

2019 ANNUAL REPORT



CONNECT

Bridging Connections in Postsecondary Education

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CONNECTIONS

Connections within the postsecondary education and philanthropic community are essential for building the field, sharing knowledge, and imagining new and enhanced solutions.

Recognizing the importance of connections, ECMC Foundation supports institutions, programs, community-based organizations, entrepreneurs and others. Our partners, in varied and diverse ways, connect with stakeholders, collaborate to leverage strengths, and share learnings and solutions across the field.

ECMC Foundation's 2019 Annual Report encapsulates the importance of connections and how the Foundation's strategic investments and grantmaking are bridging ideas and perspectives across the field to improve postsecondary education outcomes and help all learners unlock their fullest potential.



OUR MISSION

To inspire and to facilitate improvements that affect educational outcomes—especially among underserved populations—through evidence-based innovation.

OUR VISION

All learners unlock their fullest potential.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Peter J. Taylor



Last year I went to a Boxing Day party during the winter holidays at a neighbor's house.

While there, I met someone who is a mental health counselor at a major research university. In our conversation, I asked about the number one problem she sees among college students who visit her office. Her response: Too many students today don't know how to make friends.

In an era of constant communication and information overload, I worry that people are losing the practice of making real connections with each other via something other than electronic devices.

Certainly, higher education is not immune to this phenomenon. The field often faces lengthy processes, policies and procedures, resulting in silo operations, unproductive practices and—most importantly—missed opportunities to help students succeed and unlock their fullest potential.

The theme of ECMC Foundation's 2019 Annual Report is Connections. It encapsulates how connections across the postsecondary education field and philanthropy are critical for field-building, knowledge-sharing and imagining new and enhanced solutions that impact student outcomes. In the report, we uplift examples of grantees, partners and colleagues who have made "connections" a key ingredient in their program, policy and research.

Take transfer pathways from community colleges to four-year institutions, for example. The system was originally designed

to help students transfer to four-year institutions; yet, different transfer and graduation requirements across departments and institutions create circumstances that are too often impossible for students to decipher. A refined process informed by evidence could improve the connection between the two systems of postsecondary education and promote efficient and on-time transfer.

Connections from educational pathways to career pathways also typically function in silos. Education and training programs focus on educating and training students for a career, but too often there's a disconnect to the real world of work. To help students succeed in education and career, a connective tissue between employers, community-based organizations, education and training providers is necessary.

Most importantly, the need for connections between people—smart, well-intentioned people who must work closely together, share lessons and collaborate. Together, we can do so much more.

It is my and the ECMC Foundation team's hope that you walk away with this key takeaway: Human connections matter and our work will be all the more impactful for the time we take to nurture and sustain them.

A LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Jack O'Connell

John DePodesta: Looking Back on a Visionary Leader's Legacy



Thirty years ago, a group of committed citizens was called to serve—and they answered with resilience and grace. Against the turbulent end of federal student loan guarantor the Higher Education Assistance Foundation (HEAF), the U.S. Department of Education (Department) asked a group of leaders to take on the formidable task of resolving its insolvency. The agency's financial collapse in 1990 threatened the stability of federal student loan programs and was expected to generate significant losses to taxpayers.

Among the rescue team, was statesman, lawyer and businessman John DePodesta, selected for his intellect and leadership skills. As HEAF director, he helped the Department close out HEAF and transition its student loan portfolios to new student loan guarantor, ECMC, an affiliate of ECMC Foundation.

Part of the "Original Six" Board of Directors, John has been a visionary leader since ECMC's humble beginnings in 1994, facing as many challenges as it has celebrated achievements.

The news of John's formal retirement at the end of 2019 comes with sadness and celebration. As sad as we are to see John leave, he also leaves us with so much to celebrate in his 25 years at ECMC Group. He continuously brought his diplomacy and knowledge to each gathering of diverse stakeholders across government, education, law, philanthropy and finance. John intently listened to all perspectives. He valued all thoughts and ideas. At times when we digressed, he helped us connect

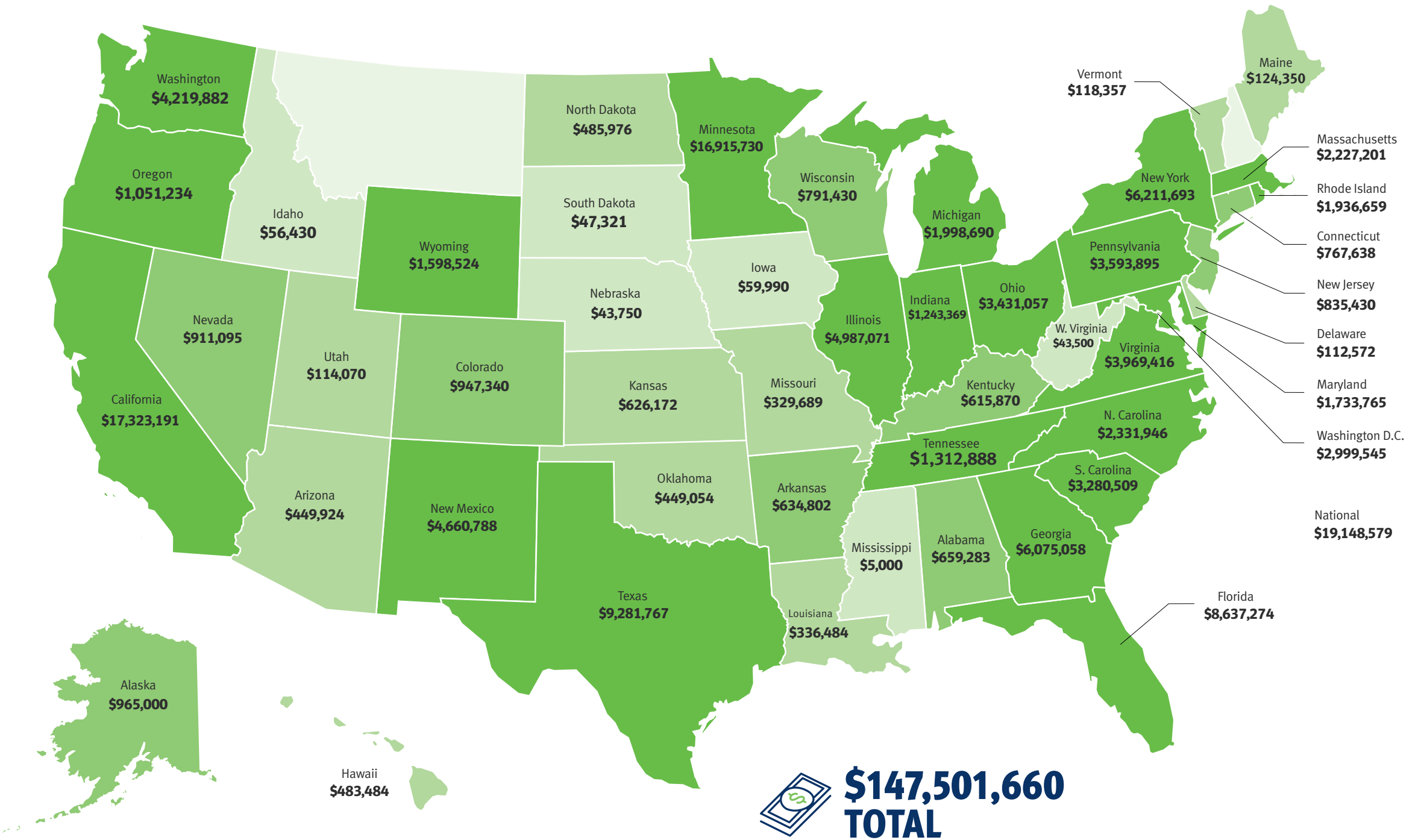
back to our collective mission of helping students succeed. John's unmatched leadership skills could be easily seen in his roles as Board director from 1994-2014 and Board chair from 2014-2019.

