

2018



ANNUAL REPORT

EDUCATION RESEARCH IDEAS BEST PRACTICES MISSION HELP GRANTS KNOWLEDGE EVALUATION VISION GRANTWITS KNOWLEDGE EVALUATION EVIDENCE-BASED

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EVIDENCE-BASED INNOVATION

At ECMC Foundation, we recognize the importance of supporting existing, evidence-based programs, while also investing in new, innovative ideas. We are willing to take risks on promising programs that have the potential to transform postsecondary education.

We approach our work with humility—asking questions and seeking answers—and collect impact data, review lessons learned, and identify best practices across our portfolios and initiatives. We believe it is critical to build a body of evidence to inform the education and philanthropic fields.

We support evaluations that:

- Validate existing models,
- Fund critical capacity building efforts,
- Invest in program design and pilot implementation,
- Provide resources to replicate proven programs, and
- Support researchers who add knowledge to the field.

Our grantee partners are committed to sharing results and insights widely so that together we can advance a community of learning, replicate strategies that work and expand on solutions that have the power to create lasting change.



All features and stories in the 2018 annual report reflect ECMC Foundation's commitment to supporting evidence-based innovation.



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



"Fear is a reaction. Courage is a decision."

Winston Churchill's words couldn't be more relevant to the postsecondary field today. Many of us are nervous— some of us even fearful—because of the pressing issues facing the field.

The problems—rooted in changing demographics, declining state funding and rising costs for students—force us to reflect deeply and rethink our practices. To survive, we must face some uncomfortable truths and find the courage to move beyond business-as-usual.

At ECMC Foundation, we are committed to solving issues of inequity in postsecondary education that can help the field move forward. We live and breathe our mission to inspire and facilitate improvements that affect educational outcomes—especially among underserved populations—through evidence-based innovation.

Our 2018 Annual Report aims to show how evidence-based innovation is part of our commitment to create lasting impact for individual students and the education system, and how we do this through our support of innovative programs and field-building activities.

Postsecondary education is the great equalizer and has shown us time and time again that it is the surest pathway out of poverty and into jobs that pay family-sustaining wages. Despite current realities faced by students and education systems today, we remain optimistic—in large part—because of our partners', grantees' and colleagues' commitment to contributing to its improvement.

While success plays out in many ways, several examples from this report illuminate the incredible power of postsecondary education. We share stories of first-generation college students who rise out of poverty and are now contributing to society in the fields of their study; adults who returned to postsecondary education later in life and move into careers they never thought possible; single mothers who juggle families, jobs, and classwork to secure an education that will change their own lives and the trajectory of their children's futures; and of course, many more.

As ECMC Foundation reaches a milestone—\$100,000,000 in grantmaking dollars committed to 426 organizations across 45 states since becoming a grantmaking organization in 2014—we have so much of which to be proud. We are grateful for the opportunity to work alongside our grantee partners and colleagues across parent company ECMC Group who share in our passion and commitment to this work.

But, with humility, we recognize that the journey with you all has only begun. To move the needle—and to help all learners unlock their fullest potential—all of us must find the courage to continue pushing toward existing best practices and turn our brightest ideas into action.

A LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Jack O'Connell

Setting Our Sights on Supporting Evidence-Based Innovation from Day One



Five years ago, the ECMC Foundation Board of Directors, led by then-Board Chairs Roberta Cooper Ramo and John DePodesta, made the decision to change ECMC Foundation from a scholarship organization to a strategic grantmaker. As a board, we were about to build a new foundation—with no blueprint on how to get started.

In early 2014, the board hired President Peter Taylor to help lead the Foundation and navigate the process of creating the direction, scope and mission. One of the earliest tasks involved crafting our mission statement—the short, yet central phrase that explains why the Foundation exists. While we debated parts of the statement at length, one phrase was apparent and won immediate, unanimous consensus: evidence-based innovation.

Arriving at these three words was logical, common sense and strategic. All of us understood the importance of funding evidence-based innovation. We engineered an organization that would be focused on both grantmaking and understanding the impact of investments. We understood this would require funding program evaluations, supporting research, and investing in innovative solutions that have the potential to move the needle in the postsecondary education system and make a lasting impact on students' lives. Long before making our first grant, we set our sights on these goals.

Our consensus around "evidence-based innovation" also came from our experiences with the Great Recession. ECMC Foundation board members come from different backgrounds and industries spanning law, IT, public service and education, to name a few—but none of us were immune to drastic and brutal budget cuts during those tumultuous years. Forced to do more with less funding, we became advocates of both investing in proven programs, processes, and strategies and building evidence around innovative investments.

While cautious from our experience during the recession years, the board, grounded in reality, understood that there would be no quick fixes. Real change takes trial and error, humility and the willingness to evaluate investments, learn from mistakes and tailor our approach as necessary.

It is hard to believe that it is now almost five years since crafting the mission statement. Since then, ECMC Foundation has done a tremendous job with staying focused on funding evidence-based and innovative programs, research and evaluations. The 2018 Annual Report is a testament to this. Stories in the report feature many of our grantees who make "evidence-based innovation" central to their work.

None of this could be done without you. On behalf of the ECMC Foundation Board of Directors, thank you to all who make this work possible—our grantee community, partners and the Foundation team.

2018 HIGHLIGHTS

\$38,398,547

DOLLARS

granted and invested this year

242

GRANTS

made to programs in 32 states and the District of Columbia

32

NEW ORGANIZATIONS

joined our portfolios of grants/investments

1

INITIATIVE

launched: CTE Leadership Collaborative

1

INVESTMENT PROGRAM

introduced: Education Innovation Ventures

92

ORGANIZATIONS

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

34,836

LIVES OF STUDENTS & LEARNERS

served by organizations in our core grantmaking portfolios

Engaging the For-Profit Sector for Catalytic Impact

ECMC Foundation announced a new program: Education Innovation Ventures, which uses program-related investments (PRIs) to make transformative investments to for-profit and nonprofit organizations that share our mission. Access to PRIs makes it possible to use market-based tools and solutions to invest in both for-profit and nonprofit ventures. PRIs generate returns, allowing us to reinvest dollars and further generate impact on learners' lives.

Elevating Current and Future Leadership in the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Field

ECMC Foundation launched the CTE Leadership Collaborative (LC) initiative to bring together diverse perspectives and equip postsecondary CTE leaders with the tools, resources and skills needed to advance postsecondary CTE. The LC is focused on elevating postsecondary CTE leadership through funding to grantees who will share their research, experiences and best practices with the field.

Inspiring Multi-Campus Collaboration

The University Innovation Alliance (UIA) hosted its first national summit on student success in April. ECMC Foundation awarded grants to university collaborations forged at the summit. Proposals included new initiatives and the scaling of existing successful programs to address shared challenges across the collaborations. Collectively, the three awarded campus networks span eight states and enroll more than 150,000 undergraduates.

Teaming up with ECMC Group to Support Entrepreneurship in Education

ECMC Foundation and parent company ECMC Group sponsored the newest division of the Minnesota Cup: Education and Training, a statewide startup competition and hub to connect Minnesota's entrepreneurial ecosystem. In April and August, both ECMC Group and ECMC Foundation co-hosted the division launch and semifinalist competition events. A riveting success, both events were attended by more than 100 aspiring and budding entrepreneurs and innovators.

Supporting Innovation Efforts at Altierus Career College

Since 2015, the Foundation has awarded \$27.86 million across 147 grants to support innovative programs at Altierus Career College (Altierus), a nonprofit higher education school system with campuses in Atlanta, Houston and Tampa owned and operated by Zenith Education Group, an affiliate of ECMC Group. Funding has supported the implementation of cutting-edge technology, updated curriculum, and facility and classroom upgrades. This year, ECMC Foundation committed \$4 million to support Altierus.

Reaching \$100 Million in Investments to Improve Educational Outcomes

At the end of 2018, the Foundation met a remarkable benchmark: more than \$100 million in granted funds to more than 425 organizations across 45 states. Within the core grantmaking portfolios, College Success has granted \$23,758,635.91, the Career Readiness granted \$25,013,632.00 and Education Innovation Ventures has invested \$1,887,500.

PRACTICING OUR MISSION

Evidence-Based Innovation

ECMC Foundation is proud to share the following highlights from grants and investments made in 2018 related to our mission of funding evidence-based innovation:



21 GRANTS

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



13 GRANTS

to refine or expand an existing, proven model



24 GRANTS

where research or evaluation was a funded activity



7 GRANTS

for capacity building

Research/Evaluation as a Key Activity

In 2018, the College Success and Career Readiness portfolios made grants in research/evaluation activities to the following organizations:

Career Readiness

- American Institutes for Research
- Aspen Institute
- Association for Career and Technical Education
- The Center for Occupational Research and Development
- Council for Adult and Experiential Learning
- Digital Promise
- Foundation for California Community Colleges
- John Jay College of Criminal Justice Prisoner Reentry Institute
- Institute for Women's Policy Research
- MDRC
- National Council for Workforce Education
- NORC at the University of Chicago
- North Carolina State University
- RAND Corporation
- Zenith Education Group

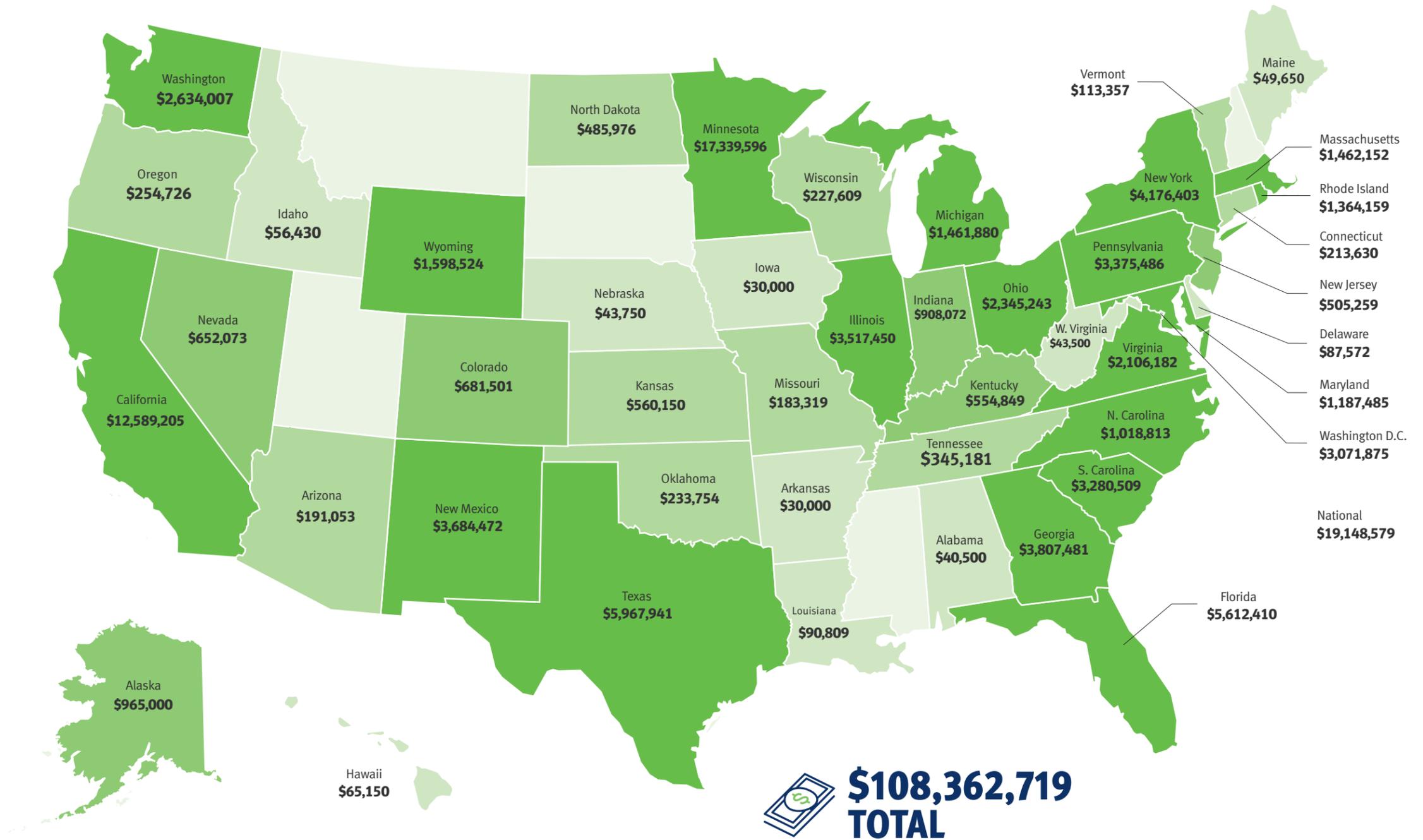
College Success

- 10,000 Degrees
- Aspen Institute
- Beyond12
- College in High School Alliance
- GradGuru
- Excelencia in Education
- Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice at Temple University
- Southern Scholarship Foundation
- Triton College
- University of North Carolina—General Administration
- University of Southern California

DISTRIBUTION OF GRANTS & INVESTMENTS

ALL GRANTS & INVESTMENTS SINCE INCEPTION (2014)

Celebrating Over \$100 Million in Grantmaking Since Inception Across the United States



2018 GRANTS & INVESTMENTS

College Success	\$9,319,160
Career Readiness	\$19,279,958
Core Career Readiness	\$9,623,105
Zenith Education Group	\$6,566,800
CTE Leadership Collaborative	\$3,090,053
Education Innovation Ventures	\$1,887,500
GO! Program	\$1,385,000
Special Opportunities	\$6,526,929

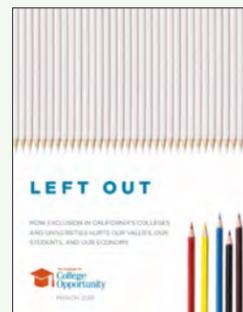
\$38,398,547

PUBLISHED RESEARCH IN 2018

The College Success and Career Readiness portfolios support research to improve and inform the field. New data, results, and trends inform our grantmaking, grantee partners, and the field-at-large regarding best practices and lessons learned. Here are some highlights from the research that was funded in previous years and published in 2018.

