

Apr 24, 2023

MEDIA CONTACT: Kip Dooley, dooley@newamerica.org

Brown University, Duke University, Hamilton College, James Madison University, Missouri University of Science & Technology and West Virginia University join the Public Interest Technology University Network (PIT-UN), committing to a shared mission to prepare their students to design, build, and govern new technologies in ways that advance the public interest.

Washington, D.C. — New America is pleased to announce six new member institutions have joined the Public Interest Technology University Network: **Brown University, Duke University, Hamilton College, James Madison University, Missouri University of Science & Technology** and **West Virginia University**. Since 2019, [members of PIT-UN](#) have created new curricula and career pathways for practitioners-in-training, and have supported faculty in their efforts to strengthen and spread public interest technology as an emerging discipline. Today, the network has grown to 63 member institutions.

The six new members will undertake a range of innovative work, including:

- Redefining computer science education, research, and technology to prioritize the needs, problems, and aspirations of people that technology has traditionally left behind
- Designing interdisciplinary convenings, research projects and degree programs focused on ethics in technology design and deployment
- Creating PIT-specific internship programs for undergraduate students
- Piloting curricula that weaves STEM disciplines with the humanities to engage questions of ethics and justice in relation to science, technology, and society
- Expanding experiential and service learning programs to provide opportunities for PIT projects via community-based partnerships
- Building bridges across the rural / urban divide to respond to urgent public interest issues such as climate change, substance abuse and inequality

“We’re very excited to have this thoughtful and ambitious group of institutions joining the network,” says Andreen Soley, director of the Public Interest Technology program at New America. “Each has already been doing public interest technology work in some capacity and we look forward to seeing how they will contribute to our existing efforts, collaborate with their PIT-UN peers, and advance the core values of the network within their local communities.”

The new members represent a range of geographies from the Northeast, Southeast, Midwest and Appalachia regions of the U.S., and unique research agendas and communities, with student populations ranging from 2,000 to nearly 30,000. Earlier this year, Lane College, Meharry Medical College and Prairie View A&M [joined PIT-UN](#), bringing the total number of minority-serving institutions (MSI) in the network to 19.

While these new members are now eligible to apply for funding through PIT-UN's annual Network Challenge, their most meaningful engagements may come through fostering thoughtful and research-driven recommendations for the higher education community through regional and thematic working groups, and the Network's annual convening, which will be hosted by Boston University on [October 12-13, 2023](#).

To date, PIT-UN has deployed its annual [Network Challenge](#) and other subject-matter specific [requests for proposals](#) to invest \$14 million in collaborative models that develop experiential learning opportunities, support faculty development, build career pathways, and increase access to technology design, use and governance among groups traditionally excluded from tech.

Members have developed over 10 new public interest technology institutes and labs to facilitate interdisciplinary research and teaching, created over 20 fellowships and communities of practice to share knowledge and best practices, and offered more than 60 new or reimagined courses under the public interest technology umbrella that have begun to shape clear degree pathways. The Network facilitates cross-institutional learning, so universities can iterate on successful models to advance their strategic goals as an institution within the PIT ecosystem.

“Colleges and universities have a vital role to play in designing, deploying and governing new technologies in a way that guards and promotes the public interest,” says New America CEO Anne-Marie Slaughter. “As an organization committed to renewing the Promise of America and realizing our highest ideals, New America is thrilled to see how PIT-UN continues to grow in number, in diversity and in its capacity to seed human-centered technological futures.”

PIT-UN is convened by New America, the Ford Foundation, and the Hewlett Foundation. The network and challenge grants are funded through the support of the Ford Foundation, Hewlett Foundation, Mastercard Impact Fund, with support from the Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth, Schmidt Futures and The Siegel Family Endowment.