

POSITION DESCRIPTION

FOR THE POSITION OF VICE PRESIDENT, EQUITY, CULTURE AND TALENT



May 2022

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POSITION DESCRIPTION



POSITION	Vice President, Equity, Culture and Talent
ORGANIZATION	Lumina Foundation
REPORTS TO	President & CEO
LOCATION	Indianapolis, IN
WEBSITE	luminafoundation.org

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ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

Lumina Foundation is an independent, private foundation in Indianapolis committed to making opportunities for learning beyond high school available to all. Lumina envisions a system that is easy to navigate, delivers fair results, and meets the nation’s talent needs through a broad range of credentials. The Foundation’s goal is to prepare people for informed citizenship and success in a global economy.



Photo: Lumina Foundation's new anchor headquarters in the Bottleworks District. Office building opening expected by mid-2024.

Lumina is collaborating with partners to design a learning system that gives every person—regardless of race and ethnicity, income, or other socioeconomic factors—the opportunities that only education and training after high school can provide. The Foundation works with governmental, nonprofit, and private-sector organizations to achieve its mission. Lumina’s work relies on strategic communication, empowering leaders who can bring about change, policy outreach to state and federal officials, investments in proven and promising practices, and targeted efforts to measure and evaluate progress.

Lumina has a passionate and committed staff. It is among the nation’s top private Foundations, with an endowment exceeding \$1.4 billion. The Foundation’s headquarters are located downtown Indianapolis, Indiana. The Foundation also has an office in Washington, D.C.

How Lumina is Making a Difference

Labor economists say two-thirds of U.S. residents from 25 to 64 will need college degrees, certificates, industry-recognized certifications, or other credentials of value by 2025 to meet individual, economic, and social demands. To help the millions of Americans who are not yet on track, dramatic changes in how and where learning occurs are necessary. Only then will the nation experience improve civic engagement, economic opportunity, health and welfare, racial equity, and social mobility.

The Foundation is working at local, state, and national levels to design an affordable, new learning landscape that is easier to navigate, especially for people who are Black, Hispanic, and Native American and often encounter barriers to success in existing education systems.

<h4>Quality Learning</h4> <p>We envision an integrated quality assurance system that ensures all college degrees and industry credentials deliver better outcomes for students.</p>	<h4>Racial Justice and Equity</h4> <p>We place achieving racial equity at the heart of all our work to ensure more adults earn degrees and other credentials after high school.</p>	<h4>Human Work and Learning</h4> <p>Economists, policymakers, and other experts spend a great deal of time talking about the “future of work,” but in many ways, the future is here....</p>	<h4>State Policy</h4> <p>Lumina’s state policy agenda begins with states setting robust postsecondary attainment goals that are disaggregated by race, ethnicity and income.</p>	<h4>Federal Policy</h4> <p>Lumina Foundation believes Congress and executive agencies should encourage education providers to affordably meet the needs of today’s student.</p>
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Lumina Foundation focuses on specific areas of interest, all of which work in concert to achieve its primary objective of ensuring that 60 percent of working-age Americans have college degrees or other quality credential by 2025. The Foundation’s internal teams are hard at work—investing, advocating, investigating, researching, and supporting efforts to effect systemic change.

Lumina’s work also spans to additional topics including Social Investment, Clear Pathways to Credentials, Funding Student Outcomes, and more. Read more about Lumina’s commitment to these [Areas of Work](#).

Lumina’s Commitment to Racial Equity

The fulcrum upon which all of Lumina’s work rests is racial equity and justice. The Foundation is committed to ensuring fair and just educational outcomes—especially for those who have long been left behind. Viewing all that the Foundation does through an equity-first lens, Lumina seeks to help create not only fair and just higher learning but a sustainable model for every adult, now and in years to come.

The convulsion of pain caused by the global health pandemic, the economic shockwaves that followed its onset and the murder of George Floyd, brought new clarity to the racial inequities that have always plagued this country’s educational, economic, criminal justice, and health care systems, among others. With the understanding that this moment represented an opportunity to finally resolve the systemic racism that has plagued our nation, in 2020 Lumina launched its [Equity First Framework](#) in an effort to ensure that recovery meant progress for everyone.

Making racial justice and equity its No. 1 priority, Lumina “*Equity First*” fuels the Foundation’s grantmaking as well as helps guide its operations, including Lumina’s finance, investments, human resources, and legal departments. Lumina identified three core elements to this approach:

- **Working definitions:** Equity is achieved when outcomes – such as the likelihood of having a high-quality credential, or being called for an interview, or being selected as a Lumina grantee or contractor – cannot be predicted by a person’s race or ethnicity. Justice, meanwhile, is realized when the policies, practices, systems, and root causes that lead to inequitable outcomes are dismantled and eradicated. All of Lumina’s new work will be aligned with these definitions.
- **Operating guidelines and criteria:** Lumina’s work must be specifically aimed at facilitating the success of Black, Latino and Native American populations.
- **The Racial Justice and Equity Fund** – \$15 million in grants focused on efforts to dismantle systems of racism, and support projects outside of Lumina’s core strategy areas. [Learn more.](#)

As part of Lumina’s Equity First journey, members of the Foundation staff are sharing their “equity narratives” – personal journeys around race in America. These are part of a collective effort to explore the country’s long history of structural racism and how these barriers affect the people Lumina is trying to help — and influence how and why staff chose this work. Read [more about the project](#).



