

Council on Leadership and Advisory (COLA)

Purpose

The purpose of the Council on Leadership and Advisory (COLA) is to enhance the Association of University Centers on Disabilities by fostering current and new leaders with lived experience of disability, including their family members, to promote leadership in their programs and communities. Council membership will expand to include directors, faculty, staff, and advisors at center programs, and Consumer Advisory Council (CAC) members.

How COLA Relates to Center Work

COLA works to enhance AUCD by fostering and supporting current and new leaders with lived experience of disability, including their family members, in order to promote this same leadership in their programs, communities, and regions, and to serve in liaison roles with local disability leadership. The Council helps the association to:

- Build effective partnerships with other AUCD Councils and Committees, federal agencies, and other national disability groups.
- Build the capacity of network members advisory committees.
- Develop leaders and mentors that build the capacity of the network to affect change at the local, state, and national levels.
- Assist in the development of standards for participation of people with disabilities and family members in network members.
- People with disabilities and family members participate in program planning, research and evaluation, and public policy.

Membership

The Council on Leadership in Advocacy, also known as COLA, is made up of individuals with disabilities and family members from each network member across the AUCD network. COLA members are involved in Community Advisory Councils at UCEDDs, AUCD Councils and Committees, AUCD Special Interest Groups, and other advocacy opportunities. Membership is open to anyone in the AUCD network. However, each center will designate an individual representative who will cast one vote when a matter before the Council requires such action.

Focus Areas

The COLA annual plan is drafted to align with the AUCD Strategic Map.

- Diversity & Equity: Utilize network resources to support COLA membership.
- Leadership: COLA membership champions and model diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Research: 1) Increase visibility of COLA within AUCD network; 2) COLA is an integral partner to strengthen network engagement and collaboration; 3) People with I/DD &/or family members lead or direct research within AUCD network.
- Policy: COLA contributes to AUCD network policy, practices, and research.