



**AUTHORITY, LEADERSHIP, INTENTION AND GENERATION NEXT**

# ALIGN



**GREETING THE NOW**

**A.K. Rice Institute  
Annual Group Relations Conference**  
In person/Quasi-residential

[www.alignconference.org](http://www.alignconference.org)

**JUNE 22-26, 2022**

UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO

“

**While events  
change our lives,  
intention changes  
the trajectory.**

Richie Norton

”

Are we ready to align ourselves with **what the next of now most needs?**

Are we open to experience **an exploration beyond the known narratives?**

Are we prepared to **set the intention and embrace the authority to lead?**

# Context

The **Authority, Leadership, Intention and Generation Next (ALIGN)** is a conference in the group relations tradition.

## You are invited.

This group relations is offered in the context of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity of this moment. While we appear to be entering a “new now,” the contours of what is next are not yet known.

Recognizing this nebulous reality, the ALIGN conference offers an opportunity to study and experience the systemic and unconscious forces at play as we seek a new day.

**How nimble, agile, resilient, and responsive will be to the emerging possibilities?  
What is learned as we enter this now—together?**

ALIGN honors the group relations tradition and embraces a generational shift as a part of the renewal of the A.K. Rice Institute National Conference. As such, our focus will be on the exercise of authority, the emergence of leadership, and the unconscious dynamics inherent in the study of groups and social systems

**Our central inquiry is on how our intention, individually and collectively, influences the exercise of authority and leadership as the next generation prepares to greet this precarious new now.**

ALIGN is offered in the context of the volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity of these times. While we appear to be entering a “new now,” the contours of this emerging moment are not yet known. How we once more relate to one another in-person after a two-year plus hiatus is a part of what we will study. Recognizing this nebulous reality, ALIGN is an opportunity to study how we may set the intention to be reflective, nimble, agile and responsive to greet the emerging possibilities of the new now.

ALIGN acknowledges the continued presence of political polarity, racial inequity, and economic disparity. There is an urgent climate crisis. There is war that threatens to inflame the world in conflagration. There is a relentless virus that is becoming increasingly endemic. ALIGN offers a space where exploration of such matters beyond the chatter of sound bites, social media posts, and echo chambers can be more richly and fully explored.

Quoting the Talmud...

“

**Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world's grief. Do justly now, love mercy now, walk humbly now. You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to abandon it.**

”

Let us  
**ALIGN**

## **Quasi-Residential**

This conference is scheduled and planned as a quasi-residential, in-person, face-to-face event. At present, there is no virtual option offered. The intention is for the conference staff to be in-residence. A limited number of housing reservations will be held for members at accommodations at or near that of the staff. To optimize in-person participation, members from outside the San Diego region are encouraged to make their own housing arrangements.

to  
greet  
this new  
now and learn  
... together.

## **COVID Requirements**

USD requires vaccination, booster, and face covering currently for all persons participating in public indoor gatherings in-person. The conference management will comply with local guidance and health mandates. Changes in this guidance will be communicated as it comes available.

# Research

We will be conducting research about the nature of learning that takes place during and after the conference. The purpose of the research is to understand member, staff, and organizational learning related to the conference themes. As part of this research, you may be invited to complete pre- and post-conference surveys and/or interviews. Responses are confidential and anonymous, and your participation is completely voluntary. Research Associate(s) will also participate in staff meetings and observe groups throughout the conference. You will be asked to consent or decline to participate in surveys and/or interviews once in person.

# Housing

As a quasi-residential conference, conference participants (members) will be responsible for their own overnight housing and transport to the USD campus. Conference fees do NOT include costs for housing accommodations.

It is expected that the conference membership will be a hybrid of those who commute from home, choose to stay with family and friends, and those who may or may not make reservations at the hotel where consultants from the staff will be in residence.

