2025 Leader College of Distinction Rubric

Section 1: Contact Information (no rubric items in this step)

Section 2: Data Template and Overall Metrics

- Data Template: upload the template to the application (no rubric items)
- Overall Metrics

This section of the application requires colleges to identify **three overall metrics** from their data template and provide an in-depth analysis of each. Please craft narratives that describe the improvements the college has made over the course of three years and clearly connect these outcomes to specific interventions, especially those implemented as part of your ATD work. Each of the three overall metrics (two leading/momentum, one lagging/milestone) will be reviewed using the following rubric:

To what degree did the college provide a strong narrative that demonstrates the institution's success on the overall metric with a clear link between specific actions the institution has taken and the success the institution has experienced?

0	1	2	3	4 - Exemplary
No explanation of how institutional changes were connected to improvement on this outcome was provided.	The narrative includes descriptions of actions taken at the institution but there is no explanation as to how the actions may have influenced this metric.	The narrative includes descriptions of actions taken, but the argument for how these actions influenced the metric outcome is weak.	The narrative includes descriptions of actions taken and provides a solid argument as to how these actions may have improved this metric.	The narrative includes descriptions of actions taken and provides a clear argument with evidence as to how these actions influenced this metric.

Section 3: Equity Metrics

Metrics where the equity gap was improved will be reviewed using the following guidelines:

A strong response links actions to the student population who saw improvement. For instance, if the outcomes for part-time students improved and the applicant narrowed the gap between part-time and full-time students, we expect the narrative to make an argument for how the institution's actions made a difference for Black students specifically (not just all students generally).

Note: Colleges should show improved equity gaps on two separate metrics for two distinct groups. Colleges are welcome to submit up to 5 equity metrics to demonstrate their equity work. Each equity metric will be reviewed using the following rubric:

Using the guidance above, to what degree was the institution successful at reducing the equity gap on this equity metric?

0	1	2	3	4 - Exemplary
No explanation of how institutional changes were connected to improvement on this outcome was provided.	The narrative includes descriptions of actions taken at the institution but there is no explanation as to how the actions specifically helped the indicated student population improve.	The narrative includes descriptions of actions taken, but the argument for how these actions specifically helped the indicated student population improve is weak.	The narrative includes descriptions of actions taken and provides a solid argument as to how these actions may have improved this metric for the indicated student population.	The narrative includes descriptions of actions taken and provides a clear argument with evidence as to how these actions influenced this metric the indicated student population.

Section 4: Benchmarking

To what degree does the institution utilize benchmarking in their student success goals?

0	1	2	3	4 - Exemplary
Narrative does not address goals/ benchmarks for outcomes.	Narrative lists goals/benchmarks without compelling reasons for selecting these priorities.	Narrative discusses goals/benchmarks with some reasoning as to selection.	Narrative clearly lists the goals/benchmark for student outcomes and how data or other criteria guided setting the benchmarks and how they align to the strategic plan.	Narrative clearly lists the goals/benchmarks for student outcomes and how data, ICAT, and/or strategic planning guided setting the benchmarks and how they align to the strategic plan.

Section 5: Narrative Questions

This section asks applicants to provide a narrative answer regarding additional aspects of the college's student success strategy. This section should present a narrative that brings together your institution's successes on the specific outcomes you identified and described in the prior application sections above. Successful applicants will tell a cohesive, engaging story of how the institution leveraged and/or augmented institutional strengths to implement transformative student success reforms, and the extent to which their college has built and/or strengthened capacity to sustain these reforms.

To what degree does the college demonstrate the connection between their efforts of transformative change and the student outcomes discussed in prior sections?

0	1	2	3	4 - Exemplary
Narrative lacks connections to capacity building or primarily focuses on boutique programs and does not connect the reform to outcomes.	Narrative explains the connections between reforms and outcomes but does not situate these changes within capacity building efforts or transformative change OR narrative highlights different outcomes from those metrics highlighted above.	Narrative explains the ways capacity building led to reforms for student success but DOES NOT connect those changes to outcomes.	Narrative explains the way capacity building led to reforms for student success AND references the metrics above. Reforms are framed as transformative.	Narrative **clearly** explains the way capacity building led to reforms for student success AND references the metrics above. Reforms are transformative in the way they affect the institution as a whole and keep equity at the forefront.

To what degree does the narrative demonstrate how capacity has been strengthened to sustain reforms?

0	1	2	3	4 - Exemplary
Narrative does not address capacity building and sustainability of reforms.	Narrative mentions sustainability or capacity but the discussion is vague and lacks the foundation to connect the two concepts.	Narrative discusses sustainability and capacity building with more detail but the connection between the two is unclear or not feasible.	Narrative links sustainability and somewhat connects it to capacity building and future work	Narrative clearly links sustainability of reforms to capacity building and future work.

How well does the college link their student success work and outcomes to their institution's measurable goals and strategies to advance equity. Is equity central to the work?

0	1	2	3	4
No reference to equity is provided.	The narrative includes descriptions of actions taken at the institution but there are minimal references to the equity work at the college.	The narrative includes descriptions of actions taken, and references equity work at the college, but does not explain the connection between equity goals and actions taken.	The narrative includes descriptions of actions taken and connects these actions to equity work at the college.	Equity is central. The narrative includes equity goals and clearly links the equity work to student outcomes. Equity is referenced across campus – administrative departments, advising, teaching, student events, etc. Racial equity is a focus of current and/or future equity work.

Section 6: President's Letter of Support

To what degree does the President/CEO Letter of Support describe how the institution centers equity in its student success work?

0	1	2	3	4 - Exemplary
Letter does not address equity.	Equity is mentioned minimally.	Equity goals are shared, but not linked to action steps.	Letter shares equity goals for equity and links the work to student outcomes. Equity has clearly been centered within student success work.	Letter shares equity goals and clearly links the equity work to student outcomes and references structural racism. Equity is referenced across campus- administrative departments, advising, teaching, student events, etc. Racial equity is a focus of current and/or future equity work.

Based on the President/CEO Letter of Support, to what degree has the college made progress on their equity work?

0	1	2	3	4 - Exemplary
Letter does not address equity.	Equity is mentioned in passing.	Progress on equity is described generally without specific examples.	Letter identifies progress in equity with examples of changes made OR outcomes.	Letter identifies progress in equity with examples of changes made AND outcomes.

To what degree does the President/CEO Letter of Support address past and future contributions to advancing learning in the Achieving the Dream Network?

0	1	2	3	4 - Exemplary
Letter does not include past contributions to ATD.		Contributions are limited to DREAM.	Letter includes examples of contributions to ATD, primarily focused on attending ATD learning events (HSS Institute, Data Summit, Teaching and Learning Summit).	Letter includes examples of contributions to ATD beyond presenting at DREAM (e.g., presenting on ATD work at national conferences or panels; hosting other colleges to showcase their ATD work; mentored other ATD colleges).