PUBLICATIONS SUPPORTED BY THE COLLEGE SUCCESS PORTFOLIO

GRANTEE: THE CAMPAIGN FOR COLLEGE OPPORTUNITY

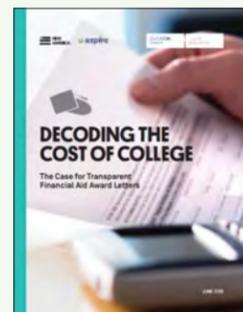


Left Out: How Exclusion in California's Colleges and Universities Hurts Our Values, Our Students, and Our Economy

This report from The Campaign for College Opportunity illuminates the disparity between the state's public college and university students and leaders within its higher education system when it comes to race and gender. While 60% of postsecondary students in California are ethnically or racially diverse, more than 60% of college faculty and senior leadership on California's campuses and 74% of academic senators are white. And while 54% of students are female, only 47% of tenured faculty, 43% of executives and 33% of system governance are female. The study argues the key to student success is ensuring centers of power and leadership understand the needs, experiences, and strengths of its student body so policies and practices better serve them—and that starts with faculty and leaders who are diverse.

READ THE REPORT > <http://collegecampaign.org/portfolio/left-out-report/>

GRANTEE: uASPIRE



Decoding the Cost of College: The Case for Transparent Financial Aid Award Letters

Students and families confront a lack of information and transparency when deciding where to attend college. This study from uAspire and New America analyzed thousands of financial aid award letters. The study found not only is financial aid insufficient to cover the cost of college for many students, but the award letters lack consistency and transparency. As a result, it is difficult for students and their families to make a financially informed decision. The report also offers policy recommendations and solutions that would help students and their families make the best financial choice for college. The research was supported by The Kresge Foundation and Jack Kent Cooke Foundation; the development of the award database used for the study was supported by ECMC Foundation.

READ THE REPORT > www.newamerica.org/education-policy/policy-papers/decoding-cost-college/

GRANTEE: MDC, INC.



Transferring Success: Structuring Community College Transfer to Support Upward Economic Mobility

Community colleges have long been important institutions for strengthening postsecondary attainment, awarding credentials that can lead to better paying jobs or form the foundation for additional credentials, including a bachelor's degree. With lower tuition costs and, ideally, an accessible pathway to a bachelor's degree via transfer to a four-year university, community colleges can be launch-pad institutions that change the education and economic trajectory for individuals and families. MDC visited four colleges in three states—Texas, Florida and North Carolina—to determine best practices for enhancing and increasing the efficiency of the transfer process. Recommendations included involving students in the design of transfer pathways and supports, in-person professional development for faculty and advisors of two-year and four-year institutions together, and cultivating a deep and working knowledge of students' external experiences (e.g., family and work obligations) when developing internal transfer policies and programs.

READ THE REPORT > www.mdcinc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Transferring-Success-Jan-2018.pdf

GRANTEE: COLLEGE PROMISE CAMPAIGN



Playbook: How to Build a Promise

The Playbook is a resource for local elected officials and their teams to provide guidance through every step of building or expanding College Promise programs in their communities. There are four sections that cover laying groundwork, program design, financial sustainability and fundraising practices, and implementation and administration. Examples of successful Promise programs from across the country are featured throughout the Playbook to demonstrate the utility of key program design elements.

READ THE REPORT > <http://collegepromise.org/policy-tools/playbook/>

GRANTEE: COMMUNITY COLLEGE RESEARCH CENTER (CCRC) AT TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY



College transition courses—focusing on subjects from math and sciences to writing and humanities—are gaining popularity among high schools as a means to boost college readiness as well as mitigate remedial education at the college level. In a national scan that generated a series of reports, the CCRC assesses high school-to-college transition curriculum designs and policies. In addition to identifying curricula that improve math and English skills, CCRC explores ways that students are systematically provided with opportunities to choose college majors and careers during their senior year of high school.

English Transition Courses in Context: Preparing Students for College Success

READ THE REPORT > <https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/english-transition-courses-preparing-students.html>

High School-to-College Transition Courses: A Typology of Design Choices

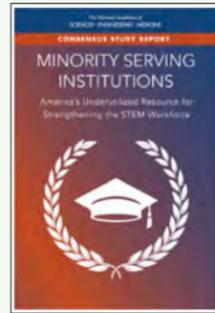
READ THE REPORT > <https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/high-school-college-transition-typology.html>

Math Transition Courses in Context: Preparing Students for College Success

READ THE REPORT > <https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/math-transition-courses-context.html>

PUBLICATIONS SUPPORTED BY THE COLLEGE SUCCESS PORTFOLIO (CONTINUED)

GRANTEE: THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES OF SCIENCES, ENGINEERING AND MEDICINE



Minority Serving Institutions: America's Underutilized Resource for Strengthening the STEM Workforce

Educational outcomes and STEM readiness of students of color will have direct implications for our nation's STEM workforce, economic growth and national security. Minority serving institutions (MSIs) provide more than 20% of the nation's STEM bachelor's degrees, yet are often an overlooked resource for ensuring high-quality education and training of the next generation of STEM-capable workers in the United States. This new report from the National Academies of Sciences examines promising practices for improving STEM education and research at the more than 700 MSIs in the U.S.—including hundreds of MSIs in California—and the steps policymakers, the local and federal government, and higher education can take to strengthen MSIs.

READ THE REPORT ▶ <http://www.nap.edu/25257>

PUBLICATIONS SUPPORTED BY THE CAREER READINESS PORTFOLIO

GRANTEE: INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN'S POLICY RESEARCH



Investing in Single Mothers' Higher Education: Costs and Benefits to Individuals, Families, and Society

While more single mothers are enrolled at postsecondary institutions today than ever before, few go on to graduate—often because of the major financial, child care and time-related challenges they face. This study from the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) quantifies the benefit of investing in and supporting postsecondary education attainment among single mothers. The analysis, the first of its kind, finds public or institutional investments in service supports, such as child care and case management, boost graduation rates and lead to increased lifetime earnings and lower poverty for single mothers who graduate. These investments also more than pay for themselves through higher tax contributions and savings on public benefits if single mothers complete degrees. The report concludes with policy recommendations for supporting single mothers' college success, including improving state child care subsidy eligibility rules, exploring more opportunities to integrate early care and higher education systems, and making campuses more family friendly.

READ THE REPORT AND SERIES OF RELATED BRIEFING PAPERS ▶ <http://iwpr.org/issue/employment-education-economic-change/access-to-higher-education/investing-single-mothers-higher-education/>

GRANTEE: VERA INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE



Second Chance Pell Experimental Sites Initiative Update

Postsecondary education in prison has been shown to contribute to successful reentry for people who have been incarcerated, while also promoting public safety. The Second Chance Pell Experimental Sites Initiative, launched by the U.S. Department of Education in 2015, provides need-based Pell Grants to people in state and federal prisons through partnerships with 65 colleges in 27 states. The Vera Institute of Justice aids the participating colleges and corrections departments, helping to ensure that these programs are providing quality higher education both in prison and post-release. This fact sheet outlines the initiative outcomes through fall 2017, including the expansion of enrollment, course offerings and degrees awarded.

READ THE REPORT ▶ www.vera.org/publications/second-chance-pell-experimental-sites-initiative-update

GRANTEE: PUBLIC POLICY INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA (PPIC)



Just the FACTS: Career and Technical Education in California

If current trends continue, roughly one-third of new jobs in California will require some training beyond high school, but less than a four-year degree. Career and technical education (CTE) can connect students to these career opportunities. This two-pager from the Public Policy Institute of California summarizes student enrollment in CTE programs in California and the associated variation in employment, wage gains and career outcomes.

READ THE REPORT ▶ www.ppic.org/publication/career-technical-education-in-california/



Stackable Credentials in Career Education at California Community Colleges

Community colleges serve a wide range of students pursuing career education: recent high school graduates, stranded workers, workers in need of retraining and more. Connecting these students to career pathways that offer opportunities for advancement is an important policy goal that can be furthered by stackable credentials. Stackable credential pathways consist of multiple, sequential awards that either allow students to earn successively higher-level credentials or build a lattice of interconnected credentials. However, little is known about how many career education programs include stackable credentials or how many students successfully stack credentials. In this report, the Public Policy Institute of California quantifies both.

READ THE REPORT ▶ www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/stackable-credentials-in-career-education-at-california-community-colleges-october-2018.pdf

GRANTEE: JOBS FOR THE FUTURE



Next Generation CBE: Designing Competency-Based Education for Underprepared College Learners

Competency-based education (CBE) is regarded as an innovative alternative to traditional postsecondary education, yet most programs serve only a narrow population of learners. Few are intended for adult learners looking to enhance the skills necessary to succeed in college coursework. However, if designed with the needs of a broader range of learners in mind, CBE could be an important piece of the national movement to increase educational access, equity and credential attainment. Jobs for the Future released a series of reports that recommend specific features likely to help more underprepared students in CBE settings master college-ready skills, persist in their postsecondary studies and ultimately earn credentials.

READ THE REPORT ▶ www.jff.org/resources/next-generation-cbe-designing-competency-based-education-underprepared-college-learners/

2018 COLLEGE SUCCESS GRANT RECIPIENTS

10,000 Degrees	\$500,000
Active Minds	\$450,000
Aspen Institute	\$750,000
Beyond12	\$650,000
Bottom Line	\$750,000
California Competes	\$150,000
Catholic Charities Fort Worth	\$550,000
Complete College America	\$600,000
Excelencia in Education	\$800,000
Georgia State University Foundation	\$400,000
GradGuru	\$450,000
Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice at Temple University	\$525,000
KnowledgeWorks	\$400,000
Management Leadership for Tomorrow	\$75,000
On Point for College	\$100,000
Peer Forward	\$150,000
Southern Scholarship Foundation	\$499,160
Triton College	\$500,000
University of Innovation Alliance	\$220,000
Collaboration Challenge Grants made to:	
• University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	\$70,000
• California State University Channel Islands	\$75,000
• Paul Quinn College	\$75,000
University of North Carolina	\$500,000
University of Southern California	\$300,000

\$9,319,160

FOCUS AREA

College Success

The College Success focus area is committed to increasing the number of college students from historically underrepresented backgrounds, including low-income and first-generation populations, who pursue and attain bachelor's degrees.

College Success supports programs, strategies and initiative that aim to:

- Improve students' transition to and persistence through college toward a bachelor's degree.
- Support on-time transfer from two-year to four-year institutions.
- Develop existing networks that cultivate institutional knowledge and reform in leadership, practitioner and cultural practice.
- Improve, align, and scale systems and supports to increase student success at institutions of higher education.