A limited number of rooms are being held for ALIGN conference staff and members at:

**The Atwood Hotel**  
**1201 Hotel Circle South**  
**San Diego, CA 92108**

**Tel. no.: 619-255-1920**  
**Email: [atwoodhotel.frontdesk@yahoo.com](mailto:atwoodhotel.frontdesk@yahoo.com)**  
**Website: [theatwoodhotel.com](http://theatwoodhotel.com)**

Please make reservations directly with The Atwood. Ask for the ALIGN CONFERENCE to receive a 10% on your reservation. This discount and the hold on the block of rooms will expire by May 31, 2022.

It is recommended that reservations are made early. At present The Atwood charges no penalty for canceled reservations 48 hours in advance of check-in. There are several similarly priced hotels in the Mission Valley/Hotel Circle area that are all within a 10-minute Car App ride to USD. Members are free to choose other accommodations.



## Primary Task

The primary task of ALIGN is to study the diverse ways conscious and unconscious processes arise in our exercise of authority, practice of leadership and exploration of intention. We will study group-level dynamics as they are happening. Our aim is to learn how behavior emerges in the “here-and-now” as well as how the roles we occupy in this temporary social ecosystem may inform our choices to live with more intention.

## Purpose

The purpose of ALIGN is to create opportunities for all participants, members and staff, to gain a better understanding of factors that influence our choices and behaviors in groups—especially related to reality and uncertainty of an endemic “new now.” While our focal purpose is on creating opportunities for learning, the potential for experiences that increase our readiness and capacity for personal, organizational, and societal transformation may also be available for study.

# EVENTS

**ALIGN is designed to be experienced as a whole, in its entirety.**

What follows are brief descriptions of the component events that make up this whole:

## Small Study Groups

Each participant is to be in a Small Study Group consisting of about 8-10 participants and 1-2 consultants. The task of the Small Study Group is to explore the emergence of leadership and exercise authority as it unfolds in the here-and-now as related to intention in the "new now." The Small Study Group is a setting that allows face-to-face interchange.

## Large Study Group

The Large Study Group is composed of all conference participants and 2-4 staff consultants. The task of the Large Study Group is the same as that of the Small Study Group in a setting that makes face-to-face interaction. As such, The Large Study Group highlights dynamics that may occur in communities and large organizations or gatherings where direct personal interactions are limited.

## **Review and Application Groups/ NOW–Nexus of Ongoing Work**

Participants are assigned to a group of 5-6 people and a consultant. The NOW provides members with the opportunity to review their experiences and the roles they have taken in the conference-as-a-whole. Particular attention is given to what and how individual members are learning. Participants will also have an opportunity to explore parallels between roles taken up in ALIGN and those played out in groups, communities, and organizations in everyday life.

## **Conference Reflection Discussion**

Participants and staff have an opportunity to collaborate in reflecting, reviewing and analyzing their learning in across the ALIGN conference. The Reflection Discussion centers the opportunity to recognize and discuss feelings, attitudes, and behaviors that have emerged and discover patterns of meaning and potential action. An invitation. to consider collectively the deeper levels of significance with implications for intention in our outside communities and organizations may be explored.



# INTENTION EVENT (Institutional Event)

The task of this event is to study and give meaning to the conference as an emerging social ecosystem.

Conference members form their own groups in the Intention Event. The focus of this event is to study issues of group formation, membership, and representation. Particular attention will be given to the boundary interactions and exchanges within and between the member-formed groups and the staff management group.

All groups in the IE are charged with examining the intention they represent and bring to emerging ecosystem.

Collectively the aim is to give meaning to the conscious and unconscious intention of unfolding shared learning.

How what emerges in the IE relates to the overall ALIGN experiences and wider larger societal context may be explored.

The staff management group works in public and provides consultation to the participant member groups upon request.