Among John's many achievements was leading the strategic shift of ECMC Foundation from a charitable organization to a strategic grantmaker. For more than 10 years, operating out of parent company ECMC Group's Minnesota headquarters, the Foundation provided scholarships to help students pay for tuition and expenses. While this helped thousands of individual students, the Board of Directors wanted deeper, more meaningful change. In early 2014, the Board made the strategic decision to shift its philanthropic efforts to address systemic challenges in postsecondary education and help millions of more students from underserved, low-income, first-generation backgrounds succeed.

I am proud and honored to have been alongside John during this shift, where I had a front-row seat to his passion for postsecondary education. To John, the creation of the Foundation meant more than just creating a more robust workforce or producing more postsecondary degrees. It meant something deeper, more meaningful: equipping the American people with knowledge—the key to an informed citizenry, to a democratic government run by the people and for the people, and to human progress.

DISTRIBUTION OF GRANTS & INVESTMENTS

All Grants & Investments from May 2014 to December 2019



2019 GRANTS & INVESTMENTS

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| College Success | \$14,756,993 |
| Core College Success | \$9,434,633 |
| Basic Needs Initiative | \$2,985,367 |
| ECMC Outreach & Student Success | \$2,256,993 |
| Other Grants | \$80,000 |

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| Career Readiness | \$17,540,318 |
| Core Career Readiness | \$8,598,926 |
| ECMC Education* | \$5,041,158 |
| CTE Leadership Collaborative | \$3,900,234 |

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|
| Education Innovation Ventures | \$2,495,000 |
|-------------------------------|-------------|

| | |
|-------------|-------------|
| GO! Program | \$1,000,000 |
|-------------|-------------|

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| Special Opportunities | \$2,444,951 |
|-----------------------|-------------|

\$38,237,262

*Formerly Zenith Education Group

2019 HIGHLIGHTS

\$38,237,262
DOLLARS

granted and invested this year

290

GRANTS & INVESTMENTS
made to programs in 33 states
and the District of Columbia

175

NEW ORGANIZATIONS
joined our portfolios of
grants/investments

1

INITIATIVE
launched: Basic Needs Initiative

76

ORGANIZATIONS
awarded grants through employee vote,
funded by the GO! Program

Bringing Together ECMC Foundation's Community at the Partner Connections Convening

In October, ECMC Foundation hosted its inaugural Partner Connections Convening in Washington, D.C., bringing together more than 150 individuals from 129 organizations. The event included an informative and engaging agenda and programs that provided opportunities for attendees to foster connections with others working to improve postsecondary outcomes.

Connecting ECMC Foundation Fellows from the CTE Leadership Collaborative

ECMC Foundation hosted the first CTE Leadership Collaborative Convening, bringing together 35 ECMC Foundation Fellows from two Foundation-funded programs run by grantees North Carolina State University and the Association for Career and Technical Education. Held in Washington, D.C., the convening provided an opportunity for Fellows to connect and discuss critical topics across research and practice in postsecondary career and technical education (CTE).

Collaborating and Connecting with Partners to Host Events in the Field

Working with several partners, including MN Cup, the Campaign for College Opportunity, Chloe Capital and Roadtrip Nation, the Foundation co-hosted several events. These included the MN Cup Education and Training Division pitch competition (August 21), a film screening of the feature-length documentary *Unlikely* (September 26), the first of three #InvestinWomen Future of Work and Education pop-up accelerators (October 30), and events held in partnership with Roadtrip Nation and City University of New York (October 17), City Colleges of Chicago (November 19) and North Carolina State University (November 21).

Reinforcing the Connection between Basic Needs and Student Success

Understanding the intrinsic connection between basic needs security and student success, ECMC Foundation launched the Basic Needs Initiative (BNI) in November. BNI supports organizations and innovative programs improving students' basic needs on campuses, such as food, housing and mental health services. Addressing these basic needs will help student persistence and completion efforts.

Connecting Visitors to an Improved Brand Experience at the ECMC Foundation Website

In early spring, ECMC Foundation unveiled its new website, connecting visitors to a more enhanced brand and user experience. The project was completed in collaboration with parent company ECMC Group's IT and Corporate Communications teams and improvements were drawn from best practices and survey responses from a diverse focus group, including colleagues, grantees, partners and peers in the postsecondary education field.

PRACTICING OUR MISSION

Breakdown of Core Grants and Investments by Category

ECMC Foundation is proud to share the following highlights of grants and investments made in 2019 related to our mission.