Testing, Replicating, Expanding Programs to Improve College Persistence and Completion

In recent years, college enrollment among low-income students has increased—and even surpassedⁱ enrollment outcomes of their middle-income peers. Although progress has been made to increase access, low-income students still struggle to persist through and graduate from college.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, 39%ⁱⁱ of Pell-eligible students complete college within six years compared to 77%ⁱⁱⁱ of students from the top income quartile. Many of these students face barriers to persisting and graduating. More often than not, they juggle coursework and jobs in order to pay for tuition and basic needs like food and rent. Many, who are the first in their family to go to college, struggle with navigating campus life because they lack guidance and support.

While there is a wealth of evidence on best practices for college access programs, less is understood about how to support underserved students during college. These grants represent our efforts to build evidence and test new solutions to improve college success rates among students from underserved backgrounds.

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

Innovation Lab Will Test Strategies Focused on Improving Student Persistence and Completion Rates

Grant Amount: \$500,000

The University of North Carolina (UNC) is a multi-campus public university system composed of all 16 of North Carolina's public universities and awarding more than 75% of the state's bachelor's degrees. ECMC Foundation's grant supports UNC-General Administration's (UNC-GA) pilot launch of the Student Success Innovation Lab (SSIL). The SSIL will test strategies aimed at improving student persistence and completion rates. UNC-GA plans to select four campuses to participate in the pilot, which will be evaluated for program and cost effectiveness. Results will be shared widely with higher education leaders from across the system and country.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES FORT WORTH

Replication of Community College Student Success Model in Texas

Grant Amount: \$550,000

A substantial population of students enrolled at community colleges drop out before earning a credential, certificate, or degree often due to financial and family issues that arise. Among full-time community college students, only 20%^{iv} graduate within three years and 35% within five years, while 45% are no longer enrolled or have not graduated or transferred. A grant to Catholic Charities Fort Worth (CCFW) provided the funding needed to replicate Stay the Course, a two-pronged integrated model that provides students access to emergency financial aid and an advisor who helps them navigate the college transfer pathway. The program is currently available in Tarrant County, Texas, and—will be replicated at three additional communities over two years within the state. Evaluation of the pilot in Tarrant County showed that the program yields positive results: students enrolled in Stay the Course are twice as likely to persist compared to their peers. With data from eight semesters, the evaluation shows that the results are holding with time. CCFW's goal is to further test and validate the model and eventually replicate it across other states and regions.

TRITON COLLEGE

Program Expansion Aims to Improve College Success Outcomes of Young Men at Hispanic-Serving Institutions

Grant Amount: \$500,000

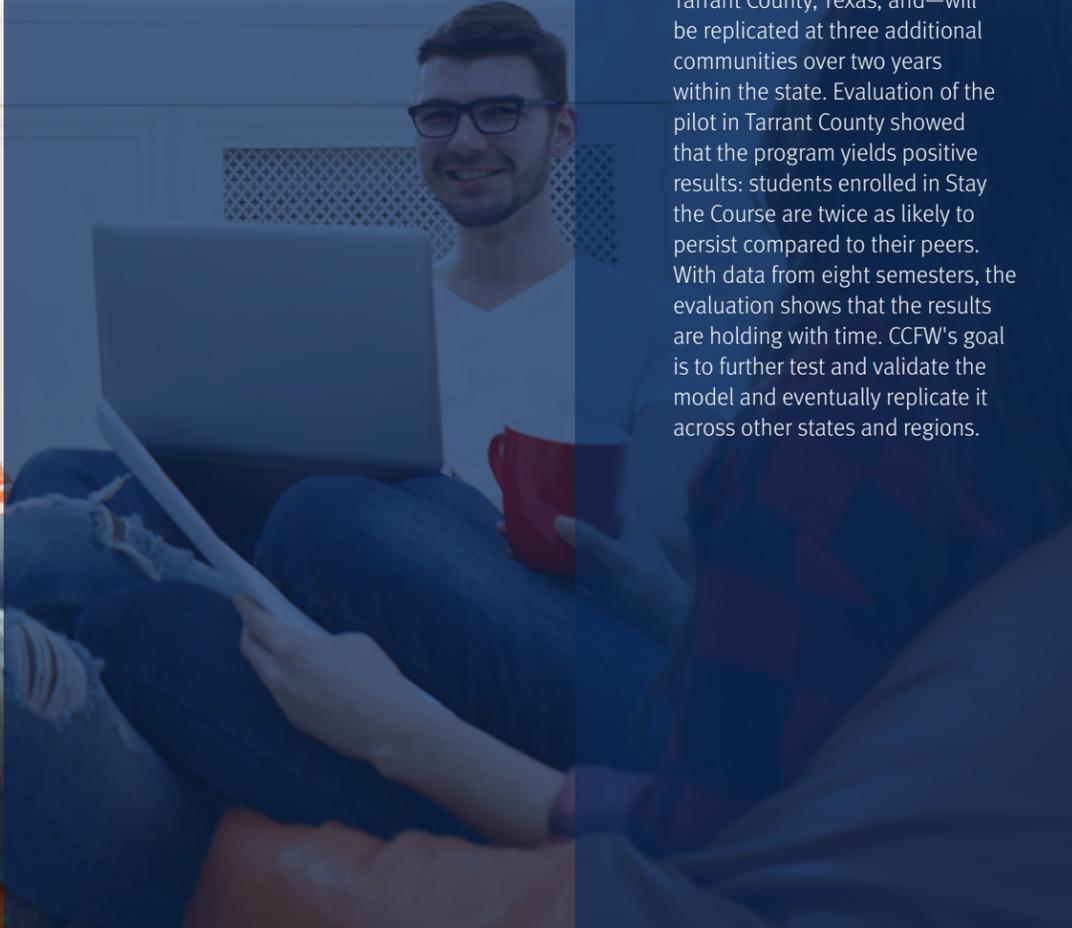
Men of color, especially those who are the first in their families to pursue higher education, often face significant opportunity gaps. As a result, nationally only 17%^v of African American men and 15% of Latino men earn a degree or certificate or transfer from a community college to a four-year institution within a three-year time frame compared to 50% of their white male counterparts. Triton College is an Illinois community college serving approximately 12,000 students each academic year and has a student body of which more than 60% are from minority populations. The Triton Undergraduate Men Pursuing Higher Education (TRIUMPH) program enlists campus faculty to provide cohort-based intensive mentoring to male students of color at the campus who are enrolled in a minimum of six college credit hours. TRIUMPH also provides targeted workshops designed to increase social, emotional and non-cognitive skills for success. Funding from ECMC Foundation supports the expansion of TRIUMPH to three additional community colleges and the completion of a wide-scale evaluation of the TRIUMPH model. The goal is to dramatically increase the completion and transfer rates of men of color at minority-serving community college campuses.

SOUTHERN SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

Southern Regional Foundation Evaluates Rent-Free Housing Model's Impact on Student Success

Grant Amount: \$499,160

For more than 60 years the Southern Scholarship Foundation (SSF) has provided rent-free housing for students pursuing a college education who demonstrate academic merit and financial need in Florida. However, housing insecurity in higher education is just barely rising into mainstream discourse as it becomes increasingly visible among the undergraduate population in the United States. A recent study^{vi} that surveyed students at 70 community colleges in 24 states found that 14% of students surveyed were homeless. In response, community organizations and colleges are searching for effective strategies to ensure that every student has a safe and secure place to live. The SSF model currently includes 470 residents living in 27 houses across Florida and attending one of SSF's seven partner state colleges and universities full-time. SSF received funding from ECMC Foundation to evaluate their model and document best practices that could be scaled to support more students.





Pictured Above: In-state leadership meetings in Las Vegas, Nevada

Expanding the Successful Momentum Pathways Model into Three New Metro Areas

Complete College America is dedicated to closing degree attainment gaps in higher education nationally.

Complete College America (CCA) was established in 2009 to address systemic hurdles that lead to low postsecondary degree attainment rates among low-income, underserved students. As a membership organization, CCA includes an alliance of metro regions, systems, institutional consortia and partner organizations across more than 40 states. CCA aims to increase the number of students with postsecondary degrees and to close the degree attainment gap for students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds. To rally rapid response in higher education, CCA focuses on testing innovative strategies,

evaluating for positive impact and spreading those proven methods.

With funding from ECMC Foundation, CCA is implementing its Metro Momentum Pathways—an initiative first piloted in Houston—in three new cities.

How It All Began

During the Houston pilot, CCA collected data on performance metrics correlated with college completion and after studying the data, identified several key strategies, known as "Game Changer Strategies" that consistently led to

dramatic improvements in college completion. These strategies include the incorporation of co-requisite academic support, recommendation that all students take at least 15 credits per semester to ensure an on-time graduation, adoption of proactive advising and inclusion of an onboarding process during the first year of college called the momentum year.

Initially, CCA treated these five strategies as distinct options. Some alliance members were satisfied with only implementing one or two while others tried to do all five simultaneously.

After studying the results of a variety of approaches, CCA learned there was an optimal order to implementing the strategies and saw the need to develop a streamlined process for campus leaders. These learnings led to a new implementation approach—a single, cohesive model called Metro Momentum Pathways.

"We realized by implementing our strategies together the collective impact will help students hit what we call momentum metrics, which can lead them to success," said Bruce Vandal, senior vice president of CCA.

Part of Bruce's role includes providing key policy leadership on CCA's college completion agenda.

The Metro Momentum Pathways model is built on success metrics and CCA is continuously collecting data that captures student progress, such as the number of credits earned each year, overall credit accumulation, and whether students are passing college-level English and math courses. Data is then disaggregated by race and ethnicity, income, gender, age and

remedial status, among other metrics. The built-in success checkpoints ensure that recent efforts are achieving the intended results and allows project teams to see the impact of their efforts within months.

From Pilot Program to Expansion

CCA's Metro Momentum Pathways approach launched its pilot site in Houston in 2016. They worked with leaders from nine postsecondary education institutions, including community colleges and four-year institutions, and quickly found success. Of the original students who started at the University of Houston (UH) in the 2014 cohort, more than 50% have already graduated or are on track to graduate in four years.

Building on the success in Houston, CCA is now replicating this proven model in three new metro areas—Inland Empire California, Southern Nevada and Southeastern Wisconsin—with the help of ECMC Foundation funding.

Through a request for proposal process, CCA prioritized the selection

of sites with the most committed leaders, highest number of Pell Grant recipients and students of color, and lowest completion rates.

"We had to be confident that our selected sites could replicate our model, while also offering student diversity and the right level of buy-in from leadership," said Sarah Ancel, senior vice president of CCA.

CCA will collaborate with two- and four-year institutions in the selected metro areas. Over the three-year grant period, they will collect specific baseline, progress and outcome metrics to scale to additional future sites.

"Eventually we hope to bring this model to five new sites per year," added Sarah. "We want to dramatically increase college completion and close equity gaps. That's our mission. We truly care about those student outcomes."

Pictured Below: In-state leadership meetings in Racine, Wisconsin



Perspectives from Complete College America Metro Sites

SAN BERNARDINO, CALIFORNIA

California's Inland Empire (IE), comprising Riverside and San Bernardino counties, spans 27,000 square miles and has a population of 4.6 million people. Yet, while the region has two public universities and 12 community colleges, it has poor educational outcomes. For every 1,000 high school freshmen in the IE, only 151 will complete a bachelor's degree at a California public university, compared to 225 high school freshmen statewide. CCA's Metro Momentum Pathways will align with Growing Inland Achievement (GIA), a collective impact organization, to expedite the implementation of best practice initiatives, with the potential to transform the opportunities and economic outlook of the 13th most populous metro area in the country.



Ann Marie Allen
Senior Director, Growing Inland Achievement

"The Inland Empire faces tough challenges when it comes to educational attainment—only 20% of adults have a bachelor's degree. Growing Inland Achievement's vision to create a well-educated workforce, thriving communities and vibrant economy will only occur by bringing all sectors of the community together. We are so excited to implement the Game Changer Strategies and technical assistance provided by Complete College America through the support of ECMC Foundation, which will lead to growing inland achievement!"

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

Strengthening and filling gaps in Nevada's education-to-career pipeline is critical particularly because 54% of jobs in Nevada currently require some form of postsecondary education and only 30% of adults have this qualification. Supporting the workforce supply pipeline not only is important for meeting labor demand but also for lifting Nevada's most vulnerable residents out of poverty in a sustainable, transformative way. CCA's Metro Momentum Pathways program will strive to help the Las Vegas/Henderson metro area meet or exceed Nevada governor's goal that 60% of Nevadans between the ages of 25 and 34 will have earned a postsecondary degree or credential by 2025.



