) and how your institution is working to address gaps. (Maximum 300 words)

- d. Describe your institution's approach to addressing equity in all aspects across the institution. In your response, you must indicate: How your college is working to close achievement gaps and achieve equitable outcomes for all students as it relates to your student success agenda, what the progress has been to-date, and identify your institution's principal challenge in this area and the steps you are taking to overcome this challenge. The review committee values candid responses that focus on the action steps the institution is taking to address challenges. [ATD's equity statement](#) sets an expectation that colleges will work to dismantle the barriers facing underserved students. Colleges must routinely scrutinize structural barriers to equity and invest in equity-minded policies, practices, and behaviors that lead to success for all students. (Maximum 500 words)
- e. Describe how your institution has achieved a student-centered culture through systemic institutional changes. Achieving the Dream Institutions are expected to strive for organizational and cultural improvement focused on the success of all students. Describe how your student success efforts have improved--or are improving--the institution's organization, processes, and culture and outline your plans for ensuring the continuation of this work. Please also reflect on how your institution will periodically revisit and adapt your work. (Maximum 500 words)

3. Evidence Section

In a single **PDF file**, provide evidence of institutional transformation that is improving the way the institution functions as well as increasing student outcomes. This document **should not exceed 11 pages**, including the cover page. Institutions should use this section to complement and augment their narrative question responses.

Please note that Achieving the Dream has each applicant's National Student Clearinghouse report and ICAT results (if completed) so there is no need to include these documents with your submission. In the Evidence Section, provide additional data to supplement the report.

- a. *Cover Page:* (maximum one page) Include the institution's name and a table of contents that lists titles/charts/table numbers with corresponding page numbers.
- b. *Evidence of Impact and Scale:* (maximum 10 pages) Provide clearly labeled and annotated documents as evidence of institutional transformation that is improving student outcomes. Please clearly indicate the connection between the data and the narrative. Evidence must support the claims made in the narrative and be presented in a clear manner, with references to specific chart/table numbers in the narrative where appropriate. Evidence should focus on impact of interventions or policy/procedure changes on student outcomes, as well as the scale of reach of said interventions/policies/procedures. If documenting percent growth and/or any outcomes data, applicants must include both percentages and actual numbers.



Achieving the Dream™

All data submitted should:

- i. Be disaggregated by race/ethnicity, Pell status, gender, and any other student groups you regularly track through disaggregated data
- ii. Provide at least 4 years of data
- iii. Show a significant upward trend across those four years, with any fluctuations explained in the description or narrative
- iv. Define the cohort clearly

Consider providing the following types of evidence in your response. Stronger evidence increases the competitiveness of your institution's application.

- *Data demonstrating faculty or staff development.* For example, you might include data showing the broad engagement of faculty and staff in particularly successful professional development opportunities or evidence of how faculty/staff put their training into practice after the session. Strong applications will also provide the level of engagement of adjuncts and part-time staff.
- *Evidence of changes in institutional policies and practices to improve student success.* For example, making successful programs—such as orientation or student success courses—mandatory, streamlining the graduation process, eliminating late registration, etc. To save space in the narrative, you may wish to provide a chart summarizing these changes, providing information on what the policy was before as well as what changes occurred to better promote student success.
- *Student, faculty, or staff feedback that indicates improvement of programs, processes, or services.* For example, you may wish to provide results from focus groups, surveys, or interviews where students, faculty, and staff assess instruction, services, or the institution.
- *Evidence of external stakeholder engagement and the impact of these partnerships on the student experience.* For example, partnerships with local K-12 institutions, four-year institutions, local nonprofit organizations, or businesses.
- *Evidence of scaling successful interventions, modifying interventions, or eliminating unsuccessful ones using the More to Most framework.* ["Some" indicates the intervention is serving less than 25 percent of its target population. "More" indicates a scale level of 25 percent to- 60 percent of target population. "Most" indicates a service level of over 60 percent of target population.]
- *Up to two letters of support from a governing board and/or a community stakeholder.* They must be submitted as part of the 10 pages of evidence. PLEASE NOTE: Testimonials from Achieving the Dream Leadership or Data Coaches will not be accepted as evidence.
- *President/CEO signature confirmation.* All applicants must include this element in their evidence.

Review Rubric

The rubric for review of LMA Applications is attached for your edification. All reviewers will use this rubric to complete the review process.

Overview Statement

Statement	Exemplary 4	Accomplished 3	Promising 2	Needs Improvement 1
Applicant provides a compelling case for why the institution should be considered for the Leah Meyer Austin Award				
Applicant provides a clear, concise overview of the institution's journey toward increasing student success				
Comment(s):				



Achieving the Dream™

Student Success Priorities

Statement	Exemplary 4	Accomplished 3	Promising 2	Needs Improvement 1
Applicant provides a clear description of the institution's student success vision and priorities/goals				
Student success priorities are ambitious and likely to positively impact a large proportion of students				
Applicant describes how the institution communicates its progress towards its priorities to the college community				
Comment(s):				



Accomplishments

Statement	Exemplary 4	Accomplished 3	Promising 2	Needs Improvement 1
Applicant offers evidence of progress toward meeting the institution's student success goals				
Applicant provides a clear explanation of how this progress was achieved				
Applicant discusses how they have progressed to scale and impact offering evidence of scale				
Comment(s):				



Achieving the Dream™

Challenges

Statement	Exemplary 4	Accomplished 3	Promising 2	Needs Improvement 1
Applicant acknowledges and describes the institution's major challenges in meeting its student success goals				
Applicant outlines effective steps that the institution has taken/is taking to address these challenges				
Comment(s):				



Achieving the Dream™

Achieving Equitable Outcomes

Statement	Exemplary 4	Accomplished 3	Promising 2	Needs Improvement 1
Applicant has a carefully considered and planned approach to achieving equitable outcomes				
Applicant is candid about its weaknesses in this area and presents a plan to overcome these challenges				
Applicant describes a coherent strategy targeted at supporting underrepresented and undeserved students				
Applicant demonstrates progress in implementing this strategy				
Comment(s):				



Achieving the Dream™

Systemic Institutional Improvement

Statement	Exemplary 4	Accomplished 3	Promising 2	Needs Improvement 1
Applicant describes how attention to student success priorities is transforming the institution.				
Applicant outlines the institution's plans to build on its existing student success efforts.				
Comment(s):				



Evidence of Impact and Scale

Statement	Exemplary 4	Accomplished 3	Promising 2	Needs Improvement 1
Evidence is relevant to the narrative responses, showing the impact of specific initiatives, policies, or practices adopted to improve student success				
Evidence is presented in a clear way. All graphs, charts, and tables are clearly labeled and n's are provided in addition to percentages where applicable				
Evidence shows clear progress (upward trend) of the institution improving student outcomes over the last four years				
The majority of the evidence submitted regarding student outcomes includes disaggregated data in relation to race/ethnicity/Pell status				
Evidence shows the scale or reach of specific initiatives, policies, or practices				
Comment(s):				