41 GRANTS

to pilot a new model, launch a new program or add a new program component



17 GRANTS

to refine or expand an existing, proven model



15 GRANTS

where research or evaluation was a funded activity



15 GRANTS

for capacity building



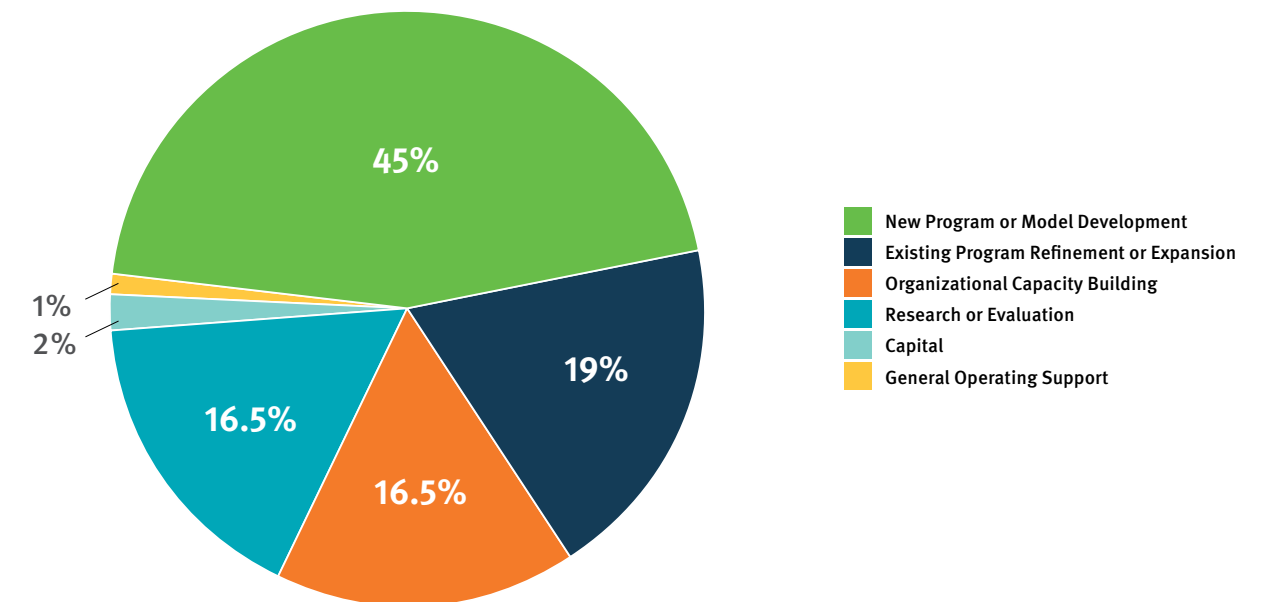
2 GRANTS

for capital



1 GRANT

for general operating support



Connecting Grant & Investment Dollars to Strategic Mission & Vision

ECMC Foundation celebrated five years of philanthropy in May 2019.

In early 2014, parent company ECMC Group's Board of Directors collectively decided to shift the Foundation from a scholarship-giving organization to a strategic-grantmaking organization.

Prior to that, ECMC Foundation operated out of ECMC Group's Minnesota headquarters and provided scholarships to help students pay for their college tuition and expenses. While this aided thousands of individual students, the Board of Directors wanted deeper, more systemic change in postsecondary education.

They understood systemic challenges within postsecondary education often act as barriers to success for students from underserved backgrounds. The Board also recognized that positively impacting educational outcomes on a wider scale would require connecting grants and investment dollars with a strategic, evidence-based approach.

As a result, the Board of Directors recruited President Peter Taylor to spearhead the shift. Peter hired a team with diverse backgrounds across education, philanthropy, law, research, public policy, social finance and direct service. Together, the team has fostered relationships with hundreds of grantees and partners, whose work and efforts make the Foundation's mission—and the Board of Director's vision—possible.

The Foundation's transition began as an experiment because the Board wanted to "see if support could change the trajectory of students who were first-generation college students, students of color and students who lived in economically challenging circumstances," said then-Board Chair and current Board Emeritus Roberta Ramo. "It [has] worked beyond our wildest expectations."

When asked what's next on ECMC Foundation's agenda, Peter said, "Humbly, we recognize the work is long from over. Until all students are able to equitably pursue the educational and career pathways of their choice, the ECMC Foundation team will remain committed to our mission and dedicated to supporting our grantees and partners."

Here's to another five years toward a full decade of increased opportunity and educational advancement!

5 Year Highlights

Between May 2014 to May 2019, ECMC Foundation:



\$110 Million

Made more than \$110 million in grants and investments



709 Grants & Investments

Committed 790 grants and investments



445 Partners

Partnered with 445 organizations



102 New Programs

Supported the pilots of 102 new programs through grants



100,000+ Participants

Touched the lives of 100,000+ participants including students, teachers, administrators and staff who participated in ECMC Foundation-grant funded programs



CONNECTING ECMC FOUNDATION FELLOWS



Pictured Above: ECMC Foundation Fellows and grantees NCSU and ACTE at the 2019 CTE Leadership Collaborative Convening

Inaugural CTE Leadership Collaborative Convening Helps Fellows Connect Across CTE Research & Practice

The CTE Leadership Collaborative, an initiative of the Career Readiness focus area, brings together diverse perspectives and equips leaders in career and technical education (CTE) with the tools, resources and skills needed to advance the field by identifying targeted solutions that address specific challenges facing the field today.

In October 2019, ECMC Foundation held its inaugural CTE Leadership Collaborative Convening in Washington, D.C. The event brought together 35 Fellows, known as ECMC Foundation Fellows. The Fellows were selected by ECMC Foundation grantees North Carolina State University (NCSU) and the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE). NCSU supports Fellows focused on postsecondary CTE research and ACTE focuses on providing professional development opportunities for postsecondary CTE practitioners.

The two-day event provided a rare opportunity for Fellows to build connections across research and practice. Feedback from the Fellows in attendance was positive, including nearly all participants agreeing that they are now better able to articulate postsecondary CTE issues and opportunities across research and practice.

Leaders across ACTE and NCSU agreed with the Fellows.

“The sessions were particularly valuable for our Fellows,” said Michael Connet, associate deputy executive director, outreach and partnership development. “Not only did they continue to expand their knowledge scope on key issues that CTE leaders need to master, [but] they also had the opportunity to reflect on their own experiences within the context of them.”

“The CTE Leadership Collaborative Convening brought together researchers and practitioners and created a forum to explore problems and solutions in postsecondary CTE. The Fellows especially enjoyed opportunities to hear from funders and better understand the types of research they support,” said the co-directors of the NCSU fellowship program, Dr. James E. Bartlett, II and Dr. Michelle Bartlett.

Topics covered at the convening included:

- Trends, issues and challenges of postsecondary CTE—presented by Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce’s Martin Van Der Werf in the opening keynote. Several trends included the rise of middle-skill

jobs, the return on investment of short-term postsecondary programs and the role of CTE in the evolving economy. Martin also emphasized the need for greater transparency of CTE program outcomes.

- The state of CTE funding and best practices for effectively engaging with funders—presented by a panel of representatives from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Greater Washington Community Foundation, Institute of Education Sciences and Siemens Foundation. Panelists agreed that support for CTE will continue; they expressed interest in funding opportunities that would address systemic challenges and equity gaps in CTE programs, provide faculty professional development and improve data collection. Panelists also encouraged Fellows to be persistent and not to get disheartened after a funding rejection. They recommended that Fellows reach out to program officers at foundations to better understand the priorities for the foundation and to get advice on other available funding resources.
- The importance of effective communication and collaboration between researchers and practitioners—presented by a panel of representatives from Achieving the Dream, American Institutes for Research, City University of New York and

MDRC. Panelists noted the benefits of aligning language to create a common understanding between researchers and practitioners, the importance of sharing interim results and learnings across the field, and the importance of sharing information and outcomes about all CTE interventions.

In addition, the Fellows worked in small groups to discuss topics related to postsecondary CTE, including CTE’s responsiveness to business and industry, the stigma around CTE and its impact on enrollment, equity in CTE, and faculty recruitment. The conversations helped the Fellows discover common areas of interest and define roles researchers and practitioners should be playing to address these important issues impacting the state of postsecondary CTE.

In 2020, the CTE Leadership Collaborative Convening will expand to include ECMC Foundation Fellows supported by the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation and the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University.



Pictured Above: Photos taken from the CTE Leadership Collaborative Convening in Washington, D.C.

