



# The Leadership Alliance Presidential Forum

A Public Briefing to Discuss  
*Confronting Challenges to Diversity in the Research Workforce*

November 4, 2016

The National Academy of Sciences Building  
2100 C St. N.W., Washington, D.C.

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On April 19, 2005, the Presidents of the Leadership Alliance convened a historic meeting – *a Presidential Forum* – to discuss trends in the effort to diversify academic institutions at all levels, and to devise strategies for the Alliance to meet these evolutionary changes. This Forum transformed the Alliance. The impact of presidents from diverse institutions lending their collective expertise shaped the Alliance’s strategic direction and was pivotal in the development of the strategic plan, “A Decade of Distinction.” This roadmap has guided the Alliance’s efforts to train, mentor and inspire students from diverse backgrounds into competitive graduate training programs and professional research-based careers. More than half (54%) of the Leadership Alliance’s 3,000 participants pursue advanced degrees – compared to the 40% national average – producing a diverse cadre of professionals to enrich America’s workforce.

It has been 10 years since this gathering of Leadership Alliance presidents, and many of the leaders of the institutions that comprise the Alliance have changed. Indeed, the landscape of higher education is changing. Therefore, it is important for the current leaders – our institutional presidents – to reconvene and examine today’s challenges to diversifying America’s workforce with leaders in the public and private sectors.

Given the current debate on the means and processes to achieve a diverse and competitive 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce, the Alliance has organized a public briefing with leaders in academia, the public and private sectors. The Forum will feature a conversation with U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, as well as panel discussions on the following topics:

- *Creating and Sustaining a Diverse 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce*
- *Preparing America’s New Majority: The Next Generation of Leaders and Role Models in Academia, Public and Private Sector*

The convening host for the *Presidential Forum* is Christina Paxson, President of Brown University. We invite you to attend this briefing and to engage your colleagues in dialogue about this important and timely topic.

In 1992, the Leadership Alliance was established as a consortium of academic institutions to address the shortage of underrepresented minorities in graduate programs and the professoriate. Now, the Alliance consists of 36 members from higher education and private industry and has expanded its mission to encourage underrepresented groups to seek research careers across a variety of disciplines. Members include leading research and teaching universities, historically black colleges and universities, several institutions that primarily serve Hispanic and Native American students and a corporate research institute.

The vision that built this consortium is fulfilling its promise as the number of scholars who have obtained doctoral degrees is nearing 400 and an equivalent number have obtained professional degrees. We are diversifying the workforce with 47% of our scholars in academia (of whom 61% are in tenure track positions), 27% in the private sector, and 12% in the public sector. Another 14% are postdoctoral fellows poised to launch their research careers.