We must walk
the path of racial
justice together.





ROLE SUMMARY

As Lumina approaches the completion of its [strategic plan](#) and closing argument for the 2025 goal, the Foundation is intensifying its push toward a more just and fair society, one which ensures paths to greater learning for people who might otherwise be left behind. The creation of the Equity, Culture and Talent role, a new executive-level position, reflects Lumina's ongoing commitment to furthering its Equity-First approach internally and externally. Moreover, the role will galvanize the work launched by the Foundation's organizational culture workgroup which conceived the servant leadership traits and characteristics Lumina's leadership team is committed to. While Lumina has made significant progress infusing Equity-First into its work at the Foundation and with partners, there's a lot of important work ahead.

Purpose

The position is responsible for leading the Foundation's internal and external equity work, building the strategy that embeds equity in all of the Foundation's work and measures and reports progress on the Foundation's equity strategy. The position leads the Foundation's organizational culture and development capacity and is responsible for talent and talent management. This role is adept in building community and understands the strategic role process plays in an empowering and engaging culture.

As an Officer of the Foundation and member of the Executive Team, the position: provides input on the Foundation's strategic direction, serves as a critical internal/external thought leader and spokesperson, and ensures fiduciary oversight and operational excellence, serves as a liaison to Lumina's philanthropic, public, and private partners to enhance the Foundation's impact and credibility; and demonstrates ongoing responsibility and accountability for Lumina's organization-wide outcomes and metrics to ensure high performance and contribution to the Foundation's emerging work.

- ▼ **Equity:** Leads the Foundation's internal and external equity work, which includes developing and implementing tools and approaches that lead to equitable outcomes; serves as an advisor and consultant to the Executive Team in developing the Team's effectiveness in leading on equity; advises each department on its internal practices including grantmaking, vendor selection and contracting, hiring, performance assessment and promotion process and equitable decision-making.
- ▼ **Organizational Culture and Organizational Development:** Leads the Foundation's organizational culture and development work to fully develop an inclusive, empowering, and equitable work culture and environment. Understands and promotes a culture built on safety, shared vulnerability, and established purpose. Actively works toward an energized and engaged culture focused on solving hard problems.
- ▼ **Human Resources:** Provides overall leadership and day to day management of the Human Resources function by effectively leading and managing talent acquisition, retention, diversity and inclusion, organizational development, training and leadership development, employee relations, communication, compensation (including Executive and Director compensation), benefits and total rewards, and succession planning.
- ▼ **External Representative:** Leverages Lumina's role as a leadership organization within philanthropy, postsecondary education, and other aligned sectors. Leads community-building efforts particularly in communities that reflect Lumina's equity populations. Develops and delivers speeches and



presentations to key stakeholders designed to facilitate progress toward Goal 2025 and to situate Lumina's *Equity First* orientation as the anchor for both our strategic and operational efforts.

- ▼ **Executive Team:** Actively engages in the Executive Team and is accountable for all the defined leadership roles of that senior management group.
- ▼ **Collaborative Leadership:** Thrives in a work environment that requires strong lateral influence and competence. Displays characteristics of a servant leader who actively listens, focuses on and gives trust to others, and is eager to spend time and resources in developing leadership qualities in others
- ▼ **Functional Leadership:** Support direct reports in their work by serving as an experienced, objective adviser and mentor. Provide administrative oversight on expenses, travel, grantmaking, contracting, and other functional processes. On-board new hires to ensure they have the introductions, resources, training, and productivity tools necessary to be effective as quickly as possible.
- ▼ **Staff Development:** Provide work assignments and mentoring opportunities to facilitate growth and development. Review individual and collective performance and provide clarifying examples where necessary. Support professional and career development by discussing and documenting with direct reports their professional development interests, strengths, and gaps.

Qualifications

- ▼ Graduate degree or demonstrated competency in equity, organizational culture and development, talent management or other related content area.
- ▼ At least 10 years of senior-level experience preferably in the higher education, nonprofit, public and/or philanthropic sectors.
- ▼ High-level analytical, problem-solving, and strategic planning abilities.
- ▼ Track record of public will-building via speeches, articles, and reports.
- ▼ Political and policy acuity.
- ▼ Expertise in change management development and implementation.
- ▼ Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to communicate concepts and activities accurately, effectively, and in ways that are suited to the Foundation's varied stakeholders.
- ▼ Expertise in managing people, projects, and budgets.
- ▼ Ability to use technology effectively.

