

LEAD1 Association Announces Diversity Fellowship Program Class of 2023-24

Recent LEAD1 Fellows ADs include Zac Selmon of Mississippi State University, Bryan Blair of Toledo, Alan Haller of Michigan State University, Anton Goff of Prairie View A&M University, and Renae Myles Payne from Fort Valley State University.

Washington, DC. – The LEAD1 Association (LEAD1), which represents the athletic directors of the 133-member schools of the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS), announced today its Diversity Fellowship Program Class of 2023-24. The program aims to increase senior-diverse leadership throughout the FBS by providing athletics administrators of color and female athletic administrators with a year-long immersion program to help them continue to advance up the administrative ranks in college athletics. Each class contains administrators who are deemed to be next in line to assume the athletics director position.

LEAD1's Diversity Fellowship Program, launched in 2021, has included several notable senior-level administrators who have stepped into athletics directors positions including Zac Selmon from Mississippi State University, Bryan Blair from the University of Toledo, Alan Haller from Michigan State University, Anton Goff from Prairie View A&M University, and Renae Myles Payne from Fort Valley State University.

To select this year's Fellowship class, LEAD1's oversight Committee, comprised of five experienced athletics administrators, executed an exhaustive search process examining feedback from top search firms, and other resources. The committee includes Sean Frazier, Director of Athletics at Northern Illinois University, China Jude, Vice President of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion for the Denver Broncos, Debbie Yow, athletics director emerita for NC State, Doug Knuth, Director of Athletics at Southern Utah University, and Dan Guerrero, former athletics director at UCLA, who now serves as president at the United States International University Sports Federation.

The Committee selected the following nine administrators deemed most ready to assume the athletics director position. Each fellow will be matched with a current or recent LEAD1 athletics director mentor and participate in virtual monthly discussions with college sports leaders, including search firms.

LEAD1 Diversity Fellowship Program Class of 2023-24:

- Erika Barnes, Arizona, Executive Senior Associate Director of Athletics/SWA
- Kristen Brown, Texas A&M, Deputy Athletics Director, Administration and Leadership/SWA
- Armani Dawkins, Virginia, Deputy Athletics Director, Competitive Excellence/SWA
- Ashton Henderson, Michigan State, Deputy Athletic Director/Championship Resources

- Marcus Hilliard, Tennessee, Senior Associate Athletics Director/Chief of Staff
- Lauren Rhodes, Penn State, Deputy AD for Student-Athlete Welfare and Development/SWA
- Ike Ukaegbu, Washington State, Deputy Director of Athletics
- Yulander Wells, Notre Dame, Deputy Athletics Director, Business Strategy
- Kevin White, Clemson, Deputy Director of Athletics

“I am extremely proud of the recent efforts our association has taken to help advance diversity, equity, and inclusion leadership within the FBS,” said LEAD1 President & CEO, Tom McMillen. “We continue to work closely with the Minority Opportunities Athletic Association (MOAA), and the Black AD Alliance to advance the mission of our DEI Coalition announced last year.”

For more information regarding the program, please contact Bart Lambergman at bart@lead1a.com.

About the LEAD1 Association:

LEAD1, founded in 1986 and formerly the Division 1A Athletic Directors Association, represents the athletics directors of the 133 member universities of the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS), that encompasses 42 states, 55,000 student athletes, and more than 25,000 athletic administrators. Key to LEAD1’s mission is advocating on policy facing NCAA Division I FBS athletic departments, promoting consensus among FBS athletic directors, and providing valuable services to member schools – all dedicated towards supporting the success of student-athletes and future of college sports. Since 2015, LEAD1 has been led by the Honorable Tom McMillen, a former Congressman, college basketball All-American, Rhodes Scholar, and 11-year NBA player. For more information, please visit www.LEAD1Association.com.