CONNECTING PARTNERS ACROSS THE FIELD



CONNECTIONS

Pictured Above: Photo taken from the Partner Conventions Convening in Washington, D.C.

Connections Convening Brings ECMC Foundation's Community of Partners Together for the First Time

Recognizing the power of bringing diverse people and perspectives together, ECMC Foundation—for the first time since its inception—hosted its inaugural Partner Connections Convening in Washington, D.C.

The event, which took place in October 2019, drew more than 150 people, representing grantees and partners from a diverse breadth of funded organizations across the country, including postsecondary institutions, research organizations, community-based organizations and start-up companies. Parent company ECMC Group's Board of Directors and senior leaders, in addition to peer funders, also participated in the convening.

Attendees heard from policymakers, government officials, reporters and researchers on trending topics in postsecondary education, and had the opportunity to build new relationships and exchange ideas to improve equitable outcomes in postsecondary

education. Survey results showed stronger connections among nonprofit leaders in attendance as a result of the convening.

Lasting two days, the event covered several topics, including:

- Critical issues facing colleges and universities in the next decade, including how to adequately prepare students to become lifelong learners—presented in conversation with author Jeff Selingo and U.S. Congresswoman Donna E. Shalala.
- The interplay between democracy and higher education and education's role in preparing citizens to participate in civil society as well as equity in education—presented in a discussion between *The New York Times'* Op-Ed columnist David Leonhardt and ECMC Foundation President Peter Taylor.
- Perspectives on the state of higher education and its role in preparing workers and citizens in today's society and economy—led by

NPR's Steve Drummond in a panel session with the American Council of Education's Ted Mitchell and the U.S. Department of Education's Dr. Casey Sacks.

Attendees also had the opportunity to convene with grantees and partners within each of their respective focus areas: College Success, Career Readiness and Education Innovation Ventures. These smaller group sessions provided an opportunity for attendees to address relevant issues within their own funding/investment portfolios.

Finally, attendees participated in an interactive learning session facilitated by Second City Works on effective change management strategies. Several takeaways included the importance of providing peer support, connecting on a human level, being open to hearing diverse perspectives and showing gratitude to team members.

Photo Highlights from the Convening



FOCUS AREA

College Success

2019 COLLEGE SUCCESS GRANT RECIPIENTS

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Arizona State University | \$500,000 |
| Achieving the Dream | \$250,000 |
| Arkansas Community Colleges | \$601,000 |
| Auburn University Foundation | \$526,081 |
| Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Los Angeles | \$499,576 |
| California State University, Long Beach Research Foundation | \$541,244 |
| Claremont Graduate University | \$300,000 |
| College Forward | \$900,000 |
| College Innovation Project, LLC | \$75,000 |
| College Success Foundation | \$400,125 |
| Communities In Schools National Office | \$150,000 |
| ECMC Group | \$2,256,993 |
| Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education | \$306,900 |
| Graduate NYC | \$250,000 |
| Hawaii P-20 | \$418,334 |
| Ithaka S+R (\$151,679 payout in 2020 budget) | \$52,316 |
| John Burton Advocates for Youth | \$525,000 |
| John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education | \$650,000 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Michigan Community College Association | \$442,208 |
| New York University, Marron Institute | \$301,000 |
| Partnership for College Completion | \$506,600 |
| Public Policy Institute of California | \$93,000 |
| RAND Corporation | \$209,401 |
| Roadtrip Nation, Ltd. | \$75,000 |
| State Higher Education Executive Officers Association | \$766,833 |
| The Campaign for College Opportunity | \$500,000 |
| The College Crusade of Rhode Island | \$555,000 |
| The University of Texas Foundation | \$135,228 |
| uAspire | \$540,000 |
| United Way of King County | \$525,000 |
| University of Southern California Rossier School of Education | \$150,000 |
| University of Texas at San Antonio | \$313,762 |
| Virginia Commonwealth University Foundation | \$361,392 |
| Other Grants | \$80,000 |

\$14,756,993

The College Success focus area seeks to increase persistence and graduation rates of students who face systemic challenges in earning a bachelor's degree. These students include, but are not limited to, first-generation college students, students from low-income backgrounds and students of color. Understanding that many students begin their postsecondary pathways at community colleges, the Foundation actively engages in opportunities to invest in transfer success.

College Success supports projects, programs and initiatives that aim to:

- Improve and scale systemic reforms and supports to increase student success at postsecondary institutions.
- Increase currently enrolled students' persistence toward a degree.
- Support timely transfer from two-year to four-year institutions.
- Enhance students' pathways to graduation with career-ready skills.
- Elevate new research findings and publications that promote student success outcomes.

To learn more, visit www.ecmcfoundation.org/what-we-do/college-success.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Los Angeles Collaborates to Expand Its Successful College Transition Program to Five States



Pictured Above: Darlene Silva and Amber

When Darlene Silva met her Big Sister (mentor) Amber from Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Los Angeles (BBBSLA) she found a positive role model.

While Darlene was in high school, Amber guided her Little Sister (mentee) through the college application process and her transition to college. Amber went with Darlene on college campus tours, assisted with financial aid paperwork and class registration, and shared advice for a successful college experience.

Today, Darlene is in her third year at Santa Monica College, where she's studying communications. She plans to transfer to the California State University system to complete her degree. In addition to receiving guidance through her college journey, with BBBSLA's help—and additional mentorship from Amber—Darlene has also secured and completed two summer internships—one at DreamWorks and one at Disney.

Darlene and Amber were part of BBBSLA's College Preparation, Access, Completion (PAC) program, which provides professionally supported, one-on-one mentoring relationships to students who face systemic challenges in earning a college degree, including first-generation college students, students from low-income backgrounds and/or students of color in Los Angeles.

The program has been a success. Of the first three cohorts, 90% of students are enrolled in a postsecondary education program, including 74% and 26% of students at four-year and two-year institutions, respectively. In 2018, 59% of the pilot class was on track to receive a postsecondary degree within six years—a figure significantly higher than their peer population's average six-year graduation rate (14%).

With support from ECMC Foundation, BBBSLA is providing resources and technical guidance to expand the PAC model to five additional BBBS affiliate sites in California, Florida, Minnesota, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. To ensure model fidelity at the expansion sites, staff regularly connect and collaborate through periodic check-ins and ongoing progress reports. Drawing on best practices and lessons learned, BBBSLA aims to help all sites support 500 mentees collectively (age 18-24) over three years.

“Everything we are doing with this program is meant to support youth in these six areas, help them get to and through college and achieve their goals,” said Yvette Sanchez, manager of College PAC for BBBSLA. “In July 2019, we hosted a two-day conference with the five new sites to kick off the expansion, train everyone on the program model and share all the template resources. We're in the early phases of our collaboration, but by working together, our efforts will only become stronger and more impactful.”

The scaling work will be completed in 2022.

