

**Subject:** [LEAP] Leap Futures Status Update from LFI Steering Committee  
**Date:** Friday, February 17, 2023 at 12:42:24 PM Eastern Standard Time  
**From:** 'Evans, Rhonda' via Community  
**To:** community@leapambassadors.org

Dear Fellow Ambassadors,

We are writing today to share an update on both the current status and the next phase of the LFI process. As you'll remember, we began the LFI process in early 2022 with the objective of having the Leap Ambassadors Community (LAC) map out scenarios to become a sustainable, self-governed entity by the end of 2023.

## RESULTS

This has been a strong process with broad engagement and involvement of many in the community. We encourage you to review [\[the executive summary of the process to-date found here\]](#). Yet, despite our efforts, we are short of identifying a path forward with a partner organization and the requisite funding to continue the LAC as we know it today.

The Steering Committee and Working Groups aspired to have support for a small team (3-4 highly qualified staff) to continue delivering the community's core elements most valued by Ambassadors (e.g., the online forum, collaborative knowledge development, community gatherings, and support of micro-communities). However, it became clear in the process that we needed to shift our focus from what was *possible* to what was *available* to finalize a partner organization, secure funder commitments, get LAC approval to move forward, and effectively begin the LAC transition by the end of May 2023.

We think it is important for the Ambassadors Community to understand where we are now and have clarity about what any future state will likely entail.

## WHERE WE ARE

As of February 2023, we are hopeful the LAC can continue with significant changes, which we have outlined below.

We see three potential scenarios:

- In the best-case scenario, we would secure a partner organization and have funding for 1-2 FTEs. The community would more closely resemble how it began (e.g., maintaining the online forum where Ambassadors can ask questions, provide support, and learn from each other, and have continued access to existing content through the website) vs. what it looks like today.
- In the intermediate case, we will have secured a partner organization, but not adequate funding for an FTE. In this case, the partner would serve as a "home" for the online forum, which could be volunteer-led, and a "warehouse" for existing content and community resources.
- In the base case, the LAC would sunset completely, with assets archived and the other online options discontinued unless a volunteer or group of volunteers comes forward to sponsor the online forum.

We are in meaningful discussions with a potential partner organization, and there are other organizations that have surfaced as possibilities. While we are positive about the discussions so far, we acknowledge that much is still to be worked out to make this a reality.

In our last communication, we shared that two funders—the Ford Foundation and the Jesse Ball duPont Fund—committed to providing funding to cover basic operations over the next three years. That funding is provisional on other funders joining, with the overall goal of enabling the equivalent of 1-2 FTEs to continue supporting the community. If we are able to garner support for 2 FTEs, it creates a more robust funding base and an opportunity for additional support activities.

## **TRANSITION & NEXT STEPS**

As planned, the Monitor Institute by Deloitte (MIbD) team has wrapped up its work and passed the baton to Venture Leadership Collective. **Andrew Niklaus** is leading the next phase of work, supported by **Debra Natenshon** (Andrew and Debra are both Ambassadors). They will lead two key work streams through the end of May with the goal of either finding a home with a partner organization and funding for at least 1 FTE or moving the LAC to a partner organization (unfunded) to hold the assets and allow for a limited continuation with volunteer support by the end of May 2023.

The goals for the next phase of work include: 1) continued exploration and negotiation with the potential partner organization to quickly get to a go/no-go decision; 2) if a partnership is viable, confirming additional funders; and 3) determining what Ambassador-led activities will be possible in a more resource-constrained future or working with the LST on sunsetting if necessary. The Leap support team (LST) is in the process of phasing down current activities and preparing the community's assets for transition or archiving.

## **APPRECIATIONS**

Lastly, in addition to all the work and contributions from the community, there are a number of people we'd like to thank, given their commitment to the LFI process to-date.

First, an enormous thanks to the LST for their collaboration in this process and all they do for the LAC. The work they do to keep the community running smoothly is mostly behind the scenes and more extensive than most Ambassadors may be aware of. The team has stepped in to support the partnership negotiations, including educating the potential partner on operations, aligning on transitions, and preparing all materials and activities for transition. These immensely talented and deeply committed team members are invaluable to supporting the path forward, and we couldn't do this work without them.

We'd also like to thank Ambassadors **Dana O'Donovan** and **Rhonda Evans** and the MIbD team who have stewarded this process and walked alongside the community for the past year. Your guidance and support have been critical to getting us to this point.

Furthermore, we thank all of our fellow Ambassadors who committed their time, energy, and talents to our

three Working Groups: Value Proposition, Fundraising, and Partnership. The Working Groups have done the leg work to outline the value proposition of the LAC and the possibilities for the future, identify and vet more than 60 potential partners, and identify viable sources of funding. Our work together is exemplary of what is possible for an Ambassador-led version of the community and has created a blueprint for the path forward.

Finally, we'd like to express our deep appreciation to **Mario Morino** for bringing this community together a decade ago, growing and nurturing it, and once again living the values of this community by investing in this Ambassador-driven process to chart the future of the LAC.

As with this process, the future lies with us as Ambassadors, and we look forward to continuing to engage with you all.

With gratitude,

LFI Steering Committee

*A. Toni Young, Amy Morgenstern, Andrew Niklaus, Art Taylor, Brad Dudding, Britt Lake, Carmen Moreno-Rivera, Christine Robinson, Debra Natenshon, Doug Bauer, Erika Van Buren, James Stancil, John Brothers, Kathy Park, Louis Erste, Omar Butler, Quentin Wilson, Shelley Metzenbaum, Tracy Gray*

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