James McCoy
Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs, College of Southern Nevada

"Our Southern Nevada metro region recognizes the need to dramatically increase the success of postsecondary students through certificate and degree completion; with a focus on proven strategies that will help close achievement gaps for our students of color and our Pell Grant recipients. I have personally had the privilege to help lead this work in the greater Las Vegas metro area over the last several years and have seen firsthand how the Metro Momentum Pathway strategies lead to an increase in student persistence and ultimately higher rates of completion. In partnership with our Nevada sister higher education institutions, the local school district, the Governor's Office of Workforce Innovation and The United Way of Southern Nevada, we have seen great success as a community in working to strengthen the pipeline between secondary education to postsecondary education to career. Thanks to this partnership with ECMC Foundation and Complete College America, we are primed to bring the Metro Momentum Pathways model to scale in Southern Nevada. We look forward to collaborating with Complete College America on this endeavor to improve student success throughout Nevada."

RACINE, WISCONSIN

Despite the presence of more than 100,000 two- and four-year college students, efforts to respond to current workforce needs in Southeastern Wisconsin are insufficient to meet the demands. One seven-county region (M7), in particular, lags significantly behind other regions in terms of postsecondary credential attainment and that data is even more alarming when disaggregated by race/ethnicity. For example, 27% of whites ages 25-65 in Milwaukee County have a bachelor's degree compared to 9% of Hispanics and 9% of blacks. To meet this urgent need, CCA will collaborate with the Higher Education Regional Alliance (HERA), a newly forming consortium of the two- and four-year colleges and universities in the M7 region, to implement its Metro Momentum Pathways model and create an innovative and nimble talent pipeline in this metro region.



Jonathan Dunn
Goal Manager, Milwaukee Succeeds Program Director, HERA

"The leadership at the Higher Education Regional Alliance's (HERA)—a regional alliance of 18 institutions of higher education in seven counties of Southeastern Wisconsin—has agreed to own, act and learn how best to evolve our postsecondary ecosystem. Therefore, we're excited about the potential impact CCA's Metro Momentum Pathways will have on our work. This technical assistance will help us deepen HERA's collaborative effort to significantly reduce the skills and talent gaps in Southeastern Wisconsin by increasing the employment rates and number of postsecondary graduates in the region."



DeAnn Possehl
Assistant Provost for Student Success, University of Wisconsin-Parkside

"We are thrilled to have been chosen as a CCA Metro Momentum Pathways site. The framework challenges the status quo, increases institutional accountability and offers a new way for all of us in the region to work together to address an important issue—college completion. We recognize it will require a new level of commitment, but the positive impact for students will be immense. It will be a game changer for the students and families in our region."



Pictured Above: Dr. Sara Goldrick-Rab announcing the launch of the Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice

Many College Students Experience Housing and Food Insecurity and Homelessness—What One Professor and Her Team Are Doing to Change That

Chante Catt received her admissions letter to Humboldt State University (Humboldt) two years ago—a dream she never thought would be possible. Because of her challenging experiences during high school, Chante avoided pursuing postsecondary education until a trusted mentor encouraged her to enroll in a community college more than a decade later.

Chante said community college was a rewarding experience—she participated in sports teams, joined student clubs, excelled at academics and was accepted to transfer into her dream

school, Humboldt. With enthusiasm for the future, Chante and her family, including her boyfriend and one-year-old daughter, packed their bags for Arcata, California, where Humboldt is located.

The family's excitement was short-lived. When Chante learned there was no on-campus housing for students with families, she looked for other options, but quickly learned she didn't qualify for any of the limited rental properties near campus. Without other options Chante and her family became homeless. First, they lived in a tent; then, they moved to temporary housing in a local

hotel, where they frequently relied on fast food for their meals. During this time, her family spent all the money they had saved. Finally, after months of searching, they secured housing 25 miles away from campus with assistance from several social service programs.

"This experience was traumatizing—it affects us to this day," Chante said.

Chante's reality is shockingly common among college students across the country. A recent study^{viii} by Dr. Sara Goldrick-Rab and her team of researchers reveals that more than a

third of university students and close to half of community college students are food and housing insecure. Using data from 43,000 students at 66 community colleges and universities across 20 states and the District of Columbia, the study illuminates the pervasive and critical issue of hunger and housing insecurity among students.

Sara's research affirmed that food and housing insecurity are major obstacles to college persistence and graduation.

"It's becoming increasingly clear that students can't learn the materials, pass a test or even graduate, if they haven't had something to eat," she said. "Many college interventions don't work because they don't deal with students' basic human needs first."

In September 2018, with the support of ECMC Foundation and others, Sara launched The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice at Temple University (Hope Center). The Hope Center is an evolved and enhanced version of the former Wisconsin HOPE Lab (HOPE Lab) at University of Wisconsin-Madison, which since 2013 has conducted research on college affordability and food and housing insecurity among students.

The HOPE Lab's work increased public knowledge about the growing crisis of hunger and homelessness among students. Their research was featured by major media outlets like *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and the Daily Show with Trevor Noah and resulted in a best-selling book, *Paying the Price*. The HOPE Lab's efforts also spurred more than two dozen new state and federal legislation and led to the start of an organization, Fast Fund, which provides emergency aid to students across the country.

With the desire to take the HOPE Lab to the next level, Sara decided to scale her work and change her approach.



Pictured Above: Chante Catt with her family

Sara and her team developed a three-pronged model, which integrates policy, practice and perception. Rather than focusing mostly on research, as the HOPE Lab did, "our researchers work hand-in-hand with practitioners and communication professionals to ensure that everything we produce is timely, relevant and accessible."

The Hope Center plans to conduct research and evaluate its impact and influence on programs like food pantries, housing and emergency aid programs across the country. They will disseminate their findings through research journals and share their work at colleges and conferences, over social media and through targeted outreach. The Hope Center plans to tackle the problem systemically, by helping institutions and policymakers implement solutions to help this population.

At the student level, it is easy to find many students whom Sara and her team have inspired. Sara says students reach out to her every day through letters, email, text messages and the phone to share their struggles.

Chante is one of the many students who has been inspired by Sara's work. She used Sara's research to inform her own efforts toward combating housing and food insecurity among students at Humboldt and in the wider community.

Two years ago, Chante founded the Humboldt State University Homeless Advocate Alliance, which works directly with and advocates on behalf of students experiencing housing insecurity. Because of her advocacy efforts, the university created the first homeless student liaison position and appointed Chante to the role. To date, the group has worked with more than 300 students, secured a 24-hour space available for students, advocated for equity and fair housing practices, among many other achievements.

Like Sara, Chante has a similar vision and passion: "If we want our students to succeed, we need to understand their basic needs. My hope is that every campus would have a social work hub to address [students'] basic needs. They are people first."

Seeds of Change: Beyond 12 Founder Goes from Struggling Student to Education Activist



Relating to a problem is often the precursor for solving it. Alex Bernadotte, founder and CEO of Beyond 12, was once the type of student she now seeks to serve.

Today, with grant funding from ECMC Foundation, Beyond 12 is taking an evidence-based approach to evaluating the impact of its new pilot with a keen eye on critical assessment and replication.

A Dream Begins

Born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Alex was left in the care of her grandmother at three months old, while her parents immigrated to the United States in search of better opportunities. Raised by her grandmother and extended family, Alex was seven before she reunited with her parents in inner-city Boston. Communicating only through

letters and pictures, the family's separation was a time of sacrifice for everyone.

"My end of the bargain was that I had to do well in school," she said. "My parents stressed the importance of education and a college degree as keys to a better life. However, neither of my parents went to college, so it was an abstract concept—we didn't understand how to get there."

Years later, the college plan started taking shape through something unexpected—an overheard conversation. At the time, Alex's mother was working as a phlebotomist for a local hospital in Dorchester, Massachusetts, where she heard a few doctors discussing their children's college plans. They mentioned "Ivy leagues" and "Dartmouth"—neither of which made sense to her—yet when she

got home, she excitedly shared that Alex should attend Dartmouth. A plan had been formed and the whole family was on board.

Alex did her part by earning good grades, taking AP classes and performing well on her SATs. Fulfilling her family's dreams, Alex was accepted into Dartmouth. But after years of hard work to get into college, Alex was shocked to realize that receiving her acceptance letter had been the easiest part.

During her first year, Alex struggled academically. She was afraid to ask for help and worse, she felt alone. When she was placed on academic probation during her second year of college, Alex was distraught. But with her family's and friends' encouragement and support, Alex decided to change things around.

"I became determined to go back to Dartmouth my second year with a game plan," she said.

This time, Alex sought the help she needed and reached out to mentors, professors and academic tutors. She also became more engaged on campus by joining activities and clubs, including an African American Society and a historically black sorority. Not only did she become an activist on issues for black students, women and other marginalized groups, she also found her political voice.

Ultimately, Alex graduated in four years and became the first in her immediate family to earn a college degree. She went on to graduate school at Stanford University.

Catalyst for Change

The challenges Alex faced during those early years sparked an idea: What if there was a way to ensure other first-generation college students wouldn't struggle with the same challenges she had?

"My experience at Dartmouth planted the seed," she said. "I started to realize I wasn't alone. It left me asking a lot of questions, like 'Why does this happen to so many students?', 'What could institutions do differently?' and 'What could my high school have done to better prepare me?'"

After graduate school, Alex worked for New Schools Venture Fund, a national philanthropic organization, where she created the blueprint and business model for Beyond 12 (B12). They ultimately helped fund its launch in 2009.

Named by Fast Company magazine in 2014 as "one of the world's top 10 most innovative companies in education," Beyond 12 is a technology-based services organization that aims to increase the number of college graduates from low-income, first-generation and historically

underrepresented backgrounds. Through a longitudinal student tracking platform and a personalized student coaching app, B12 ensures that its students receive the timely support they need to transition into and persist through degree completion.

What makes B12's approach so innovative? First, it combines technology with a human element through a mobile app called MyCoach that offers virtual coaching. Secondly, it allows students to report their progress to both their college and high schools and serves as an on-demand guide to help students keep track of key deadlines, resources and opportunities. By sharing students' self-reported data to both secondary and postsecondary institutions, B12 links K-12 with higher education—eliminating the idea that student success is solely a higher education challenge.

B12's pilot program served nine high schools and approximately 450 college freshmen in Chicago, Philadelphia and the San Francisco Bay Area. B12 has since coached more than 7,000 college students and tracked the postsecondary progress of 100,000+ students. At a 75% three-year persistence rate, cohorts have exceeded both the national three-year persistence average of 48% for underrepresented students and their own target rate of 70%.

ECMC Foundation Funds Expansion Efforts

ECMC Foundation joined the funding effort in spring 2018 to support B12's partnership with College Advising Corps (CAC), a college access program and past ECMC Foundation grantee, to design and pilot an integration of their models to serve 750 students who attend New York City (NYC) public schools as they transition and persist in higher education.

Students receiving college access support from CAC advisors in select NYC schools will receive college persistence



Pictured Above: Alex Bernadotte, Freshman Year at Dartmouth

support from B12 coaches upon high school graduation and through their college years. Together, their goal is to develop a seamless college transition pipeline with proven results for mass scalability.

Building on each organization's prior success, B12 and CAC plan to increase their impact by coordinating their service models to ensure that 75% of the students they serve together will earn a college degree or remain enrolled six years after they enter college. B12 and CAC have engaged a third-party firm, Root Cause, to lead and fast-track the planning, implementation and management of their coordinated efforts.

An evaluation, led by expert Dr. Eric Bettinger at Stanford University, will assess whether the pilot meets the established success criteria to further expand to more NYC schools and replicate in other geographies.

"We're thinking big," said Alex. "Our goal is to spread this approach across the country and coach one million college students annually by 2025."

FEATURED CLOSED GRANT: COLLEGE POSSIBLE



Pictured Above: College Possible coach providing guidance on college

Proven College Success Program Expands to Chicago and Philadelphia and Serves More Than 1,300 Students in Two Years

The College Possible program is a near-peer support program for low-income students that aims to close the degree divide and tackle the college completion crisis. College Possible trains AmeriCorps coaches to provide financial literacy training, college application assistance, and support in identifying financial aid and scholarship to students. Once students are enrolled in college, coaches help them navigate the transition to and through college by providing assistance and guidance on budgeting, accessing office hours, applying to work-study programs and finding further financial aid.

