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Leading for Sustainable Impact

Application Package

2026-2027 New and Evolving Academic Leadership (NEAL) Program

Thank you for your interest in the 2026-2027 NEAL Program.

Please submit your entire application package **by May 21, 2026** to be considered for the program.

If you would like to qualify for early bird tuition rates, you must be [registered as a CFD member](#) prior to submitting your application and submit your entire application package **by April 21, 2026**.

APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Complete the online application form ([click here to complete the form](#))
2. Submit the following documents via email to cfd@unityhealth.to:
 - Short CV – Please provide a CV (maximum 4 pages) that contains relevant details to this program (e.g your current and past appointments, faculty positions and relevant education)
 - 4-page Statement of Expressed Interest (specifics outlined below)
 - Signed Learner Contract acknowledging your understanding that program participants will be expected to attend all three modules and complete the required homework and assignments (*see following pages for Learner Contract*)

Note about your application & information storage/sharing:

We will be using Dropbox to store and share your applications with the selection committee. When you email your application components, they are downloaded and stored in a Dropbox folder until the selection committee review process has been completed. The committee members are only able to view your application and not download it onto their personal computers. Once the committee has reviewed and decisions have been made, the applications are removed from Dropbox and stored in our secure drives.



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If you are given a conditional offer, your program sponsor will receive a link to a Qualtrics form to validate and confirm their provision of protected time and/or financial support to enable your participation in the program. The data from the Qualtrics form will be downloaded and saved onto our secure drives prior to the final offers of acceptance being extended to successful applicants. After this, the data will be removed off of the Qualtrics site/server.

If you would prefer for your application NOT to be uploaded/stored during the review process on Dropbox, please inform Manpreet at the time you submit your application components to cfd@unityhealth.to. Your application package will then be shared with review committee members via email. The committee members will be instructed to only view your application and not download it onto their personal computers.

Questions about the program, the application process or program fees can be directed to:

- Cate Creede-Desmarais, Program Lead, Centre for Faculty Development
(cate@potentialgroup.com)
- Manpreet Saini, Education Coordinator, Centre for Faculty Development
(manpreet.saini@unityhealth.to)



Statement of Expressed Interest

Instructions

Format: 4-page maximum, 12 point Times New Roman font, single spaced

NEAL is a unique leadership program in that "use of self" is at the centre of everything we learn and focus on -- i.e. the program is focused both on who you are and on what you do. Please describe what you hope for through spending a year engaging in the learning community of NEAL. What are your hopes for how you want to evolve as a leader? What kinds of shifts in your team, program, community or the world would you like to better influence? What do you care most about -- and how do you want to lead in that space? Consider the questions below as prompts – **none are mandatory except the final one on the next page.**

Optional prompts for the other parts of your statement:

- Are there aspects of your identity (e.g., gender, race and/or any other social identity categories) that you feel are particularly influencing your leadership development needs and desire for impact or influence right now?
- Why are you interested in the NEAL program at this stage in your career? What impact would you like to be having?
- Please describe the leadership activities that you have been and/or are currently pursuing. What type of impact do you believe you are creating for individuals, the organization and/or the broader community?
- What are the values that you believe guide an inclusive and impactful leader? How have you demonstrated these values in your own leadership journey so far?
- What are some of the experiences that you have had to navigate in your life (e.g., personal circumstances, educational journey, career) that have shaped your sense of yourself as a leader to date? What have you learned about what's most important for you to influence your environment or the broader world in the way you most want?
- How do you see relationship-building as a crucial factor in leadership and systems transformation work? Can you provide an example of how you have engaged in collaboration within/across networks and relationship building in your leadership activities or otherwise?
- What is the most crucial system transformation that you would like to see in your sector? What do you think is required to bring forth this transformation? How might you contribute to that transformation?



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- How have you demonstrated your commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, Indigeneity and accessibility through your leadership activities or otherwise? What do you see as opportunities for your growth and development in those areas?
- Who are leaders that inspire you? What are you interested in learning from other leaders? How would you work collaboratively with others to learn, share, and grow as a collective?

Mandatory Prompt:

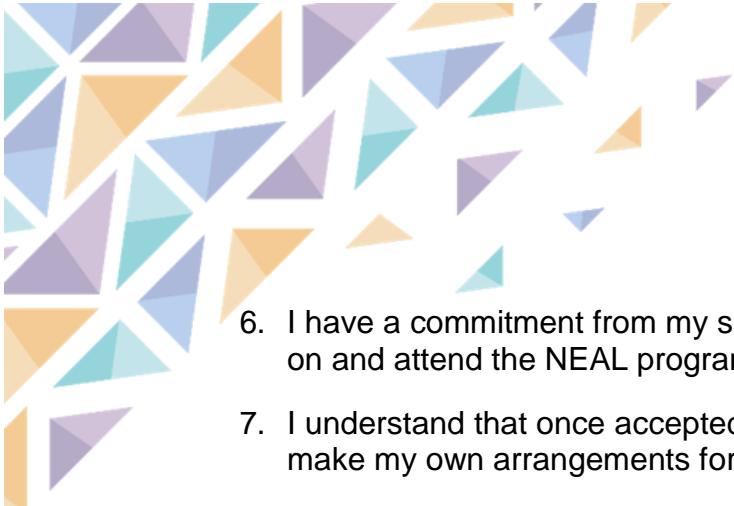
- **Everyone in NEAL engages in leading (or co-leading) some kind of change initiative where they can bring what they are learning into action. Please briefly describe what initiative or project you will be doing during this time, and why this is important to you. (This doesn't have to be definitive -- projects most often change once the program begins).**