# Opportunities for Learning

In this experience, the members and staff will have opportunities to:

- Study authority, leadership and intention in the emerging “new now”
- Learn about covert and overt group processes in groups
- Identify underlying patterns when we:
  - Forming groups
  - Establish leadership structures
  - Create alignment with other groups
  - Engage the social ecosystem
- Explore in “real time” how we:
  - Take up roles
  - Negotiate authority
  - Accomplish tasks
  - Manage boundaries reflect on
  - Learning in “real time”
- Examine the fluidity of roles and identities in an emergent context.
- Work with competition, collaboration, conflict, coalition-building, envy, delegation, and love.
- Encounter isolation, autonomy, affiliation, collaboration, and coalition building
- Deepen awareness of capacity to lead and advocate in home organizations
- Apply what has been learned and experienced to life choices

## Conference Staff

Staff manage the experience as a whole and take up consulting roles during its various parts. As managers, staff manage the boundary conditions of the experience, particularly in relation to time, task, and territory. As consultants, staff offer interpretations, observations, working hypotheses and reflections that explore the conscious and unconscious aspects of organizational life in the system as it emerges. The focus of study is primarily on group level dynamics rather than on the individual, except as where an individual may represent a dynamic for the whole.

Staff do not manage the participant members or their behavior except in cases where the safety of members or staff may be involved. Members are free to engage the primary task and purpose as they choose and as they authorize themselves and each other to do.

# Conference Staff



**Zachary Green, Ph.D.**  
Director

Professor of Practice, Leadership Studies and Director of Leadership Development, The Nonprofit Institute, University of San Diego; Co-founder, IMAGO Global Grassroots; Founding Director; Horizon Equity Scholars Program; Associate, Washington-Baltimore Center; Fellow, A.K. Rice Institute; Founding Circle and Board, Group Relations International.

## Administration Team



**Anna Runion, MA**

Religion, Point Loma Nazarene University — Resident Minister, University of San Diego; Doctoral Student and Teaching Assistant, Department of Leadership Studies, University of San Diego; Fellow, GLEAN Network; Seminarian and Adese Fellow, United Church of Christ; Co-Creator, Group Relations International.



**Novien Yarber, MA**

Doctoral Candidate, Department of Leadership Studies (SOLES); Lecturer & Program Coordinator, Leadership Studies Minor, Department of Leadership Studies (SOLES); Equity Fellow for Leadership & Philanthropy, Horizon Equity Scholars Program, The Nonprofit Institute (SOLES); Fellow, Gates Millennium Scholars Program; Co-Creator, Group Relations International.

## Research Associate



**John Weng, MA**

Principal, John Weng Consulting; Leadership Coach, Execonline; Leadership Solutions Facilitator, Center for Creative Leadership; Associate Director, Student Governments, Auxiliares and Services, UC San Diego; Adjunct Lecturer and Doctoral Candidate, Department of Leadership Studies, University Of San Diego; Member, International Leadership Association; Co-Creator, Group Relations International; Consultant Candidate, A.K. Rice Institute for the Study of Social Systems.



## **Tyler Bean, CPA, CFE**

Manager, Forensic & Integrity Services, EY LLP; Member, American Institute of Certified Public Accountants; Member, Association of Certified Fraud Examiners; Mentor, Freshmen League Program, Boston College; Member and Former Board Treasurer, Center for the Study of Groups and Social Systems (CSGSS); Co-Creator, Group Relations International; Associate Member and Consultant Candidate, A.K. Rice Institute.



## **Laura Dorsey-Elson, Ph.D**

Director, Center for Innovative Instruction & Scholarship and Associate Professor of Strategic Communication, Morgan State University; President, Elson Consulting Group, LLC; President, Washington-Baltimore Center for the Study of Group Relations; Associate, A.K. Rice Institute for the Study of Social Systems.



## **Yaro Fong-Olivares, MS**

Executive Director, Center for Women and Business, Bentley University; Leadership Psychology PsyD candidate, William James College; M.S., The New School; B.A. Barnard College. Organizational Development leader with a focus on racial justice, equity, and inclusion; Past President, Executive Committee, New York Center; Member, Center for the Study of Groups and Social Systems; Co-Creator, Group Relations International; Certified Consultant, AK Rice Institute for the Study of Social Systems.