In 2015, ECMC Foundation granted \$400,000 to College Possible to expand to two new sites—Chicago and Philadelphia. Collectively, the two programs served more than 1,300 students over the course of the grant period.

Several highlights include:

- 98% of the students served were accepted to at least one four-year institution;
- 100% of students in the Chicago program applied for financial aid;
- More than \$2,000,000 in scholarships were awarded to Philadelphia students; and
- 52% of College Possible students graduate college within 6 years—almost twice^{viii} the national average for students from low-income backgrounds.

The College Possible team continues to use data to improve their model and are dedicated to measuring outcomes. Today, the team plans to keep growing and expanding the Chicago and Philadelphia programs after the grant's completion.

Highlights of Students Served by College Possible



CAMRYN
MIGUEST

College Possible Program: Chicago
School: COE College, Class of 2021
Program of Study: Creative Writing
Current Position: Student

"I wanted to be the first of my siblings to attend a four-year university. It was great to know I had someone to talk to about my college. I knew I could go to my coach with anything."

"When I was in high school I didn't really think about going to college—I didn't know where to go [or] how to apply for it. One of the best parts about College Possible has been making connections with coaches and other students who have gone through the same things that I have been through. I'm a first-generation college student, so it is really helpful."



HUY LEE

College Possible Program: Minnesota
School: University of Minnesota, Class of 2017
Program of Study: Civil Engineering and Media Communications
Current Position: Engineer at Progressive Consulting Engineers, Inc.

"College Possible has provided me so much support; it is indescribable. I learned that no matter where in the world you are, there are people like you. The people I met have continuously motivated me."



ANNA
PEREZ-VILLAGOMEZ

College Possible Program: Philadelphia
School: Barnard College in New York, Class of 2021
Program of Study: Math
Current Position: Student

GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT: UNIVERSITY INNOVATION ALLIANCE



Pictured Above: Participants collaborating during workshop activity at UIA Convening, held at Michigan University in October 2018

Colleges and Universities Collaborate to Address Equity and Achievement Gaps

While college campuses rarely reach outside their walls to collaborate with other campuses, 10 postsecondary institutions have pledged to work together to share best practices, help pilot innovations, and openly discuss risks and failures.

The new collaboration is the result of a challenge grant supported by ECMC Foundation and in partnership with the University Innovation Alliance (UIA), a group of 11 public research institutions committed to increasing the number and socioeconomic diversity of college graduates.

Designed to spawn new campus networks that replicate the UIA's culture of collaboration, the challenge

grant includes three awards of up to \$75,000 to participants in the recent UIA National Summit who became inspired to develop and advance new collaborative work as a result of attendance.

"We are hopeful that the UIA's work is truly the beginning of an era—one where schools reach out to their peers across states and the country to ask for help, advice and insight," said Peter Taylor, president of ECMC Foundation. "We are excited to see how the UIA has already inspired great projects like these and look forward to supporting their work."

To be eligible for the grant, teams of at least three campuses were encouraged

to develop proposals to address persistence and graduation gaps among low-income, first-generation college students and students of color. These proposals could include new initiatives or the scaling of existing successful programs across new campuses. Collectively, the grantees across the three campus networks span across eight states and enroll more than 150,000 undergraduates.

The awarded projects include:

- **Starting Strong: Summer Bridge Program Tailored to Low-Income Black Males** led by the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill in collaboration with Morehouse College and the University of Central Florida.

These campuses will glean insights from each other to build and expand summer bridge programs designed to support black male students' transition into college. The campuses aim to increase persistence and graduation rates among black males.

- **Improving Data and Communication to Increase Student Retention** led by California State University (CSU) Channel Islands in collaboration with CSU Northridge, CSU Fresno and Portland State University. To reduce their common challenge—high first-year dropout rates that hover around 20%—the CSUs and their Oregon-based partner institution will build datasets to identify risk factors for dropping out, as well as establish communications protocols to reach at-risk students.

- **The Urban College Consortium** led by Paul Quinn College in collaboration with Kuyper College and Wilberforce University. Paul Quinn College's Work Model requires residential students to work paid internships in addition to jobs on-campus to provide real-world experience and reduce student loan debt. Earnings go toward students' tuition and fees; therefore, decreasing student loan debt. The three institutions will explore ways to pilot and replicate the model on their campuses.

The challenge grant was launched at UIA's Inaugural National Summit in April. The Summit is part of UIA's efforts to expand its reach and momentum in getting institutions to collaborate, scale and share innovations that improve college graduation rates for students

from low-income, disadvantaged backgrounds. More than 300 leaders, administrators and faculty in higher education from 77 institutions attended the summit.

"If we want to really unlock the promise of higher education, colleges and universities can no longer go it alone. The UIA is working to scale innovation and inspire others to advance important change to benefit students," said Bridget Burns, executive director of the UIA. "We are thrilled at the level of enthusiasm and meaningful work coming out of the summit and could not be more grateful to have generous partners like ECMC Foundation who are committed to helping us inspire and build a student success movement in higher education."

Pictured Below:

(L) College and university leaders sharing best practices and innovative thinking across their campuses

(R) UIA Founding Executive Director Bridget Burns talking to UIA Convening participants in October 2018





FOCUS AREA

Career Readiness

2018 CAREER READINESS GRANT RECIPIENTS

America Achieves	\$150,000
American Institutes for Research	\$247,450
Aspen Institute	\$700,000
Association for Career and Technical Education	\$1,056,000
College Unbound	\$150,000
Council for Adult and Experiential Learning	\$835,703
Credential Engine	\$97,650
Digital Promise	\$150,000
Education Design Lab	\$1,241,625
Foundation for California Community Colleges	\$499,978
Institute for Educational Leadership	\$946,419
Institute for Women's Policy Research	\$425,000
John Jay College of Criminal Justice Prisoner Reentry Institute	\$350,029
Just-A-Start Corporation	\$501,053
Lutheran Metro Ministry	\$750,000
MDRC	\$375,000
National Council for Workforce Education	\$126,720
NORC at the University of Chicago	\$493,560
North Carolina State University	\$2,034,053
RAND	\$278,908
Skills for Chicagoland's Future	\$385,000
The Center for Occupational Research and Development	\$150,000
Unloop Academy	\$769,010
Zenith Education Group	\$6,566,800

\$19,279,958

The Career Readiness focus area is committed to connecting adults with limited or no education beyond high school to accredited, credit-bearing, industry-informed, and transferable postsecondary career and technical education (CTE) programs that are part of career pathways that lead to portable certificates or degrees.

Career Readiness supports programs, strategies and initiatives that aim to:

- Build the capacity of institutions and organizations that provide and/or support adult learners' postsecondary CTE advancement up to the associate degree.
- Conduct research and evaluations to inform the field and promote postsecondary CTE programs that are part of educational pathways that lead to portable certificates or degrees.
- Develop postsecondary education experiences for adults that use learner-centered approaches and incorporate academic and non-academic wraparound supports.

Supporting Innovation and Design Efforts to Better Serve Adult Learners

Today, nontraditional learners are the fastest growing population of students pursuing postsecondary credentials, comprising more than half⁶⁴ the undergraduate student body across the United States and this figure is predicted to increase in the coming years.

Unlike students who matriculate to college from high school, adult learners are more likely to have one or more characteristics (e.g., over the age of 24, married, legal dependents, veteran) that qualify them as independent by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Adult learners may enroll part-time, have little, some or no prior college coursework, and/or are looking to earn a new credential.

The shifting demographics among the student population has led to different challenges for the postsecondary system and some institutions and organizations are beginning to rethink their approach. ECMC Foundation supports efforts to design, test, implement, and evaluate postsecondary career and technical education (CTE) programs up to the associate degree level. These grants highlight examples of our funding commitments in this area.

FOUNDATION FOR CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

California Will Launch First Online Community College Designed to Meet Adult Learners' Unique Needs

Grant Amount: \$499,978

Recognizing the need for a tailored approach for adult learners, the California Community College (CCC) system—the largest system of higher education in the nation—will launch the first community college that is 100% online and will launch the first community college that is 100% online and designed to serve working adults and help them achieve upward mobility. ECMC Foundation's grant to the Foundation for California Community Colleges supports the design of the new online college using information gleaned from adult learner focus groups, faculty expert engagement sessions and student journey maps.

CENTER FOR OCCUPATIONAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Research Group Studies Employers' Perspectives and Motivating Factors in CTE Programs

Grant Amount: \$150,000

To ensure that career pathway programs meet the workforce needs of a region, as well as be sustainable, employer engagement is a critical part of the design process. With funding from ECMC Foundation, the Center for Occupational Research and Development (CORD) is working with Social Policy Research Associates to examine the motivating factors behind employer engagement in CTE programs at the community colleges they are working with, as well as employers' perceived benefits and return on investment. CORD will publish a report that presents findings and highlights key themes and recommendations for colleges seeking to enhance employer engagement practices.

INSTITUTE EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Ten Communities Design Career Pathway Programs to Help Adult Learners

Grant Amount: \$946,419

Access to career pathway programs can expand affordable options for adult learners who face institutional barriers to employment. The Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) received funding from ECMC Foundation to launch the Career Pathways Challenge where IEL will select 10 teams from communities across the country to create career pathway programs for adult learners based on their communities' needs and assets. IEL will lead the teams through a highly supported process that includes a design camp, technical assistance and coaching, and a Career Pathways Festival, where they will present their designs and receive feedback. All teams will receive assistance to design an evaluation plan and identify scaling and sustainability scenarios. From the 10 teams, three will be selected in August 2019 to receive \$100,000 and technical assistance to implement their program, while the remaining teams will receive continued coaching to refine their design.

ZENITH EDUCATION GROUP

Newly Designed Course Will Help ESL Students Contextualize English for Classroom and Career

Grant Amount: \$53,770

A large percentage of the student body at Altierus Career College-Tampa (Altierus) speaks English as a second language. This grant to Zenith Education Group, which owns and operates Altierus campuses, supports the campus' partnership with ReDefiners World Languages to design and facilitate a blended, contextualized English Language Acquisition course. This supplemental course will integrate core language objectives into an introductory healthcare professional course, a prerequisite for all students in Allied Health programs. The goal of the course is to promote student success through practical English language skill development, with a specific focus on developing communicative skills relative to job readiness. Outcomes will be evaluated after one year to determine future feasibility of the program.

JOHN JAY COLLEGE PRISONER REENTRY INSTITUTE

Research Group Evaluates Postsecondary Education Initiative for Justice-Involved Individuals

Grant Amount: \$350,029

College Initiative (CI), a program of the John Jay College Prisoner Reentry Institute, helps formerly incarcerated and court-involved individuals enroll in college. CI provides individualized academic counseling to help justice-involved prospective students select colleges and majors, apply for financial aid and scholarships and enroll in school. CI also provides a range of enrichment services, such as peer mentoring to increase persistence and success through and after graduation. ECMC Foundation's funding supports a process and outcomes evaluation that will analyze the CI program, its efficacy and the benefits to CI students. The goal of the evaluation is to help identify components of the program that are successful and those that need improvement as they seek to expand in New York City.



Pictured Above: Students at the Washington Corrections Center for Women participating in Unloop Academy's software development training program

Nonprofit Tech Startup Validates Model with Goal of Replicating Coding Program at More Correctional Facilities

Three years ago, Yvonne Wood had barely heard of the Internet or held a smartphone. Today, the self-proclaimed "tech-geek" and web developer knows the ins and outs of coding.

Yvonne, who is almost 60 years old, spent the last three decades of her life at the Washington Corrections Center for Women (WCCW) where access to the Internet and most technology aren't available to incarcerated individuals. She entered the correctional facility in the 1980s when the Internet had not yet become widespread and available for public use.

During her years at WCCW, she had often thought about life after release and whether she would find her purpose and calling. Yvonne finally got her answer in 2016 when nonprofit tech startup, Unloop, held an introductory session about their software development training program, Unloop Academy (Unloop).

Designed as a one-year cohort and career pathway model, the Unloop Academy program culminates in a web application developer certificate, which prepares participants to launch entry-level web development careers.

Participants who want to continue their education have the option of transferring credits to computer science programs at two- and four-year institutions. In addition to WCCW, the program also operates within the Monroe Correctional Complex, a prison for men.

A Committed Partnership from the Postsecondary Education and Employer Community

Part of what makes Unloop's work possible is the committed partnership of the postsecondary education community. Classes are taught by



Pictured Above: Yvonne Wood, an Unloop Academy program participant at her internship at Techretary

instructors from Tacoma Community College and Edmonds Community College. The campuses also provide equipment and offer academic credit for each course in the certificate program. Because Internet access isn't allowed inside the facilities, an isolated server is used to simulate the look, feel and function of a real website.