New & Evolving Academic Leaders (NEAL) Program: Learner Contract (2026-2027)

Program Requirements

1. I must attend a minimum of 80 hours by the program end in May 2027. Should I not meet this minimum, I recognize that I may be unable to fulfill the required hours and will not receive a Continuing Education Certificate.
2. I understand that I can reach out to Program Coordinator or Lead if I have any questions related to my progress in the program or the program overall.
3. I will read and review all assigned reading associated with the course and prepare/submit any homework that is required.
4. I will complete the following assignments/components for the program:
 - a. *Change Project – I commit to working on and completing a change project in an academic context throughout the course of the program. This project will be of interest to me and align with my personal and professional goals.*
 - b. *Coaching - I will schedule time and commit to the scheduled time for conducting coaching sessions between modules with my assigned coach.*
 - c. *Reflection Logs – I will complete and submit the reflection log assignment assigned after each module.*
 - d. *Leadership Learning Presentation – At the conclusion of the course, I will prepare and present a short presentation about what I have learned about leadership from applying the NEAL curriculum and working on my change project.*
 - e. *Other Assignments – I commit to completing all other assignments as assigned by the Program Lead, Theme Co-Leads and other facilitators.*
5. To successfully complete the program requirements, I must complete the above assignments **and** attend all dates of the program as listed below:
 - **Module 1:**
September 23-25, 2026 *In-person in Toronto*
October 15-16, 2026 *Virtual*
 - **Module 2:**
January 21-22, 2027 *In-person in Toronto*
January 25-26, 2027 *Virtual*
 - **Module 3:**
April 15-16, 2027 *Virtual*
May 5-7, 2027 *In-person in Toronto*



6. I have a commitment from my sponsor to provide me with protected time to work on and attend the NEAL program.
7. I understand that once accepted into the NEAL program, I will be expected to make my own arrangements for accommodation in Toronto (where applicable).
8. I understand that should I be unable to maintain my participation in the program, the tuition is not refundable.

Accountable Learning Environments

9. While participating in program sessions I commit to showing up on time and prepared to learn.
10. As a member of the CFD, I will uphold the CFD's commitment to creating a safe(r), brave(r), accountable, and inclusive environment for all. I acknowledge that the fulfillment of the Centre's mission depends upon an environment of acceptance and mutual respect. (Learn more about psychologically safe learning environments here:
https://centreforfacdev.ca/pdf/CFD%20Psychologically%20Safe%20Learning%20Environments_Feb2023.pdf)
11. While attending program sessions I will do my best to maintain a psychologically safe space. I will do this by; using "I" statements, actively listening, making space for voices that have more barriers to being heard, and wearing headphones if I am in a public space while attending virtual sessions to ensure privacy of the other attendees.

I, _____ have read and agree to the terms of the program. I am committed to completing all program requirements and contributing to an accountable learning environment. I am aware that graduation from the program and receipt of the Continuing Education Certificate is dependent upon successful completion of the required hours.

Signature:

Date:



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Application Package Rubric

Values	Demonstrated by NEAL Applicant
Collaborative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership potential - some experience in leadership activities (evidence shown through examples of community and/or organizational activities) Experience integrating a holistic approach to leadership, including prioritizing relationship building, supporting wellness within the organization and participating in mentorship activities (as a mentor and/or mentee) Potential to work and communicate effectively with others collaboratively within and/or across networks Genuine interest in working with, learning from and sharing with others Experience with team-building, building collaborative relationships and engaging diverse stakeholders Commitment to collaboration across networks
Reflexive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrated examples of developing qualities of empathy and self-awareness as a leader and areas for continued development and growth Leadership that prioritizes the importance of communication, empathy, and self-awareness An awareness of how to grow impact at individual, organizational and community level matched with potential to do so Commitment to personal growth
Inclusive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate openness to developing as a leader committed to EDIIA who will consider diverse ideas and views and expanding knowledge and ways of knowing Demonstrated commitment to EDIIA and its importance in the sector Recognizes who is absent and should be included in key decision-making from past leadership experiences
Innovative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate a strategic vision and plan for a project/idea that will grow impact at the individual, organizational, and/or broader community level Prioritizes the importance of wellness in organizations Interested in leading in the academic health sciences with community development and engagement at the forefront. Commitment to the expansion of ideas, knowledge, and ways of knowing Ability to apply learning towards a greater impact
Courageous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to show humility and vulnerability in their leadership practice to date Demonstrates effort to disrupt or challenge the status quo Demonstrate long term commitment and concern for systems change in the sector along with a breadth of perspective on issues impacting the sector Leadership that prioritizes systems change/transformation in a multi-perspective environment