INVESTMENT SNAPSHOT

ECMC Foundation invested **\$499,576** to help Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Los Angeles (BBBSLA) expand its College Preparation, Access, Completion (PAC) program to five additional agency sites across the country.

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering & Medicine Strengthens STEM Education for Students at Minority-Serving Institutions



Pictured Above: Dr. Tiffany E. Taylor (left) and Dr. Leigh Miles Jackson (right) presenting on the MSI consensus study report.

Now more than ever, careers in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) industries play a significant role in our nation's economic growth and global prosperity. This requires the U.S. to continually expand and diversify its STEM-capable workforce—and that starts with education. But there's a problem.

“Our nation is heading into this global economic race with one hand behind our back,” said Tom Rudin, director, Board on Higher Education and Workforce (BHEW) for the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (National Academies).

“About 20% of our nation's undergraduates in STEM fields are educated at minority-serving institutions (MSIs)—yet many MSIs are under-resourced,” Tom explained. “Therefore, many students from underrepresented backgrounds, including students of color and low-income students, work with outdated lab equipment and are not getting the robust research experience they need to become well-educated scientists, engineers and healthcare providers.”

In 2018, the National Academies launched a major effort to drive evidence-based improvements in the academic experiences of STEM students

at MSIs, which are postsecondary education institutions that enroll a significant percentage of undergraduate students from current or historical minority backgrounds. These schools include historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving institutions, and tribal colleges and universities.

With funding from ECMC Foundation, an 18-member study committee conducted on-site visits at nine MSIs and collected and analyzed data from nearly 600 MSIs—a massive undertaking that culminated in the report “Minority Serving Institutions: America's Underutilized Resource for Strengthening the STEM Workforce,” published in 2019 by The National Academies Press (Espinosa, McGuire, & Miles Jackson). The final consensus report presents best practices in supporting student success in STEM fields at MSIs, including multilevel, mission-driven leadership, institutional responsiveness to meet students where they are and supportive campus environments.

Following the report's publication, the National Academies launched an ambitious dissemination strategy, sharing findings and recommendations with a diverse audience of stakeholders.

“Our goal is to stimulate constructive action by Congress, state legislators, private sector investors, MSI leaders and federal officials—ultimately advancing STEM education and workforce outcomes for the tens of millions of students enrolled at MSIs,” said Leigh Miles Jackson, study director for BHEW.

During 2019, the national rollout of the report included a one-day convocation, a Congressional hearing focused on the report, ongoing presentations, webinars and town hall meetings around the U.S. The efforts have contributed to securing additional financial support, including from the U.S. Department of Defense.

INVESTMENT SNAPSHOT

ECMC Foundation invested **\$250,000** to help the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine research STEM education at minority-serving institutions (MSIs), share findings and solutions and connect to actionable change.

FOCUS AREA

Career Readiness

The Career Readiness focus area is committed to improving postsecondary career and technical education (CTE) outcomes for students from underserved backgrounds. Grants made as part of the Career Readiness focus area typically fund intermediaries, institutions or organizations that are supporting, implementing, researching or evaluating credit-bearing postsecondary pathways for adult learners that lead to academic credentials and provide a pathway to careers paying family-sustaining wages.

Career Readiness support projects, programs and initiatives that aim to:

- Build the capacity of institutions and organizations to provide accredited, credit-bearing, industry-informed and transferable postsecondary CTE pathways.
- Conduct research and evaluations to inform the field and promote postsecondary CTE programs that lead to portable certificates or degrees.
- Support adult learners' postsecondary CTE advancement toward a certificate or associate degree with the inclusion of learner-centered approaches and academic and non-academic wraparound supports.

To learn more, visit www.ecmcfoundation.org/what-we-do/career-readiness.

2019 CAREER READINESS GRANT RECIPIENTS

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Achieving the Dream | \$250,000 |
| Alliance for Higher Education in Prison | \$329,808 |
| America Achieves | \$75,000 |
| Asia Society | \$74,980 |
| Association of Community College Trustees | \$110,000 |
| Capital IDEA Houston | \$150,000 |
| Center for Law and Social Policy | \$125,000 |
| College Innovation Project, LLC | \$75,000 |
| Denver Education Attainment Network | \$75,000 |
| ECMC Education | \$5,041,158 |
| Education Strategy Group | \$291,280 |
| LIFT | \$150,000 |
| MDRC | \$25,000 |
| Merit America | \$600,000 |
| National Association of Counties Research Foundation | \$150,000 |
| New America | \$120,000 |
| Northern New Mexico College Foundation | \$750,000 |
| Operation Restoration | \$65,000 |
| Presidents and Fellows of Harvard College | \$1,849,920 |
| Roadtrip Nation, Ltd. | \$940,000 |
| Seattle Jobs Initiative | \$750,000 |
| Sinclair Community College | \$480,892 |
| Tennessee Higher Education Commission | \$647,666 |
| The Foundation for Maine's Community Colleges | \$74,700 |
| The Research Foundation City University of New York | \$887,214 |
| The Tennessee Higher Education Initiative | \$125,000 |
| The Virginia Foundation for Community College Education | \$149,160 |
| Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation | \$2,050,314 |
| World Education, Inc. | \$1,128,226 |

\$17,540,318

CONNECTING PROGRAM SUCCESS FROM NEW YORK TO OHIO & BEYOND

MDRC Encourages the Expansion of a Proven Community College Program Nationwide

Pictured Above: Alison Musser at MDRC presenting research.

What started as one program model in a single state, designed to help students at community colleges persist and graduate within three years, is now gaining traction across the country.

With proven success under its belt and a fitting name like ASAP, it is no surprise that the Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) is catching the attention of the postsecondary education field.

Developed in 2007 by the City University of New York (CUNY), ASAP has been shown to improve graduation rates and time-to-degree among community college students from low-income backgrounds through a comprehensive program model that includes a tightly integrated three-year package of financial, academic and support services.

Eight years after ASAP launched, an evaluation by education research organization MDRC found ASAP had nearly doubled graduation rates for participants—a remarkably large impact.

Spring-boarding off these positive results, MDRC and CUNY partnered to replicate the success in Ohio. ECMC Foundation granted MDRC \$350,000 in 2016 to launch the Ohio Demonstration of the ASAP model with three Ohio

community colleges and conduct a rigorous analysis of the outcomes.

The results of this evaluation study were released in 2019. Based on a study sample of 1,500 students, 19% of students in the program group graduated after two years compared with 7.9% in the control group. These students also outperformed the control group on semester-to-semester persistence and earned an average of two additional credits per semester.

Moreover, the results proved that the ASAP model could be successfully replicated and scaled, connecting success from one state to another.

“The evaluation results show that ASAP substantially increases the number of students who graduate,” said Colleen Sommo, MDRC project director. “We’ve also learned the ASAP model can be effective in varying localities and institutional contexts for different student populations. The fact that the Ohio programs achieved similar results to CUNY ASAP demonstrates that the model can be effective in varying contexts.”