## **Betsy Hasegawa Ed.D.**

Harvard Graduate School of Education — Immediate Past Associate Vice President for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, South Seattle College; The Lummi Nation Peacemaking Circle Leadership Team; Fellow, A.K. Rice Institute for the Study of Social Systems; Co-Creator, Group Relations International.



## **Salina Villegas M.A., M.Ed**

Director of Leadership Programs, RISE San Diego; Retreat Facilitator, The Posse Foundation; Faculty, RISE San Diego Urban Leadership Fellows Program; Fellow, Lideramos Latinx Leadership Program; Fellow, RISE Urban Leadership Fellows Program; Horizon Scholar, Nonprofit Institute, University of San Diego; Co-Creator, Group Relations International.



## **Stacey Williams, MS**

Vice President of Programs, Montana Conservation Corps; Lecturer and Graduate, School of Leadership and Education Sciences, University of San Diego; Vice President, Grex Board; Co-Creator, Group Relations International; Consultant Candidate, A.K. Rice Institute for The Study of Social Systems.



# Special Notes

## Who's the event for?

This conference is designed for those who seek to deepen their capacity to enter nuanced conversations beyond the basic and the binary on the issues of the day. ALIGN requires openness and willingness to enter and remain present to exploration of personal and systemic dynamics from a group perspective.

While no particular background or experience is necessary to participate, personal and emotional resilience are important resources for this kind of learning.

This conference may be for you if you seek to:

- Learn through immediate and direct experience
- Study group dynamics and their influence on our overt and covert actions
- Deepen competence in the encounter of identity and equity
- See to go below the surface of learning—in ourselves and in others
- Embrace an inclusive authority to lead
- Greet the emerging “now” with greater intention

Conference members from a wide variety of fields, organizations, educational backgrounds, and vocations have gained valuable learning in group relations experiences. Members who have careers in the helping professions, community advocacy, organizational consultation, education, law, leadership, management, technology, and human resources have found the learning to be particularly applicable to their professions.

## Attendance Policy

Members are committing to attend and participate in all components of the experience in-person. As the conference is designed to be an integrated whole, with each component building on the previous, participants are expected to attend all sessions.

Any member who misses a session of the conference is requested to inform the conference administrative team. Members who do not complete in-person registration may be administratively withdrawn from the conference without refund.

## Withdrawal Policy

Fees can only be refunded (less \$100 administration charge) if a written notice of cancellation (via email) is received by 6 PM PST on June 17, 2022.

## Confidentiality

Staff will not report the behavior of any individual member to anyone outside the conference and the boards of the sponsoring organizations.

## Stress

The conference is an educational endeavor and does not provide psychotherapy or counseling. Although the experiential learning available can be stimulating and enriching, it can also be emotionally stressful and confrontational. Thus, applicants who are ill, experiencing significant personal difficulties or are intensely emotionally triggered by views different from their own should forgo participating at this time. Registration and conference membership may be refused or rescinded at the discretion of the conference staff.

# Times & Location

## Location

### University of San Diego

### Sister Mother Rosalie Hill Hall

School of Leadership and Education Sciences  
Marian Way and Camino Way  
San Diego, CA

### BEGINS: **Wednesday, June 22, 2022**

Registration Opens	12:00 pm
Conference Opens	1:00 pm

### ENDS: **Sunday, June 26, 2022**

Conference Ends	2:30 pm
Social (optional) Ends	3:00 pm

## Fees

### EARLY BIRD (before 6/3/22)

- \$995
- \$895 (group of 3 or more)
- \$650 (full time students/)

### REGULAR FEE (deadline 6/17//22)

- \$1095
- \$955 (AKRI members/ GRI co-creators)
- \$995 (group of 3 or more)
- \$750 (full time students)



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REGISTER HERE

[www.alignconference.org](http://www.alignconference.org)

For more information please contact us at:  
[aligngrc@gmail.com](mailto:aligngrc@gmail.com)

 **akri** the a.k. rice institute  
for the study of social systems®

 **GROUP  
RELATIONS  
INTERNATIONAL**  
Creating a better world - together