



## **The Fund for Leadership, Equity, Access and Diversity Announces its 2017 LEAD Fund Authors**

*College students competed by submitting papers and research  
In the fields of Equity, Social Justice, Diversity and Inclusion*

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Washington, DC, December 15, 2017 – The Fund for Leadership, Equity, Access and Diversity (LEAD Fund) announced its first class of LEAD Fund Authors today. The LEAD Fund Authors were chosen from the research papers submitted by students or graduates of colleges and universities. The topics for the papers had to relate to the mission of the Fund, which is access, equity, social justice, diversity and inclusion. This year’s authors, Natalie Giron and Dakota Strode, both attended or are currently enrolled at American University in Washington, DC.

Natalie D. Giron, a recent honors graduate from American University, conducted research on the “Educational Experience of Undocumented Latinx Students and Families in the New Political Climate.” Dakota Strode, a senior at American University currently spending his first semester at Trinity College in Ireland, wrote about “LGBTQA+ Rights & Obama.”<sup>1</sup> “The LEAD Fund is thrilled to foster and support the development of a new generation of thought leaders on the critical issues of our time” said Jennifer Tucker, Chair of the LEAD Fund Board of Directors.

“Both topics are very timely, given the current debates about the rights of immigrant students under the Deferred Action for Child Arrivals, or DACA initiative, and the protections of members of the LGBTQA+ community,” said Shirley J. Wilcher, President and CEO of the LEAD Fund. “These papers were well-written and are a testament to the outstanding potential of our future scholars and practitioners in the equity and diversity professions or in the academy,” she added.

The Fund for Leadership, Equity, Access and Diversity (LEAD Fund) was established to provide thought leadership in promoting inclusive organizations and institutions through research and education on issues related to diversity, social responsibility, human and civil rights. The LEAD Fund is a “Think and Do” tank, which advances new knowledge and tested strategies aimed at eliminating prejudice and discrimination.

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<sup>1</sup> LGBTQA+ is an acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Aerosexual, Asexual, or Aromantic, and all others who identify within the community.

The Fund is a 501 (c) (3) charitable organization. It complements the work of the American Association for Access, Equity and Diversity (AAAED) through programs and activities that address a range of concerns, including affirmative action, equal opportunity, equity, access, civil rights, and diversity and inclusion in education, employment, business and contracting. The scope of the Fund's activities is both domestic and international. The LEAD Fund places a special emphasis on the emerging demographics in the United States in all of its work.

The LEAD Fund Authors Program emphasizes "Diversity in Action" and is committed to promoting undergraduate and graduate research that advances new understandings and tested strategies aimed at expanding organizational or institutional knowledge of access, equity, and diversity.

LEAD Fund Authors are selected among a diverse pool of applicants who present their work in the form of poster presentations at the American Association for Access, Equity and Diversity's (AAAED) annual conference and in other venues. They may also submit their papers directly to the Fund. Selected presenters will become LEAD Fund Authors and will have the opportunity to have their presentations published by the Fund. If their research is chosen for publication, LEAD Fund Authors will receive an honorarium.

To view the 2017 LEAD Fund Authors' papers, visit the LEAD Fund webpage at:  
[https://www.aaed.org/aaed/The\\_LEAD\\_Fund\\_Authors\\_Program.asp](https://www.aaed.org/aaed/The_LEAD_Fund_Authors_Program.asp).

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