Yvonne remarked how the instructors were not only resourceful but patient.

"One of our first assignments was to build a website, but I didn't even know what a website was," she says. "My teacher took the time to explain. He was patient, despite my tears and frustration, and helped me understand the tech world."

Unloop also partners with employers who help inform the curriculum and ensure that the certificate program is industry-informed. Workshops with employers like Microsoft and Moz provide opportunities for participants to hear directly from companies about careers in the tech industry. Other

available supports for participants include career counseling, mentorship opportunities and reentry services.

Since the program's launch, Unloop Academy has been offered to six cohorts. To date, among the individuals who have been released, approximately half have transferred their credits and are enrolled in a postsecondary program, while others are in IT-related jobs.

Yvonne is one of the many success stories. With Unloop's help, she landed an internship at Techretaries, a tech support and solutions company in Washington state, which eventually turned into a full-time position.

"While most people my age are looking forward to retirement within five to 10 years, I'm looking forward to just getting started," she says. "It's a chance for me to do something meaningful. My goal is to build a career at Techretaries—but it wouldn't have been possible without Unloop."

Collecting Data, Validating, Scaling

Unloop co-founder Lindsey Wilson says collecting data on outcomes like persistence, graduation, and job placement helps the team learn what is and is not working, and whether they should pivot and adjust the model.

As a result of this process, the model has been modified several times. For example, when the Unloop team saw a low persistence rate among students in the program's inaugural year, they investigated the issue and discovered it was because many participants had lost interest and/or were initially unaware of the rigors of the program.

In response, the team added a mandatory, prerequisite course to help participants gauge their interest before fully immersing in the program. The new aspect of the program worked well and persistence rates increased from 65% to 95%.

In 2018, ECMC Foundation granted \$769,010 to Unloop to help them further test and validate their pathway model in Washington state and support its scaling across the country. Part of that work will include creating a playbook that provides guidance on how to implement a web development program in other facilities.

Unloop's co-founder acknowledges the road ahead is long, but that the team is eager to scale the program to any prison with a local tech community. When asked about her vision for the organization's future, Lindsey said, "I hope Unloop will help transform the tech industry to one that is open to hiring individuals, regardless of their past."



FEATURE STORY: CTE LEADERSHIP COLLABORATIVE

ECMC Foundation Launches Initiative to Elevate Leadership in Postsecondary CTE

Job reports^x in 2018 from the U.S. Department of Labor paint a rosy picture of the American economy: one with widespread job growth and the lowest unemployment rate in decades. Many of these openings are middle-skill jobs with family-sustaining wages in high-demand industries like manufacturing, information technology and healthcare—and can be accessed by attaining postsecondary career and technical education (CTE) credentials. Yet, despite the optimistic reports, many employers struggle to find qualified workers with the right education and training background.

Over the past few years, ECMC Foundation's Career Readiness team has met with leaders from community colleges and community-based organizations to learn more about opportunities in postsecondary CTE. The team learned that while CTE programs exist, the quality and outcomes of these programs vary, there is limited research^{xi}

on best practices, and leadership and professional development opportunities are uncommon.

ECMC Foundation launched the CTE Leadership Collaborative (LC) in fall 2018 in response to these challenges. The LC focuses on bringing together diverse perspectives and equipping postsecondary CTE leaders with the tools, resources and skills needed to advance the field.

Two grants were made as part of the CTE LC in 2018:

- The CTE Research Program at North Carolina State University (NCSU)—Sponsored by ECMC Foundation will advance CTE research and knowledge by supporting graduate students and postdoctoral researchers from a range of postsecondary institutions and a variety of academic disciplines. The goal is to grow high-quality postsecondary CTE research, which currently lacks significant visibility and financial support.

- Postsecondary Leadership Success Program at ACTE—Sponsored by ECMC Foundation will support current and aspiring leaders in CTE. The goal is to provide professional and career growth opportunities to the next generation of leaders at nonprofits and postsecondary institutions offering CTE programs.

The ECMC Foundation CTE LC will launch competitive funding opportunities to identify targeted solutions that address specific challenges facing postsecondary CTE. Grantees and selected ECMC Foundation fellows will commit to sharing their research, experiences and best practices with the field through a range of activities. This ensures the knowledge and lessons learned from the LC have the potential to be far-reaching and impact the CTE field more broadly.

FEATURED CLOSED GRANT: ASPEN INSTITUTE

Shaping the Next Generation of Community College Leaders

An estimated 400 community college presidents retired in the past year and more than 80%^{xii} of community college presidents are expected to retire over the next decade. The Aspen Institute's College Excellence Program (CEP) saw this as an opportunity to shape the future of leadership—and student success—at community colleges across the country.

CEP launched the Aspen Presidential Fellowship for Community College Excellence in 2015 in partnership with Stanford University. The fellowship aims to recruit and develop a cadre of diverse, student success-focused current and future community college presidents who can collectively push the field forward. The 10-month fellowship provides seminars that cover leadership and best practices to increase student success, especially among low-income, minority and first-generation college students. The fellowship also connects experienced community college leaders with aspiring and new community college presidents.

Over the last three years, ECMC Foundation granted the Aspen Institute \$825,000 to support the development of the fellowship's robust curriculum focused on leading internal change, building external partnerships and employing evidence-based strategies to support student success. Program implementation costs, including recruitment and fellowship activities, were also covered for the first two cohorts of fellows. The first cohort^{xiii} (2016-17) had 40 fellows from 17 states and 30 community colleges and the second cohort^{xiv} (2017-18) had 38 fellows from 24 states and 38 community colleges.

Aspen shares the curriculum on their website^{xv} hoping other organizations will replicate their model for large-scale impact. The curriculum is easily accessible and focused on providing tools for existing and aspiring community college leaders so they can dramatically improve student success. Access the curriculum at www.collegeexcellencecurriculum.aspeninstitute.org.

Program Highlights and Accomplishments

Among the 78 program alumni from the first two cohorts, 24 are currently sitting presidents of community colleges that collectively serve more than 400,000 students. Of the 24 sitting presidents, 67% are women and 37% identify as a person of color.

A third-party evaluation of the first cohort demonstrated that fellows:

- Gained an increased understanding of the role of a community college president and the ability to spearhead change as an institutional leader;
- Felt significantly better equipped to develop themselves as a leader after the fellowship, planned for the first years of a community college presidency and evaluated their "fit" at a college; and
- Felt confident about their ability to be a transformational community college president.



Pictured Above: Members of the second cohort of the Aspen Presidential Fellowship for Community College Excellence



Perspectives: Aspen Fellows

We connected with fellows from both cohorts to ask them about their experience.



Jeff Cox, EdD

Aspen Fellow Cohort 2
President, Wilkes Community College
Wilkesboro, North Carolina

What advice do you have for aspiring community college presidents looking to join the Aspen Fellowship?

"I wish every aspiring community college president could participate in the Aspen Fellowship. I joined the program as a new president whose background was in K-12 education. What I have learned through my involvement in this program has truly shaped my leadership vision and the work I am doing at Wilkes Community College. We are using the Aspen Framework for Community College Excellence as the cornerstone of our new strategic planning process for the college. As we work to make a significant impact on the economic mobility of the people in our service area, the principles contained within this framework have proven to be a perfect roadmap for our planning. From the first seminar at Stanford University, where we learned from some of the most brilliant thinkers in the higher education field, to the knowledge I've gained from the Aspen staff, my Aspen mentor and from the other fellows, I cannot easily quantify how impactful this program has been for me. I am no doubt a more effective president because of my participation in this program. I cannot wait to put what I have learned into action to see the positive impact on my small community in North Carolina."



Michael Gutierrez, EdD

Aspen Fellow Cohort 1
President, Sacramento City College
Sacramento, California

How did the fellowship help prepare you for becoming a community college president?

"Ready or not, the first day we sit on the president's chair is when everyone sees us as the leader of the college. Nobody cares if we moved from another state. Nobody cares if we need a few days to adjust. Nobody cares that we barely know how to get to work. The faculty, staff and students see us as the president as soon as we walk in the door. The Aspen Fellowship helped prepare us to feel confident that we were indeed ready to sit in the big chair. Two significant components made me feel confident in becoming a president. The first is that I modified my higher education philosophy based on the knowledge acquired during the fellowship. The fellowship's curriculum taught all of us the four-part framework for student success: 1. Equity, 2. Learning, 3. Labor Market Outcomes, and 4. Completion and Transfer with a bachelor's degree. These four components helped transform my educational philosophy upon which I am leading my new college. Second, the camaraderie built between the cohort helped me understand that I have both a support group and a network that will transform community colleges throughout the nation."



Katy Ho, PhD

Aspen Fellow Cohort 2
Vice President of Academic Affairs, Portland Community College
Portland, Oregon

What is the best advice or tip you learned from your mentor about being a community college president?

"My mentor, Dr. William Serrata, provided me with a wealth of knowledge, tips and advice based on his own journey of becoming a community college president. What I find most helpful is to reflect on the core theme that ran through all his advice: stay true to yourself. A community college president balances many stakeholder needs [and] political dynamics and is challenged with maintaining a sense of healthy balance between work and life. In order to wade through the noise and do what is best for students and the community one serves, a president must truly know themselves, their own values and how much they are willing to push themselves out of their comfort zones. I admire the many stories Dr. Serrata shared with me where his decisions and ability to address complex issues have been grounded in his own understanding of who he is, where he came from and how this has informed his life's work."



Paula Pando, EdD

Aspen Fellow Cohort 2
Senior Vice President for Student and Educational Services, Hudson County Community College
Jersey City, New Jersey

What was your favorite learning experience or moment in the fellowship?

"Reflecting on the many meaningful experiences in the fellowship, it is nearly impossible to select just one favorite. The opportunity to learn from and with thought leaders and talented practitioners from across the country has been extraordinary. One set of experiences that stands out are the fireside chats. In an intimate setting, fellows had the opportunity to hear from presidents who have done truly remarkable work in service of student success and completion. Beginning with an interview thoughtfully facilitated by Josh Wyner, executive director of the College Excellence Program at the Aspen Institute, followed by Q&A with the fellows, these inspiring presidents generously shared how they were able to move their institutions from the status-quo to achieving significant and sustained improvements in overall student success while also narrowing achievement gaps among underrepresented groups. The candor with which they spoke about the challenges of leading systemic and cultural change in service of improving lives was both refreshing and eye-opening. I was thrilled to get the opportunity to facilitate the last fireside chat with a professional hero of mine, Dr. Karen Stout, president of Achieving the Dream."



Falecia D. Williams, EdD

Aspen Fellow Cohort 2
President, West and Downtown Campuses at Valencia College
Orlando, Florida

Can you tell us about your presidential strategy capstone project?

"The capstone project I developed is the case for fostering equity in student success outcomes by opening a 21st-century joint campus for the University of Central Florida (UCF) and Valencia College in Downtown Orlando (Valencia). The new campus has the expressed intent to improve the quality of life for the people who live and work in the community while powering Central Florida's educational and economic growth. By design, students will have increased access to short-term workforce training and two-year degrees from Valencia and advanced degrees from UCF in high-demand fields that integrate with industry and place students within walking distance of internships, apprenticeships and jobs. This bold vision includes the implementation of an engagement framework focused on the tenets of flourishing 21st-century cities' health and wellness, safety and justice, urban education, family-sustaining employment and housing. The campus will transform lives and the community for decades to come."

On a Mission to Create Paths out of Poverty for Single Mothers



Gloria Perez, CEO of Jeremiah Program (Jeremiah) understands the struggles and obstacles that single mothers face.

She was in fifth grade when her father died from cancer at age 46. Suddenly widowed, Gloria's mom was left to raise Gloria and her two older sisters on her own. Feeling isolated and alone, she did her best to support her family. She worked as a secretary for the Air Force to make ends meet, but dreamt of getting a college degree to improve her financial situation.

Eventually, her mother's educational journey began. Gloria recalls going with her mom to the community college every night and doing her homework or sleeping in the library because they couldn't afford a babysitter.

"Like many adult students, she earned credits, but never completed her associate degree because barriers got in the way," said Gloria.

Managing school and full-time work posed its own challenges, but things got too tough when Gloria's sisters started having trouble in school. Gloria's mom had to take a break from college, and to her mom's own regret, she never finished.

