

# LC chosen for Racial Equity Leadership Academy

Lee College is one of 10 colleges selected to participate in the national Achieving the Dream (ATD) and the University of Southern California (USC) Race and Equity Center Racial Equity Leadership Academy (RELA), a year-long program scheduled to begin in summer 2021. The intensive program is designed to support teams of five individuals from each college in the development of a bold, strategic racial equity plan to implement actionable solutions at their institutions.

“We are excited to be part of the RELA program. Our students are at the heart of everything we do, and participation in this program will allow us to provide the best possible learning experience for our traditionally underserved student populations,” said Dr. Lynda Villanueva, Lee College president.

Other colleges selected for the program included Anne Arundel Community College (MD); Austin Community College District (TX); Broward College (FL); Chattanooga State Community College (TN); Columbus State Community College (OH); Kingsborough Community College (NY); Montgomery County Community College (PA); Mott Community College (MI); and Pierce College (WA).

With programming based on ATD’s Institutional Capacity Framework and tailored to community colleges working to overcome equity-focused challenges, RELA will occur July 26–29, 2021. College teams will work together to develop a strategic racial equity change effort that will launch at each institution during the Fall 2021 semester.

“Our goal is to serve traditionally marginalized student populations and their families by removing systemic barriers and empowering their success,” said Dr. Victoria Marron, Lee College’s Associate Vice President of Retention and Transition Services and Chief Equity Officer. “This program will help equip us to make that goal a reality.”

By the end of RELA, teams from each college will have identified a racial equity change effort, participated in coaching engagements, developed a new vision for their campus’s racial equity work, and launched their racial equity change effort with a comprehensive, prioritized action plan. The overall expected outcomes are increased student persistence and completion through an intentional design to eliminate structural barriers to equity.

ATD leads a growing network of more than 300 community colleges from 45 states committed to helping their students, particularly low-income students and students of color, achieve their goals for academic success, personal growth and economic opportunity.