Today, the success is causing a ripple effect with community colleges from California and Tennessee in the replication stage and colleges in

Arizona, Montana, Rhode Island and West Virginia expressing interest in implementing the model. In response to the CUNY ASAP model’s success, in September 2019, ECMC Foundation provided MDRC a \$25,000 gift to further disseminate the model.

Going forward, Colleen hopes the ASAP model will make a strong, positive impact on community colleges everywhere.

She said, “In the near future, we hope that colleges and policymakers around the country will have learned from the ASAP findings and move forward with instituting these types of reforms.”

INVESTMENT SNAPSHOT

ECMC Foundation invested **\$350,000** to support MDRC’s demonstration and evaluation of the CUNY ASAP model implementation in three Ohio community colleges.

CONNECTING TECHNICAL & PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

Altierus Career College Campuses Join Forces to Integrate Professional Skills into Curriculum

A candidate may have all the technical skills a job requires—the training, the knowledge and the abilities—but that is just part of the equation to excel in the workplace.

No matter the strength of one’s work experience or educational credentials, employers want to hire individuals with strong soft skills, such as the ability to communicate professionally, think critically, problem-solve efficiently and collaborate effectively with colleagues.

ECMC Education, the nonprofit provider of Altierus Career Colleges (Altierus), understands this reality. Excelling in the career paths supported by Altierus, including allied health and trades, requires technical knowledge combined with soft skills.

Today, the campuses are taking action to equip students with these crucial soft skills, which Altierus refers to as “professional skills.”

Curricula at Altierus has been primarily focused on technical, discipline-specific competencies needed to pass certification exams. With support from ECMC Foundation, ECMC Education is now making significant strides to integrate professional skills training uniformly across all academic programs and campuses.

The team is building a new professional skills course that is tuition and credit-free. The mandatory course will be led by the Career Services teams and delivered in an online modality through Altierus’ Canvas learning management system. The course uses a digital credentialing platform called Badgr, which allows students to earn professional skill badges when they complete and master new skills.

“Right now, we’re bringing together program chairs, career services personnel, faculty and staff from all Altierus Career College campuses and programs to integrate professional skills into courses at our campuses in Tampa, Florida, Norcross, Georgia, and Bissonnet, Texas,” said Jennifer Eull, PhD, dean of allied health at Altierus, who is leading the effort across campuses. “During our meetings, which are held about once a month, our leaders and frontline staff are able to connect, share best practices and work together to put their recommendations into action.”

“Now is the time to be innovative, bold and forward-thinking when training the future workforce on professional skills,” said Jennifer. “Through this project, our graduates will be well-prepared for day-to-day and long-term success in the workplace.”

INVESTMENT SNAPSHOT

ECMC Foundation invested **\$95,000** to help ECMC Education’s Altierus Career College campuses integrate professional skills to help prepare students for the working world.

Education Innovation Ventures

ECMC Foundation's Education Innovation Ventures (EIV) program makes below-market-rate investments into nonprofit and for-profit ventures that seek to generate both social impact and financial returns.

Complementing ECMC Foundation's strategic grantmaking, the EIV program uses a full spectrum of program-related investments—including debt and equity instruments—to improve educational outcomes and economic mobility among learners from underserved backgrounds.

These catalytic investments enable the Foundation to tap into the creative power of the nonprofit and for-profit sectors, unlock innovative ideas and build evidence-based practices. EIV provides flexible risk capital to seed, develop and help new ventures and entrepreneurs prove market viability and attract additional financing to grow and scale their work. Financial returns are reinvested into new program-related investments, allowing ECMC Foundation to recycle investment dollars and generate further positive impact on learners' lives.

To learn more, visit www.ecmcfoundation.org/what-we-do/education-innovation-ventures.

2019 EDUCATION INNOVATION VENTURES RECIPIENTS

PARTNERS

| | |
|-------------------|-----------|
| Venn Foundation | \$320,000 |
| • Authess | \$150,000 |
| • Emerge | \$125,000 |
| • TeachersConnect | \$45,000 |

PORTFOLIO COMPANIES

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|
| Better Future Forward, Inc. | \$825,000 |
| Blendoor, Inc. | \$150,000 |
| Edquity | \$850,000 |
| InScribe, Inc. | \$150,000 |
| Skillist | \$150,000 |

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| OTHER GRANTS | \$50,000 |
|---------------------|-----------------|

\$2,495,000

Edquity's App Connects Students to Emergency Aid & Improves College Retention

The statistics are staggering: Data from the Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice (Goldrick-Rab, Baker-Smith, Coca, Looker, & Williams, 2018) and Reo Partners (2018) revealed that half of all college students face food or housing insecurity and three million students leave college every year due to small, but time-sensitive financial crises—situations that may be potentially prevented if emergency aid were available

Today, there's an app that can help: Edquity for College.

Created by David Helene, the app is the first technology solution to help college students combat basic needs insecurity and enhance emergency aid capabilities. It supports students with day-to-day cash-flow management and integrates with bank accounts to help them track their spending and monitor their budgets. The app also features a Yelp-like resource for referral to all of the emergency resources on and around campus.

The Edquity for College app launched in October 2019 at three locations: Dallas County Community College District, LaGuardia Community College and Nevada State College.

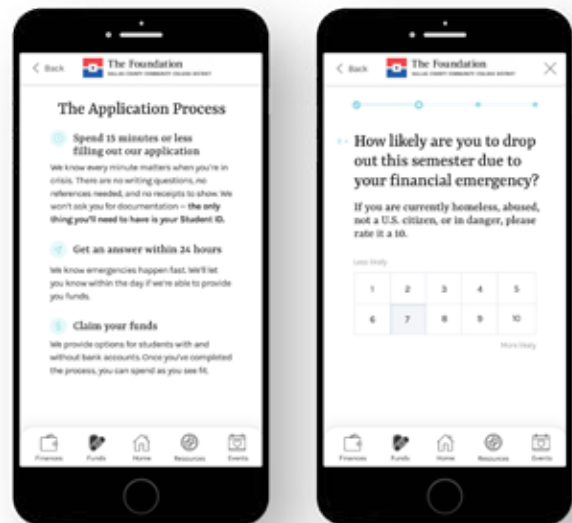
With backing from funders and investors, such as ECMC Foundation, Edquity was also able to roll out a feature that facilitates emergency aid delivery to students with acute financial hardship within 48 hours. The function prevents the

lag time that often occurs when aid is being distributed by institutions. "While emergency aid funds are now offered by many colleges, most are extremely bureaucratic and slow-moving," said David. "Many can take as long as two weeks from application to determination and can cost up to 30% in administrative overhead."

With Edquity for College, students in need of emergency aid can apply directly through the app and, if approved, will receive funding within 48 hours. Eligible students can receive a stipend of up to \$500 once per semester and are encouraged to "pay it forward" by returning the dollars they received—if they can at a later date—to help provide relief to other students.

"Ultimately, we want to not only reduce transaction costs, inefficiencies and pain points affiliated with current aid programs, but we also want to massively increase the supply of resources available to students—so we can keep them in college and moving toward degree attainment," said David.

