

“...cross-sector platforms of innovation, leadership, and learning require a high-quality holding space. Part of that holding space is process, part of it is people, part of it is place, and part of it is purpose. But the most important ingredient is always the same: a few fully committed people who would give everything to make it work. Sometimes it’s just one or two people. But if you have four or five, you may be able to make mountains move” (Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013, p. 186).

ALUMNI LEADERS COUNCIL WORKING AGREEMENTS

The Alumni Leaders Council is a representative group of BECLN alumni committed to agreeing upon and providing ongoing guidance on the below key components of BECLN implemented by BECLN Staff and BECLN members. For the 2016-2017 year, previously active Network alumni were invited to join and others joined through self-nominations from the Network at large. All Leaders Council members agree to one year of service (August 1 to July 31st) and will be asked at the June Council meeting regarding their intention to continue their service.

- Continue to refine how BECLN as a collective of Buell Leaders and as individuals add value to the early childhood system using these foundational outcome statements developed through the first four years of BECLN:
 - We participate in and leverage leadership opportunities.
 - We generate new leadership knowledge.
 - We speak up about equity, opportunity, and educational excellence for all young children and families in Colorado.
 - We Influence the status quo of early childhood through intentional leadership practices.
- Annually agree upon a menu of focal activities for the Network and advise on their implementation based upon:
 - The BECLN shared values, practices, and desired impact outcomes.
 - Recommendations from the Network at large generated at the July retreat.
 - Shared prior learning and experiences.
 - Literature on best practices for networks, leadership, and adult learning.
- Support ongoing Network membership engagement by:
 - Agreeing upon and communicating membership expectations and processes for peer accountability.
 - Informing the intentional supports put in place for members during professional transitions (e.g. new BECLP graduates into the Network, Buell Leaders changing professional roles).
 - Guiding the ongoing development and functionality of the website as a tool to support an engaged and well-connected membership.
 - Leading for equity in the Network to ensure all alumni have opportunities to add and receive value for their participation and inform the BECLP recruitment process to ensure a diverse set of incoming Network members.
- In collaboration with the BECLN Director and Coordinator, share in the oversight of the BECLN operating expense budget to ensure funds are appropriately supporting focal activities.

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- Define the methods for how the Network will monitor its condition and performance given the guiding evaluation approach defined by the Network management team, regularly review and reflect upon documentation and data, and refine evaluation methods as necessary.

ALUMNI LEADER COUNCIL REPRESENTIVES GIVE:

- Unique perspectives, expertise, and connections as early childhood leaders and alumni of the program.
 - The group meets monthly in person on the Clayton Early Learning campus or virtually. For the 2016-2017 year, these meetings will be from 8:30-11:30 every 4th Friday of the month.
- Capacity as ongoing leading learner willing to practice the BECLN values and leadership practices.
 - For 2016-2017, the group will engage in an online Book Club around a shared foundational book on Network theory and practice: "Connecting to Change the World". In addition, a team will attend the Collective Impact Seminar November 29th-December 1st. Members are invited to share with the group additional resources or opportunities for learning throughout the year.
- Their voice as leaders and stewards of BECLN to foster continued connection among Buell Leaders and with other community partners and networks.
 - Group members each pick one (or more) other ongoing Network Activity to be involved in throughout the year. For example, join a workgroup to be a representative of the Council or actively lead an online discussion forum. (The opportunities to commit to an activity will become more clear as the Network establishes a set of activity goals)
- Note: Overall time commitment from members is on average approximately 6-8 hours per month.

ALUMNI LEADER COUNCIL REPRESENTIVES GET:

- An opportunity to lead the direction of an early childhood leadership Network in Colorado.
- Staff support from the BECLN Director and Coordinator to implement and accomplish activities and tasks determined and agreed upon by the council.
- An opportunity to participate in a community of practice among a cross-cohort group of Buell colleagues.
- A leadership service position to be recognized on professional resumes.
- A stipend of \$1,000 for each member in recognition of individual contributions as outlined above. Council members are allowed to split this amount up to be paid out at two points during the grant year (i.e. once in December and once in June). Since this is our first year, everyone is guaranteed this full amount unless the member is persistently not able to practice the below norms. A group conversation will occur if a different amount is found to be more equitable.
- Mileage reimbursement to attend Council meetings or related events that are 25 miles or more from their home.

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“Just because no one is ‘in control’ does not mean that there is no ‘control’. In fact, all healthy organisms have processes of control. However, they are distributed processes, not concentrated in any one authoritarian decision maker...the essence of organic control is the capacity to maintain internal balances critical to stability and to growth” (Senge, 1990, p. 292-293).