It's a plight that's all too common. According to the Institute of Women's Policy Research (IWPR), only 8%^{vi} of single mothers who enroll in college will graduate with an associate or bachelor's degree within six years, compared to 54% of married mothers and 40% of women overall.

In most cases, single mothers enrolled in postsecondary programs juggle classes, homework, child care, work, finances and running a household—all by themselves. Even the smallest of unexpected obstacles can push these students to the sidelines.

Jeremiah's founder, Michael J. O'Connell, was a Catholic priest who recognized the barriers facing single mothers pursuing education and saw a gap in programming. There were employment programs, early childhood programs and even career development programs, but nothing was holistic. So, he created a new program that addressed the many barriers faced by single moms.

"He used to say, 'If we get this right, people will want to replicate this program,'" said Gloria.

Twenty years ago, Father O'Connell asked Gloria to join as the program's CEO.

"What attracted me to Jeremiah Program initially was their commitment to work with women who are ready to take action to change," she shared. "I wanted to help make that change through education and the target population [single moms] reminded me of my own mother."

Funding to Move Progress Forward and Help More Single Moms

With funding from ECMC Foundation and others, Jeremiah is on the fast-track to making postsecondary success more attainable for single mothers.

Working nationally, Jeremiah offers two-generation anti-poverty solutions for families headed by single mothers. The organization works with single mothers living below the poverty line and their young children to improve access to postsecondary education and reduce barriers to success for both generations.

Jeremiah's proven holistic program model includes five fundamental services: coaching for career-track college education, empowerment and life skills training, quality early childhood education, safe affordable housing and supportive community.

Jeremiah's efforts are working. A 2016 survey of 30 Jeremiah alumnae showed that 100% of graduates are living in



Pictured Above: Jeremiah Program participant and her children

safe housing and 91% are employed or continuing their education. With an average annual income of \$47,609, the majority of graduates have moved above the federal poverty line. The next goal is expansion.

Funding from ECMC Foundation supports Jeremiah's capacity-building efforts in its next phase of growth. First, Jeremiah is gathering market research to identify the opportunities for high-demand jobs in all Jeremiah's existing communities. It is also conducting focus groups to inform a future pilot that will test a shorter-term career pathway model in Rochester, Minnesota. This short-term education pathway is in addition to the work that Jeremiah currently does to help participants earn two- and four-year degrees.

"The world is changing rapidly and we are aware that a shorter-term educational pathway can really help students start their careers," said Gloria. "We think that shorter-term educational opportunities can give students the ability to enter the workforce and open them up to a world of possibilities and to many careers in the future."

ECMC Foundation funding will also help Jeremiah develop sophisticated financial modeling tools to integrate their financial systems, guide business

plan outputs, and inform strategic decisions about Jeremiah's future program innovation and growth.

"When we evaluate new communities, the financial modeling tool will help us understand the cost of partnerships and the cost of operating the program on our own," said Gloria. "We will be using that cost analysis to impact the decisions about where we grow. Ultimately, we hope to be an example of the effectiveness of two-generation strategies, working to end poverty for families."

As Jeremiah continues its mission and expands, Gloria is just as passionate about the cause as ever—often drawing on her own childhood experiences and mentors, including her father, for inspiration.

"My father's work [as a social worker] gave me exposure to very low-income families who were struggling in public housing," she said. "The opportunity to interact with the parents and kids helped me understand that they were no different from our family, in terms of being loving, supportive and having aspirations. He always said people just need an opportunity and a pathway. That's why Jeremiah Program exists."

Education Innovation Ventures

In 2018, ECMC Foundation launched the Education Innovation Ventures (EIV) program, which uses program-related investments to unlock the creative synergy of for-profit and nonprofit sectors.

Complementing our strategic grantmaking, EIV uses financial tools, including loans, deposits, equity, and guarantees, to make below-market-rate investments to for-profit and nonprofit enterprises that seek to generate both social impact and financial returns. Financial returns are reinvested into additional PRIs, allowing us to recycle investment dollars and generate further positive impact on learners' lives.

2018 EDUCATION INNOVATION VENTURES (EIV) RECIPIENTS

PARTNERS

Employment Technology Fund	\$1,000,000
Venn Foundation	\$87,500

PORTFOLIO COMPANIES

College Forward	\$400,000
Better Future Forward	\$400,000

\$1,887,500

PARTNERS

Partner organizations work to increase availability of and exposure to PRIs for social impact ventures. ECMC Foundation made grants to two partners, who have been instrumental in helping EIV develop, build and solidify its PRI portfolio.

Employment Technology Fund (ETF)

ETF is a U.S.-focused impact fund committed to supporting social enterprises that are working to remove barriers to employment for millions of underemployed, low-income adults. Through our investment in ETF, ECMC Foundation joined the Joyce, W.K. Kellogg, Rockefeller, and Walmart Foundations as an Executive Committee Advisory Board member and advises on and approves PRIs made by ETF.

Venn Foundation

The Venn Foundation is a Minneapolis-based foundation that manages donor-advised accounts for funders interested in making investments using PRI tools. The Venn Foundation helps donors identify, negotiate and define PRI opportunities across all sectors that are advancing charitable purposes.

PORTFOLIO COMPANIES

Portfolio companies receive direct investments and work closely with the Foundation team to report on their progress. In 2018, ECMC Foundation made two direct PRIs to portfolio companies working to improve educational outcomes for underserved students.

College Forward

CoPilot Expansion Aims to Reach One Million Students by 2025
PRI Amount: \$400,000

Recognizing that a robust student information system is critical to long-term postsecondary success, persistence and graduation, College Forward launched CoPilot in 2014 to provide organizations and educational coaches, mentors and advisors a holistic student information system. Based in Austin, CoPilot provides users with important data and predictive analytics to help identify students who are at risk of not persisting and delivers targeted student-tailored interventions. With support from ECMC Foundation and the Kresge Foundation, CoPilot is now undergoing expansion efforts with the goal of reaching one million students by 2025.

Better Future Forward

Supporting Innovative Models to Solve the Student Loan Crisis
PRI Amount: \$400,000

Better Future Forward is a nonprofit organization focused on providing income-share agreement (ISA) funds to advance opportunity and educational equity for low-income students. ISAs are a promising financial tool that have the potential to level the playing field for low-income students, while also helping mitigate the student loan crisis. ISA-holders, by contrast to loan-holders, commit to paying the ISA issuer a percentage of their income for a set number of years.

With anchor support from ECMC Foundation, Better Future Forward will launch an ISA program in Chicago, which will provide funding to low-income students from 20 universities across the city.

FEATURED LEADER: YIGAL KERSZENBAUM, EMPLOYMENT TECHNOLOGY FUND



Meet the Investor Who's Made a Difference in Vulnerable Communities Across the Globe; Now He's Reenergizing His Efforts in the States

Neil Diamond's classic hit "We're Coming to America" played on repeat in the Kerszenbaum household for weeks before the family of four packed their bags for the journey from Israel to their new home, America.

Yigal Kerszenbaum, then only eight years old, left the only world he had known. He and his family moved into a tiny two-bedroom apartment with his aunts and uncles who arrived several months before. While their place was crowded and space often was limited, they were hopeful for the better life promised in the states.

In the 1980s, when his family arrived in Los Angeles, they only had \$5,000. Initially, to make ends meet, Yigal and his sister helped their mother sell imitation flowers, which they handmade from female stockings and fine wire. Things became better when his father's career took off. Yigal says his father, a PhD nuclear engineer, taught him the value of hard work. The older Kerszenbaum instilled in his son that success comes from "10% brains and 90% hard work."

Yigal didn't realize it then, but this experience would come to shape his career path. He took his father's advice to heart, applied it to his own education, and now dedicates his work to helping others overcome poverty through hard work, education and job training.

Today, Yigal, a Georgetown MBA graduate, is the managing director of Employment Technology Fund (ETF), an impact investing fund that invests in technology solutions that train, upskill, inform, and connect low-income and lower-skilled adults to employment opportunities.

The goal of ETF is to close the employment opportunity gap, which faces millions of Americans who lack the skills, training and opportunities to access jobs with family-sustaining wages. Many of these individuals are from low-income, minority and immigrant communities. The types of investments that ETF makes are program-related investments (PRIs), a set of financial tools that are designed to generate both social impact and financial returns. PRIs make inexpensive capital available

to nonprofit or for-profit enterprises that address social and environmental challenges. Unlike grants, financial returns from PRIs are expected and can be recycled into additional investments that further generate positive social impact.

ETF was launched in August 2017 with funding from four leading foundations, including Walmart Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation, Joyce Foundation and The W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Earlier this year, ECMC Foundation joined as the fifth leading funder.

In his role, Yigal is responsible for identifying and supporting the growth of innovative tech-based solutions. He says because ETF itself is a start-up, his responsibilities run the entire gamut from fundraising to managing relationships with funders and from running day-to-day operations to deal sourcing and more. Since its launch, it has made five investments, including Cell-Ed, NorthStar, SkillSmart, Nepris and Signal Vine.

Before ETF, Yigal worked at Developing World Markets and The Rockefeller Foundation. His work in impacting investing through these two organizations took him (literally) around the world from Kenya to Thailand, England, Mexico, Bolivia and 25 other countries. He says his inspiration is drawn from the deep connections he made with local entrepreneurs, from female artisans in Bolivia to smallholder mango farmers in Africa and from shopkeepers in India to immigrant job seekers in the United States.

After working in communities across the globe, Yigal is excited to reenergize his efforts to close the employment opportunity gap in the states. The decision came after he recognized that the opportunities he was afforded for economic mobility are slipping away in this country.

Citing research^{xvii} from Raj Chetty, Yigal says, "Individuals born in 1980 had a 90% chance of earning more than their parents. For children born today, that number is just 50%."

The impact investing expert says he looks forward to making a difference in vulnerable communities in the United States.



An Innovative (and Milton Friedman-Approved) Way to Combat The College-Debt Crisis

This op-ed appeared in *Crain's Chicago Business* and was authored by ECMC Foundation President Peter Taylor and Better Future Forward Executive Director Kevin James.

In 2005, Barack and Michelle Obama, in their 40s at the time, announced they were almost done paying back their student loans—nearly 20 years after graduating from college. Some Americans were shocked, but the Obamas' story is common: Both grew up in low-income families and as the cost of college continued to rise, they increasingly relied on loans to finance their education.

Considered the "great equalizer," higher education is the key out of poverty for students from underserved, low-income backgrounds, and is the gateway to family-sustaining jobs. Yet the rising cost of tuition, fees and expenses puts a college education out of reach for students with fewer economic means.

To cover college expenses, many students have turned to loans (both government and private) and are

amassing more debt than previous generations.

The average 2017 college graduate owed \$39,400, and recently, the total debt owed by students surpassed \$1.5 trillion. The impact is most severe on low-income Americans: 12 years after graduation, 91 percent of students from low-income backgrounds still have student loan debt, compared to 59 percent of their wealthier peers.

These challenges have led some critics to question the value of a college education and its return on investment. Given that 65 percent of jobs will require at least some postsecondary education in just two years, the question shouldn't be "Does college matter?" but rather, "How do we make it more accessible, affordable and equitable?"

Some education pioneers are turning to a potential solution—income-share agreements (ISAs)—which are employed in several Latin American countries. While the concept isn't new (it was first introduced more than 50 years ago by Nobel Prize-winning University of Chicago economist Milton Friedman), the application of the model in the United States is. Only a handful of universities, including Purdue University, and coding boot camps are experimenting with them.

With ISAs, students receive financial aid in exchange for a defined share of their post-graduation income. Unlike loans, there is no principal to repay or interest to accrue, and there are thresholds and caps on the student's ISA payments.

ISAs are contingent on income. When students struggle financially, their payment obligation is negligible or nonexistent, and when they thrive, their payment obligation scales with their success.

Better Future Forward is spearheading efforts on ISAs and working to level the playing field for low-income students. In 2017, BFF launched pilot programs in Minnesota and Washington, D.C., and is currently scaling its efforts to the Chicago area with support from ECMC Foundation and two local Chicago foundations.

BFF will collaborate with several Chicago-based college success organizations (Bottom Line, OneGoal, One Million Degrees and College Possible) to serve roughly 60 Chicago students attending four-year universities in Illinois. These organizations will also provide ongoing wraparound support like college mentorship and coaching.

Eventually, BFF plans to grow the program so that every low-income student in Chicago has access to ISAs. And while the philanthropic sector can drive innovation by seeding new interventions, to make a system that works for all students and solve the student loan crisis, we need participation from businesses, policymakers and the public.

