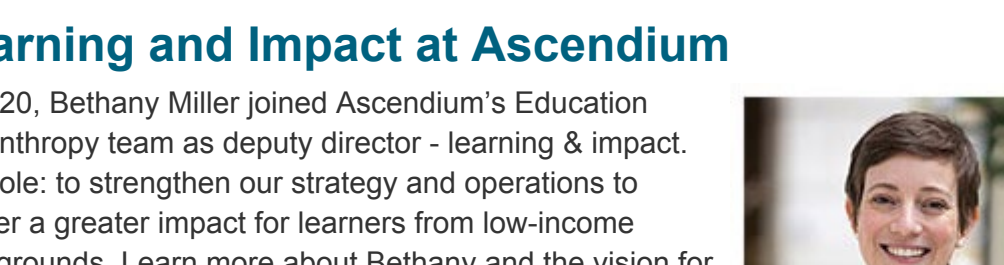


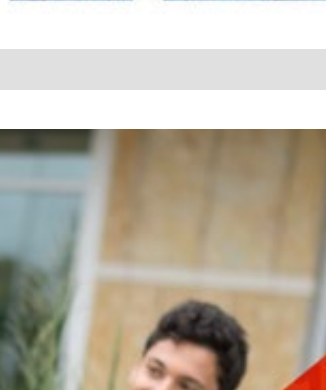


**LEARNING AND IMPACT FRAMEWORK**



**Learning and Impact at Ascendium**

In 2020, Bethany Miller joined Ascendium’s Education Philanthropy team as deputy director - learning & impact. Her role: to strengthen our strategy and operations to deliver a greater impact for learners from low-income backgrounds. Learn more about Bethany and the vision for the Learning and Impact team and how they hope to increase our philanthropy’s effectiveness and contribute to better outcomes for these learners. [Read more...](#)



**Like and Follow Us!**

Ascendium

**Starting this Month, Find Ascendium's Education Philanthropy News and Info on Social @AscendiumEP**

Ascendium’s Education Philanthropy is now on social media — find us on Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram. Now you’ll be able to connect, share and converse with us on social media channels we’ve established just for our education philanthropy. These channels will be focused exclusively on initiatives we’re backing, the work of our amazing grant partners and other topics of interest to the field. [Read more...](#)

**New Podcasts Shine Light on Rural Voices, Partners**

Rural Matters has a new eight-part podcast series focused on postsecondary education and workforce training in rural communities. The series kicked off with a compelling first episode featuring the voices of four rural community college leaders from across the U.S. Ascendium is supporting this series with the aim of informing more listeners about the viewpoints of both learners and institutions in rural areas, as well as highlighting the voices of our grant partners and the work they are doing. [Read more...](#)

**Insights Gained from Rural Respondents in ECS Special Report**

To make the most effective investments in rural postsecondary education and workforce training, it’s important that Ascendium and others in the field understand rural residents’ perceptions. There are insights to be gleaned from their perceptions of the value of education, barriers to entry or completion, connections to work and general satisfaction with prior education and training experiences. A new Education Commission of the States report, in partnership with Strada Education Network and Gallup and funded by Ascendium, provides a greater awareness and deeper understanding of how rural residents perceive postsecondary education and training, particularly in light of the COVID-19 health crisis. [Read more...](#)

**Biden Postsecondary Education Proposals Raise Profile of Evidence-Based Reform Strategies**

A Biden Administration proposal includes \$62 billion to invest in evidence-based strategies that increase retention and completion rates at institutions serving students from communities most underrepresented in postsecondary education. This focus on proven strategies targeting underrepresented learners closely parallels Ascendium’s strategy and mission to improve education and career outcomes for learners from low-income backgrounds. [Read more...](#)

**Now Hiring**

Ascendium empowers our team members with experiences, tools and support to thrive. We’re now hiring to fill the role of Learning and Impact Officer. [Find more information and apply online here.](#)

**New Resources**

**A Better Way to Place Students: What Colleges Need to Know About Multiple Measures Assessments**

Placement testing often determines whether a student is required to take developmental education courses or college-level courses upon entry to postsecondary education. Placement testing can also be a barrier for students, which is why Ascendium supported the research captured in [this resource](#) by MDRC and the Community College Research Center which explores an alternative to high-stakes placement testing.