The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice, also a grantee of ECMC Foundation, will be responsible for evaluating the efficacy of Edquity for College's intervention in the Dallas County Community College District. The results will be released in 2020.



INVESTMENT SNAPSHOT

ECMC Foundation invested **\$850,000** in Edquity, which provides financial planning and access to emergency resources and aid to college students to remediate financial hardship and basic needs insecurity.

One Female Tech CEO's Solution Connects Employers to Talent from Diverse Backgrounds & Eliminates Unconscious Bias



Pictured Above: Stephanie Lampkin, Founder and CEO of Blendoor

Contrary to popular thought, having the right degrees, skills and work experience doesn't guarantee your dream job.

That reality was a hard pill to swallow for Stephanie Lampkin, an African American woman who learned to code software at age 13 and went on to become the founder and CEO of Blendoor.

Stephanie had a highly impressive resume—including a bachelor's degree from Stanford University, work experience at Microsoft and an MBA from MIT—but she still struggled to secure her desired career advancement opportunities.

She's not alone in her struggle. Although the tech industry has spent \$1.2 billion on diversity hiring and retention in the past five years, this has resulted in a mere 1% increase in female hires and virtually no increase in racial diversity, according to the *Silicon Valley Business Journal* (Elias, 2017).

Stephanie believes the challenge is unconscious bias in the workplace,

particularly in the technology sector. Not willing to merely sit back and accept the status quo, in 2016, she founded Blendoor, a talent marketplace and hiring platform for companies seeking diverse candidates. The platform uses artificial intelligence and machine learning to match diverse job seekers to family-sustaining career opportunities while removing potentially biasing information.

Resumes in Blendoor's system are redacted of personal data and anonymized so that hiring managers only see skills, past work and educational experiences. A scale is prominently displayed on the site at all times to show hiring managers the diversity breakdown of the candidates they intend to screen and interview.

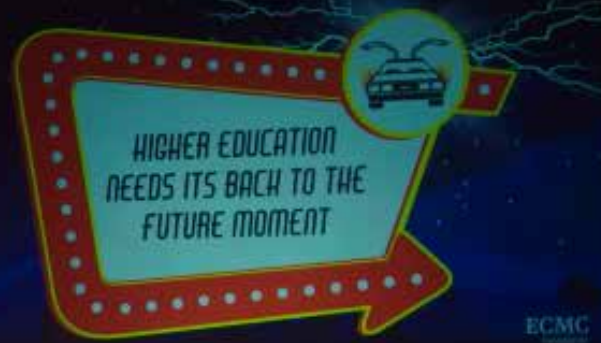
With support from the Education Innovation Ventures program at ECMC Foundation, Blendoor is building a solution that's delivered via Software as a Service or subscription model. The solution will expand the system's functionality by integrating with a company's applicant tracking system.

When asked about her vision for Blendoor, Stephanie said, "I hope that eventually Blendoor can be used and replicated in other mediums outside of hiring—anything related to people. If Blendoor could be a major catalyst in that change, I would die a happy person."

INVESTMENT SNAPSHOT

ECMC Foundation invested **\$150,000** to help Blendoor build out and scale its enterprise solution that matches diverse job seekers with job opportunities.

CONNECTING PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE



TEDxUCLA



Pictured Above: Peter Taylor on the TedxUCLA stage sharing his belief that higher education is due for its "Back to the Future" moment.

Higher Education Is about to Have Its “Back to the Future” Moment

By Peter J Taylor, President, ECMC Foundation

Higher education is due for its “Back to the Future” moment—a return to a time where all viable educational pathways, including career and technical education (CTE), are celebrated and pursued.

The classic 1980s movie was funny and entertaining, but also contained themes of transformation that can be seen as a metaphor for the value of education in promoting social mobility. The metaphor should also remind everyone who cares about higher education of the pressing need to connect the past to the present to move forward to the future.

Many of us believe a four-year degree is the best, surefire way to a good job that pays a family-sustaining wage and a ticket to the American Dream. The problem is many people have grown to believe that the four-year degree is the one and only path to career success.

Today, many jobs that pay family-sustaining wages in information technology, healthcare, culinary arts, construction and hospitality require some education beyond high school, but not a four-year degree. Millions of these jobs are also left unfilled.

I am an optimist and believe that if all of us can apply lessons from “Back to

the Future,” we will see many more graduates who are more successful and collectively, we will have a truly transformative effect on today’s students, families and communities.

Higher education is about to have its “Back to the Future” moment—and it needs your help. Will you join the movement?

I encourage you to watch my TedxUCLA Talk from May 2019 to learn how at www.ecmcfoundation.org/informed/2019/higher-education-is-about-to-have-its-back-to-the-future-moment.

UP AHEAD IN 2020

College Success: Fulfilling Basic Needs—Supporting the Whole Student

Having basic needs, such as food, housing, healthcare, mental health services and financial assistance, met is critical for students’ wellbeing and academic performance. During National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week in November, ECMC Foundation launched its Basic Needs Initiative (BNI) and announced the initiative’s first cohort of grantees: Arkansas Community Colleges, Auburn University Foundation, Ithaca S+R, John Burton Advocates for Youth, Michigan Community College Association, The University of Texas at San Antonio and United Way of King County. Over the next three years, these organizations and institutions will further the research, development and scaling of basic needs initiatives at two-year and four-year campuses. ECMC Foundation will work with third-party consulting partner, Education Northwest, to conduct an evaluation of the BNI cohort and to facilitate the cohort’s shared learning. The growth and lessons learned will be used to inform the Foundation’s strategic grantmaking and drive best practices and evidence-based solutions to better serve students facing gaps in basic needs.

Career Readiness: Release of Research in Postsecondary Career and Technical Education

Several research studies funded by ECMC Foundation will be released in 2020. The Career Readiness team believes the absence of research on postsecondary career and technical education (CTE) is detrimental to the field and leaves practitioners with only anecdotal evidence on the efficacy of postsecondary CTE programs. Greater access to and availability of research will help both ECMC Foundation

Heading into 2020, ECMC Foundation is excited that seeds planted in 2019 and prior years are coming to fruition. These include initiatives, research and events across its two focus areas, College Success and Career Readiness, and the Education Innovation Ventures program.

and the postsecondary field better understand the current state of today’s CTE programs and opportunities for growth. Ten grantees—Public Policy Institute of California, Institute for Higher Education Policy, the Center for Occupational Research and Development, American Institutes for Research, NORC at the University of Chicago, MDRC, RAND Corporation, Achieving the Dream, New America and the Association of Community College Trustees—will begin disseminating their research in 2020. This is in addition to the research from the first cohort of ECMC Foundation Fellows of the CTE Research Program at North Carolina State University, a program supported by the Foundation’s CTE Leadership Collaborative.