It's time to think outside the box. To make college costs more affordable and equitable, we need to test innovative financing solutions.

College-Debt Crisis Overview

\$1.5T+
TOTAL STUDENT DEBT

\$39,400
AVERAGE 2017 COLLEGE GRADUATE DEBT

STUDENTS CARRYING DEBT
12 YEARS AFTER GRADUATION



LOW-INCOME STUDENTS

vs.



WEALTHIER STUDENTS

EVALUATION & MONITORING

ECMC Foundation is committed to evaluation and measurement and recognizes the obligation to share findings to educate and improve the field.

Evaluating Grant Programs to Inform ECMC Foundation's Grantmaking Strategy

In an effort to support our grantees and assess our impact, we conduct program-specific evaluations as well as assessments across our portfolios. Findings from these evaluations can help inform best practices and the strategic grantmaking of both portfolios.

Recap: LeadersUp Evaluation and Synthesis Workshop

In 2017, ECMC Foundation contracted American Institute of Research (AIR) to conduct a program implementation evaluation of LeadersUp's expansion to the San Francisco Bay Area. A Career Readiness portfolio grantee, LeadersUp is a nonprofit organization and talent development intermediary with the mission to bridge the divide between untapped potential of young people and the business challenge of finding the best talent.

After launching its program in Los Angeles and Chicago with support from ECMC Foundation in 2016, LeadersUp expanded its model to the San Francisco Bay Area. ECMC Foundation decided to evaluate the program's implementation in San Francisco largely because the work represented a broader trend of collaboration between multiple stakeholders—from the public and private sectors—whose goals overlapped but were distinct.

To conduct the evaluation, AIR used a mixed methods study drawing from multiple data resources: program documentation, event observation, interviews with participants and industry partners, surveys and focus groups.

Upon completion of the study in 2018, staff from ECMC Foundation and LeadersUp participated in a workshop to make sense of the evaluation results. The workshop provided an

opportunity to review and react to the findings. The Foundation plans to conduct additional program implementation evaluations in the future and will integrate learnings into its grantmaking strategy.

Looking Ahead: Evaluating Impact of Mentorship in College Persistence

Research suggests^{xviii} mentorship is one of the most effective strategies for providing historically underrepresented students with the social and cultural capital necessary for successful degree completion. While there are publications that examine the value and benefits of student mentorship, little research has tackled the various components that make each program successful and considered which elements can be replicated at scale.

In 2018, the ECMC Foundation College Success team issued a request for proposal seeking a third-party research organization to evaluate a subset of grantees that prioritize mentoring among their direct-service supports for college students. The evaluation will help identify which program designs enable increased access to and engagement with college success mentoring services among students from underserved backgrounds. Specifically, it will identify which engagement models and advising components of these mentoring programs are most effective for student persistence and successful college completion.

NORC at the University of Chicago was selected to conduct the evaluation. The findings will be released in 2020.



CONNECTING TO THE ECMC GROUP FAMILY

ECMC Foundation is part of the ECMC Group company enterprise and we strive to connect our mission across the ECMC Group family.

ECMC Foundation Commits \$1.39 Million to Communities Where Employees Live and Work



This year, ECMC Foundation committed \$1.39 million to 92 education-related organizations across 19 states through the GO! Program.

An annual employee engagement program, the GO! Program gives team members across affiliates of the Foundation's parent company, ECMC Group, the opportunity to nominate organizations in their communities. Employees across the United States then cast votes to select winners of grants, ranging from \$10,000 to \$25,000.

"The GO! Program gives our colleagues the ability to bring ECMC Foundation's mission of improving educational opportunities to their communities and to the folks that matter most to them," said Peter Taylor, president of ECMC Foundation. "The stories we hear about the grants are inspiring and empower employees to make a difference."

Some employees nominated programs that have personally helped them. Tamara Poole, account specialist at ECMC Group's office in Sacramento, is a single mom and former participant at Single Mom Strong, an organization that provides weekly seminars, discussion groups, and classes to empower single mothers and their children to be their best selves.

"I nominated Single Mom Strong because the program has helped me through my own trying times," Tamara said.

Single Mom Strong received a \$25,000 grant.

Libby Considine, corporate communications specialist at ECMC Group's headquarters in Minneapolis, nominated Minds Matter, which provides summer enrichment programs for low-income,

high-achieving students to help them successfully navigate the challenges on the path to college. For Libby, the opportunity to give back to an organization where she regularly volunteers her time was especially rewarding.

"As a volunteer for the organization, I see first-hand the difference the program makes in the lives of the students and how the trajectory of their futures becomes increasingly brighter upon graduation," Libby said.

Minds Matter received a \$25,000 grant.

Employees like Phillip Moore, program chair at the Altierus-Bissonnet campus in Houston, nominated an organization that introduces students to the potential of a college degree.

"Rayzor Sharp Community Development has provided support in the Houston community for several years," said Phillip. "To watch them grow to the point where they are taking future college students on campus tours and having teacher appreciation nights makes me very proud to have nominated them for the GO! Program."

Rayzor Sharp Community Development received a \$10,000 grant.

Now in its fourth year, the GO! Program received 227 nominations and enjoyed widespread participation across all 31 sites where voting occurred. Grantees were selected based on the number of votes each organization received. In total, the Foundation has awarded approximately 200 grants and nearly \$5 million through this program.

A Leader with a Vision: Meet Jeremy Wheaton, President and CEO of ECMC Group

Jeremy Wheaton has spent his career helping students succeed. From his college days working in the financial aid office to his current role as president and CEO of ECMC Group, Jeremy has continuously focused his efforts on providing students with opportunities that will enable them to accomplish their academic goals.

Since assuming the role in August 2017, Jeremy has been working with teams across the enterprise—including ECMC Foundation, ECMC and Zenith Education Group—to help increase college access, persistence and completion; improve student loan repayment; and solve America's workforce education and training challenges through investments, innovation and proven competencies in higher education.

In this Q&A, meet Jeremy and learn what inspires him.



Q: What drives and inspires you to help students from all backgrounds succeed?

A: I have seen firsthand how complex the process of going to college can be, so this is personal for me.

My parents are first-generation college students—and like many who are the first in their family to go to college, they fought to earn their degrees. My mother came from a family of entrepreneurs who earned their success without earning their degrees. My dad came from a low-income, working-class family, where going to college was not an expectation nor within their financial means. They had to figure it out on their own—the application process, financial aid, navigating college and so on. Thanks to them, the path was easier for my sister and me.

It is amazingly fulfilling to be in a role where I can help others, knowing it will lift up generations to come.

Q: What is your favorite part of your job?

A: I love working with our teams. Throughout my career, it has been motivating to watch employees develop and advance their skills while doing good work; with

some even going on to earn either their first degree or an advanced degree. Being able to witness, and at times, play a role in helping our people develop, advance, and positively impact their families, while assisting students and our surrounding communities, has been very rewarding.

Q: Why does supporting evidence-based and innovative programs and solutions matter in postsecondary education?

A: While we have come a long way in providing greater access to postsecondary education, we have more to do to ensure all students complete and succeed. Focusing on evidence-based programs and innovation ensures we are maximizing our impact with the resources we have.

Q: If you had any words of advice for students, what would that be?

A: Believe in yourself. Commit to yourself. And celebrate your successes along the way. There will be obstacles and challenges, but if you surround yourself with people who believe in you, their positive support will be there when you need someone to lean on.



Pictured Above: Roadtrip Nation RV at the premiere of the documentary

Documentary Sparks Conversation Across the Country about the Role of Community College

"One Step Closer" viewing tour hosted by ECMC Foundation, grantees, partners and parent company ECMC Group affiliates.

Who are today's students? How are postsecondary education institutions, including community colleges, responding to their unique needs? What can community colleges do to help students reach their educational and career goals?

Questions like these have been sparking conversations across the country since April—when Roadtrip Nation debuted "One Step Closer", a documentary sponsored by ECMC Foundation, at the Crest Theatre in Sacramento, California.

The film follows three students—Armand, Becca and Melanie—who are at different stages of their community college experiences, as they travel 3,300 miles across the country in a green RV in search of education and career inspiration.

After its premiere, with support from the Foundation, Roadtrip Nation's team members, known as "Roadies," traveled to more than 20 cities across America—ultimately covering 6,495 miles during separate spring and fall tours—to spread the word about the film and engage viewers on topics about community college.

Personal and Professional Advice

The one-hour documentary captures interviews with successful people who started their postsecondary journey at a community college. Through these conversations the roadtrippers learned about a variety of career paths; heard stories of resilience, sorrow and success; and received advice to help them grow both personally and professionally. As they shared about their life journeys, the diverse range of individuals interviewed aligned around similar themes: be passionate, positive, and present; show humility and curiosity; set and achieve goals; ignore naysayers and self-doubt; and express compassion and respect for others.

Multiple Cities. One Documentary. Powerful Conversations.

Tour stops were held at high schools, community colleges, ECMC Foundation grantee sites, and parent company ECMC Group-affiliated locations, including ECMC Group headquarters, The College Place - Minnesota and the Altierus Career College campus in Houston.

During the first tour, Roadies made 10 stops including multiple places throughout California, Oregon and Minnesota, ultimately ending in Chicago. After a summer break, Roadtrip Nation continued its tour with another 10 stops, kicking off in September in Pomona, California, then heading to several East Coast sites before heading back through Alabama, Louisiana and eventually ending in Texas.

According to Roadies, the screening and accompanying tour stop activities were well received by the students, faculty and staff. After the event, viewers spent time exploring the RV and reflecting on their experiences.

One student attendee at the former grantee Bright Prospect viewing location said, "I liked that we were able to talk about our interests and talk about how we can make those interests into careers." Another stated, "I can relate to the roadtrippers' stories. They went through the same thing that I'm going through."

Bright Prospect is a Southern California nonprofit and ECMC Foundation grantee that empowers predominantly low-income students to gain admission to, succeed in and graduate from college.

In Deatsville, Alabama, where a screening of the documentary was held for about 100 incarcerated men at Ingram State Technical College (ISTC)—an Alabama community college that serves the state's incarcerated population—one student said he found "inspiration to let go of fear and to get moving," and that "time waits for no



Pictured Above: Students viewing documentary at Ingram State Technical College in Alabama

one—the only thing worse than failure is to never try." Another said he walked away with a "fresh dose of confidence and hope for the future."

ISTC is one of 65 colleges across 27 states in the Second Chance Pell pilot program that is receiving technical assistance and training from the Vera Institute of Justice, an ECMC Foundation grantee.

A Bonus Stop at the Nation's Capital

After the Roadies ended their fall tour, a bonus screening was held in early December in Washington, D.C. The event, hosted by ECMC Foundation grantee the Aspen Institute and ECMC Foundation drew an audience of policymakers, researchers, practitioners and reporters.

After the screening, postsecondary education experts from organizations, including the Institute for Higher Education Policy, the American Association for State Colleges and Universities and Montgomery College, talked about today's community college students, discussed whether institutions are adequately meeting their needs and presented their ideas on how to best prepare students to succeed.

To help students, "we must understand the rich complexity of the students who come to us," said DeRionne Pollard, Montgomery College president.

Julia Ajinkya, vice president of applied research at Institute of Higher Education, believes community colleges should do more than educate and train for jobs.

"Community colleges should not only respond to workforce needs but proactively take control and produce the leaders we need," she said.

Roadtripper Becca Rodack was also a panelist that day. She reminded the audience that sometimes, one person can make a big difference in whether a student succeeds.

"I had a very open advisor," she said. "The career advisor came to classes on the first day of school and told us where her office is—so I went."

The summer trip that Becca went on is over and the initial nationwide screening tour is complete, but One Step Closer's impact—on the roadtrippers, the Roadies, viewers and all who came across it—will continue.

Supported by both the College Success and Career Readiness teams, Roadtrip Nation received \$850,000 in 2016 to send a team of three community college roadtrippers to interview professionals who also attended community college. The experience was filmed and developed into a one-hour documentary that can be viewed on public television and streamed online at www.pbs.org/video/one-step-closer-xcaooj/.

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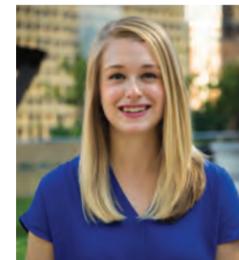
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ECMC Foundation

444 South Flower Street

Suite 2550

Los Angeles, CA 90071

www.ecmcfoundation.org