**Convening: Mapping the Future of Technology in Prison Higher Education (Videos)**

[These videos](#) are presentations from a virtual convening in February 2021 of more than 100 attendees who explored the future of technology in postsecondary education in prison. The convening was produced by Open Campus Media with support from Ascendium. Participants included representatives of universities, advocacy groups, funders and state corrections systems.

**Emerging Solutions: Improving Institutional Collaboration and Student Outcomes Through the Texas Transfer Alliance**

Effective policies around transfer were important before COVID-19 and are arguably even more important as institutions recover from the health crisis. [This brief](#), produced by the Charles A. Dana Center through Tackling Transfer, is co-funded by many partners, including Ascendium. It showcases work completed by the Texas Transfer Alliance as it relates to emerging transfer practices that show promise in improving student success and social mobility.

**Higher Education in Puerto Rico: Conditions and Context Influencing Institutional Resilience**

The profile of many rural communities across the U.S. is not that dissimilar from those in Puerto Rico. Understanding the context of Puerto Rican institutions to enroll, retain and graduate their Latino students can inform efforts to better serve this student population on the island, as well as on the U.S. mainland. [This report](#), produced by *Excelencia* in Education with support from Ascendium, provides an overview of the educational environment in Puerto Rico and is part one of a two-part series exploring institutional resilience and transformation in Puerto Rico.

**COVID-19 Transfer, Mobility, and Progress: Final Look Spring 2021 Report**

The National Student Clearinghouse Research Center released the fourth of a nine-part report series to provide institutions and researchers with near real-time data on how the COVID-19 health crisis is impacting transfer. [This report](#), co-funded by Ascendium and ECMC Foundation, shows transfer overall was down 10% and community college transfer enrollment declined 16.3%, a worrisome trend for learners from low-income backgrounds.

**Optimal College Financial Aid: Theory and Evidence on Free College, Early Commitment, and Merit Aid from an Eight-Year Randomized Trial**

Utilizing data collected through The Degree Project, a partnership between Ascendium, Milwaukee Public Schools and researchers, [this working paper](#) analyzes how promise programs and the design of financial aid programs affect a variety of high school, college and life outcomes.

**Education Commission of the States Special Report**

This Education Commission of the States [report](#), in partnership with Strada Education Network and Gallup and funded by Ascendium, provides a greater awareness and deeper understanding of how rural residents perceive postsecondary education and training, particularly in light of the COVID-19 health crisis.

**How Ohio Community Colleges Are Using Guided Pathways to Personalize Student Support**

[This report](#), supported by Ascendium, examines innovative ways Ohio community colleges are providing personalized student supports within the guided pathways model. The report finds that personalizing universal support has the potential to increase equity by better recognizing and meeting the needs of underrepresented students, a step towards reducing structural barriers to their success.

**Rural Community Colleges with Lisa Larson, Chad Brown, Angel Reyna and Jay Falke (Part I)**

The first in an eight-part podcast series from Rural Matters and sponsored by Ascendium, [this episode](#) features four rural community college leaders. Each shares their experiences of focusing on student success and the integral role community colleges play in rural regional economic success.

**Recent Grants**

**Streamline Key Learner Transitions**

**College Promise Careers Institute & Expanding Ecosystems for Promise Student Support** Scaling

**College Promise Campaign | \$250,000 | 07/2021 - 06/2022**

This grant supports the College Promise Campaign in expanding their efforts to build awareness of supports for specific College Promise student populations and their work focused on elevating the role of postsecondary education in addressing workforce and economic development needs.

**On the Go: Find Ascendium Staff in the Field**

Ascendium is committed to the safety of our staff. We continue to monitor and follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s guidance regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and safety protocol for travel and in-person events. We will continue to support and attend virtual events but look forward to opportunities in August and beyond to connect in-person.

- 🚩 **GlobalMindED: 2021 Virtual Conference**  
April 1 - July 30, 2021
- 🚩 **GSV Ventures: ASU+GSV Summit**  
San Diego, CA / Virtual  
August 9 - 11, 2021
- 🚩 **NCAN: Rebuilding for Postsecondary Equity Virtual Conference**  
October 5 - 7, 2021

🚩 = Ascendium is a proud sponsor