Education Innovation Ventures: #InvestInWomen: Future of Work and Education

At a time when female founders receive less than 5% of venture capital, ECMC Foundation joined forces with Chloe Capital to invest in women-led innovation companies. Together, the two organizations are hosting a national tour involving day-long pop-up accelerators and pitch competitions. The inaugural event kicked off in October 2019 in Los Angeles and will be followed by successive pop-up accelerators in New Orleans in February 2020 and Charlotte in May 2020. In each city, five women-led companies will be selected to pitch ventures aimed at improving outcomes in postsecondary education and preparing individuals to excel in the fast-paced and evolving workforce of today and the future. The winners will receive investments of up to \$250,000. This trilogy of events is supported by the Foundation’s Education Innovation Ventures program.



EVALUATION & STRATEGIC GROWTH



ECMC Foundation Evaluates & Reflects On Its Strategy, Process & Impact

In 2019, ECMC Foundation partnered with the Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP) to conduct its first-ever comprehensive survey of grantees. As part of this process, 99 grantees and partners were invited to participate in a confidential online perception survey, which took place in February and March 2019 and had a response rate of 67%. The survey focused on grantees' perception of ECMC Foundation across five key measures: Field Impact, Community Impact, Organization Impact, Relationships and Grantmaking Processes. ECMC Foundation's survey results were compared to CEP's broader dataset of more than 250 funders and a cohort of 11 funders who more closely resemble the Foundation in scale and scope.

Overall, the results were positive; ECMC Foundation scored above average compared to both peer groups in most areas surveyed. However, there was also room for improvement, which the Foundation takes to heart and has begun to take action to address.

Next Steps: Opportunities for Reflection and Growth

ECMC Foundation is pleased by the positive feedback it received and is committed to improving in areas identified by Foundation grantees and partners as opportunities for growth. For example, ECMC Foundation completed a website redesign in April 2019 and will continue to refine its external communications to provide better information and transparency. The Foundation continuously works to improve its grantmaking process, with particular attention to helping prospective and current grantees become familiar with navigating the Fluxx grants portal. In addition, to help the Foundation grow strategically and deepen its impact, ECMC Foundation recently welcomed Lynn Alvarez, vice president of programs and strategy, in July and Loraine Park, manager of learning and impact, in October.

New Team Members Join ECMC Foundation to Focus on Evaluation & Strategy

Having reached its fifth anniversary in strategic grantmaking, ECMC Foundation seeks to understand the impact of its grants and investments and to strategically grow across its focus areas. In 2019, the Foundation welcomed two new members to the team to help refine its practices: Lynn Alvarez, vice president of programs and strategy, and Loraine Park, manager of learning and impact.



LYNN ALVAREZ
Vice President, Programs & Strategy

Lynn Alvarez joined the Foundation in July and is responsible for directing strategy across the Foundation's portfolios. She works directly with the Foundation's president and all team members to implement the team's goals, grantmaking, investments and initiatives.

When asked what she is most passionate about regarding postsecondary education, Lynn said, "As the first in my family to attend college, I am inspired by what postsecondary education can do to help individuals and their communities create opportunities that were previously closed to them."

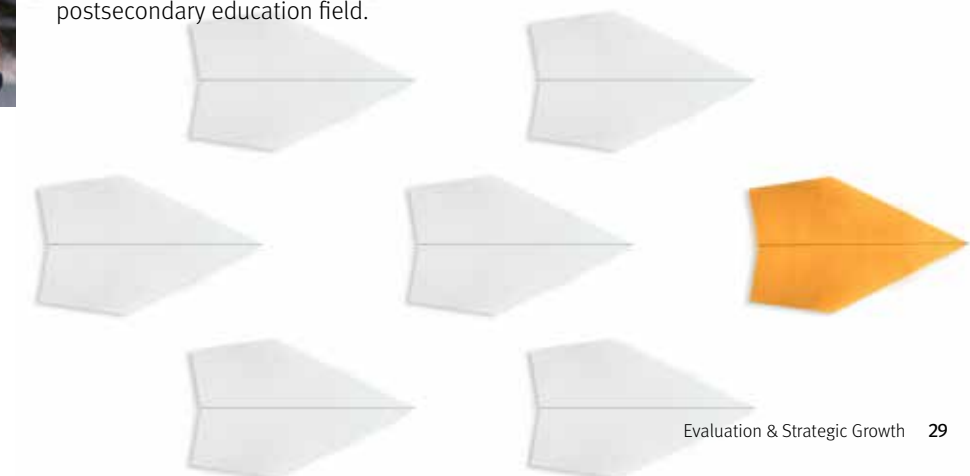
In addition to her passion for closing equity gaps and helping students succeed, Lynn is a skilled strategist with a wealth of experience across philanthropy, law, education and public service. Prior to joining ECMC Foundation, Lynn operated her own philanthropic advising firm for 15 years, where she helped private and community foundations develop and manage initiatives, refine grantmaking systems, evaluate impact, train grantmaking staff and manage funding portfolios. Prior to consulting, Lynn worked at several foundations, was a public interest attorney and taught at the University of California, Los Angeles School of Law.



LORAIN PARK
Manager, Learning & Impact

Loraine Park joined ECMC Foundation in October and is responsible for managing the data collection, measurement and evaluation of the Foundation's grants and investments. Loraine is a seasoned evaluator, strategist and facilitator with more than 15 years of experience leading a wide range of implementation and outcomes studies as well as strategy and planning projects for the social services sector.

Her work at ECMC Foundation includes facilitating grant information, tracking the grant process from inception through completion and helping tell the Foundation's impact story. Findings gleaned from the data will be used to inform the Foundation's grantmaking and investment strategy and to share best practices and evidence-based solutions with the postsecondary education field.



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FINANCIALS

ECMC FOUNDATION FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

As of and for the Year Ended December 31

| | 2019 | 2018 |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Assets | \$734,524,570 | \$733,045,279 |
| Cash & cash equivalents | \$23,709,235 | \$19,271,649 |
| Investments | \$707,606,160 | \$713,069,586 |
| Other | \$3,209,175 | \$704,044 |
| Liabilities & Net Assets | \$734,524,570 | \$733,045,279 |
| Current liabilities | \$1,054,534 | \$516,655 |
| Grants payable within 12 months | \$18,886,638 | \$14,157,143 |
| Grants payable beyond 12 months | \$6,565,691 | \$5,930,818 |
| Non-current liabilities | — | \$18,480 |
| Net assets without donor restrictions | \$708,017,707 | \$712,422,183 |
| Revenues | \$36,962,179 | \$11,448,533 |
| Gain from investment pool earnings, net | \$36,745,221 | \$11,332,446 |
| Other | \$216,958 | \$116,087 |
| Expenses | \$41,366,655 | \$37,289,124 |
| Grants | \$37,053,179 | \$33,916,263 |
| Administrative | \$3,060,210 | \$2,493,199 |
| DCAs & professional services | \$1,179,835 | \$567,215 |
| Other | \$73,431 | \$312,447 |
| Change in Net Assets | (\$4,404,476) | (\$25,840,591) |

Unaudited and internally prepared financial statements.

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