Personal Characteristics

As an Executive Team member, this team member must be committed to the core values of Lumina and demonstrate a history of servant leadership including being: a good listener, people-focused and values developing others, humble, trusting, caring, and collaborative.

Critical Competencies

The combination of observable and measurable knowledge, skills, abilities, and practices that contribute to enhanced employee performance and ultimately result in organizational success.

- ▼ **Equity Lens** – As with Lumina's value, "*We believe in Equity and Justice First,*" this staff member should have an equity lens in the work that they do, and the outcomes they seek. Equity should be central in the practice of how they act and have acted to accomplish their professional goals.



- ▼ **Community-building** – Brings a history of doing community-building work, specifically in (a) community/communities that reflect Lumina’s equity populations.
- ▼ **Process-oriented** – a background leading process, such as decision-making processes, or stakeholder management processes.
- ▼ **DEI Leadership Expertise** – Deep and sustained experience with proven success in creating, planning, leading and implementing racial equity, diversity, and inclusion vision, strategies and programs. Track record of successfully leading integration of racial equity, diversity, and inclusion throughout organizational policies, practices and management and culture.
- ▼ **Change Management Experience** – Background in leading and representing change process that meaningfully and successfully moved an organization into a more equitable environment. Demonstrated experience establishing key performance indicators utilizing data to drive organizational change and accountability.
- ▼ **Influencer** – Keen understanding of how to empower people, influence colleagues, and work across departments in a complex organization.
- ▼ **Collaborative** – Demonstrated ability to work within a collaborative environment, encourages collaboration within and between teams, and possess the ability to cultivate relationships both internal and external to Lumina.
- ▼ **Communication** – Proven experience as a communicator comfortable in dialogue with a broad range of individuals at all levels of understanding and comfort levels with social justice, racial equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- ▼ **Talent Management** – Possess fundamental knowledge of the day to day management of Human Resources functions including talent acquisition, retention, diversity and inclusion, organizational development, training and leadership development, employee relations, communication, compensation, benefits and total rewards, and succession planning.

Work Environment and Physical Demands

- ▼ Work may be performed in an office environment, mostly sedentary.
- ▼ Travels 20%-30%, including overnight stays.
- ▼ This Position Summary is only a summary of the typical job functions, not an exhaustive list of all possible responsibilities, and may be subject to change at any time due to reasonable accommodation or other reasons. Lumina employees must present proof to Human Resources that they are fully vaccinated from the COVID-19 virus or have requested and have been granted a religious or medical exemption from being fully vaccinated.

Reporting To

This role reports to **Jamie Merisotis**, President and CEO. Merisotis, an international leader in higher education, human work, philanthropy, and public policy, has been Lumina’s president and CEO since 2008. Before joining Lumina, he was the co-founder of a non-partisan research and policy organization and served as an advisor and consultant in southern Africa, Europe, the former Soviet Union, and other areas of the world. Merisotis is a Council on Foreign Relations member.





An innovator committed to increasing educational attainment in the United States, he focuses on realizing racial justice and equity through Lumina’s efforts to recast higher learning for today’s students. These adults increasingly are Black and brown, from low-income families, or the first in their families to go to college.

Frequently sought as a media commentator and contributor, his writing has appeared in The Washington Post, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, National Journal, Stanford Social Innovation Review, Washington Monthly, Politico, The Hill, Roll Call, and other publications.

Previously, Merisotis was president of the nonpartisan, D.C.-based Institute for Higher Education Policy, which he co-founded. He also was executive director of a bipartisan national commission the president and congressional leaders appointed to study college affordability. Merisotis is the author of *America Needs Talent*, named a Booklist Top 10 Business book of 2016, and *Human Work in the Age of Smart Machines*, an Amazon category bestseller released in 2020.

Merisotis is on the governing board of The Ditchley Foundation in the United Kingdom. He is past chairman and trustee emeritus of the Council on Foundations and he leads a task force for the organization highlighting philanthropy’s ethical responsibility to the greater good. He also is past chairman of The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis, the world’s largest such entity offering exceptional learning experiences through the arts, sciences, and humanities to transform the lives of children and families. Merisotis is on the Central Indiana Corporate Partnership board. He also advises companies that rely on artificial intelligence and machine learning to address complex challenges related to work and learning.

A distinguished graduate of Bates College, he has been awarded honorary degrees from colleges and universities worldwide.

Lumina Foundation for Education is an Equal Opportunity Employer

Contact

Lumina Foundation for Education has retained the Diversified Search Group for this engagement. Jason León and Neysa Dillon Brown are leading the search. [Click here to express interest and submit your resumes and cover letters.](#) Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed via email to luminasearch@divsearch.com.