NORMS (based on the Operating Principles in Plastrik, Taylor, & Cleveland, 2014, p. 70):

- *“Make the network do the work”:*
 - We create value for each other and for the broader Network knowing that the collective work of our group and the activities of BECLN are informed, guided, and inspired by our collaborative actions.
 - We initiate and respond to group communication related to our collective work. We utilize several tools to facilitate efficient and inclusive group communication:
 - For group conversations about ongoing work or discussion topics, we utilize the Alumni Leaders Council Group page on the BECLP website. We challenge each other to try new collaborative tools and to explore/enhance the possibilities of our website.
 - For instances regarding a time-sensitive decision or important topic requiring all members input, we send direct emails to all group members (using group roster) with “RESPONSE NEEDED” in the email subject line. Members have one-week to respond unless otherwise noted.
- *“Do everything with someone, not alone”:*
 - As activity goals and priorities are established, we intentionally connect Council members into either pairs or small groups to support each other. We will intentionally consider the following when creating pairs/groups: (1) Council member’s interests and strengths (2) Building new relationships among group members, and (3) Identifying how the group uses and learns about technology to facilitate collaborative work.
 - Our meeting agendas, highlights, and handouts are consistently available on the Council group page on the BECLN website. This allows all members to do the work by staying informed of our work and maintain ongoing documentation of our collaborative process.
- *“Let connections flow to value”:*
 - Our connection with the Alumni Leaders Council leads to value when we are able to consistently participate and dedicate time to engage in meetings and between meeting communications. Therefore, if our individual life circumstances and time available for Council commitments change, we agree to the following:
 - If at any time during the course of your tenure on the Council you recognize that you are unable to fulfill your commitment, notify Network staff or group about your capacity to continue as a member of the group.
 - If the group has not heard from you in the course of a month, then Network staff will initiate a conversation about your capacity to continue as a member of the group

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- If desired, the group will seek to identify a less demanding role or connection within the Network that would lead to value for individuals unable to continue on the Council.
- *“Keep network information and decision making open and transparent”:*
 - As a group, we recognize the importance of creating transparent processes for making informed group decisions, thus:
 - For internal group decision-making, Council members fill out a brief quarterly online survey sent by Network staff (sometime during the months of September, December, March, and June). The quarterly survey is developed by the group to ask about approximate hours members have spent on Network related activities, the type of activities, and feedback regarding group process and work together. Results from this survey will be shared with the group to inform future decision making regarding Council agreements and norms, allow for fair and equitable decision making around future stipend amounts, and inform the grant report regarding the amount and type of in-kind services provided by alumni on the Council in addition to lessons learned along the way.
 - For decision-making that impacts the Network at large, Council members release a blog, brief, video, or other appropriate communication tool to explain the decision and the data and process used in making the decision. Network members will be provided an opportunity to comment or provide feedback.
- *“Keep plans flexible”:*
 - Participate in quarterly group check-in: The council will dedicate time in the September, December, March, and June meetings to review our progress and group feedback. The purpose of the check-in will be to make any necessary adjustments to agreements and supports provided by Network Staff based on the ongoing experience and feedback from Council members.
 - Additional agreements and norms are likely to emerge as we continue our work together. For example, this document does not fully address yet how we will make decisions beyond the use of data and group discussion (e.g., do we agree to consensus or majority rule?). These norms or practices will be further defined as needed throughout the year.

We actively share and commit to the above agreements and norms because ultimately we believe in the purpose, power, and possibility of BECLN. And because we know:

“Relationships are the pathways to the intelligence of the system. Through relationships, information is created and transformed, the organization’s identity expands to include more stakeholders, and the enterprise becomes wiser. The more access people have to one another, the more possibilities there are. Without connections, nothing happens.” (Wheatley, 2005, p. 40).

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ALUMNI LEADERS COUNCIL MEMBER INFORMATION FOR 2016-2017 ROSTER (To be completed in a through a Survey Monkey link):

Please fill out the below form if you commit to the above agreements and norms associated with serving as a member of the Alumni Leaders Council. This agreement will be in place until July 31st, 2017.

Printed name: _____

Best email for group communications: _____

Best phone number if someone on the group needs to contact me: _____

Buell Cohort: _____

Have you created and completed an online profile on the Buell Network Website?

Yes _____ No _____ Need further assistance in building or managing profile _____

Current professional role and organization: _____

Current leadership work or interests:

Why have you chosen to be a member of the BECLN Alumni Leaders Council?

What else do you want the group to know about you as a collaborator or leader?

THANK YOU FOR BECOMING A COUNCIL MEMBER!