



New Initiative Will Help “Optimize” HEP Delivery in Minnesota, Iowa and New York

In July 2019, we issued a request for concepts to find postsecondary institutions and corrections departments poised to take their higher education in prison (HEP) systems to the next level and help the field learn what it takes to build the relationships and infrastructure necessary for systemic improvement. This initiative, “Optimizing Delivery Systems for Higher Education in Prison: Postsecondary Pathways for Re-Entry Transition,” represents our first major HEP project since last spring’s unveiling of our new funding strategy, which features HEP as one of four focus areas. We’re committing a total of \$5 million toward the initiative in planning grants, implementation grants and a comprehensive evaluation.

After reviewing the submissions, we’re excited to announce these sites as our grant partners, each awarded a \$150,000 planning grant:

- The Minnesota Department of Corrections will work with the “Just Education” Collaborative at University of Minnesota’s Institute for Advanced Study, Inver Hills Community College/Dakota County Technical College and Augsburg University as they prepare to launch their “College at Prison” effort.
- The Iowa Department of Education will partner with the Iowa Department of Corrections, Des Moines Area Community College, Iowa Central Community College and the University of Iowa to develop a statewide plan to support workforce-relevant academic and career pathways.
- City University of New York’s Institute for State and Local Governance will collaborate with the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, bringing together key stakeholders across the state to align educational offerings.

After the planning phase, funding of up to \$800,000 will be awarded to successful planning sites.

We believe reimagining these delivery systems to better meet students’ needs could ultimately lead to increased credential completion rates, smoother college transfers and more meaningful employment opportunities. [Read more.](#)



CAPR Conference Reflects on Developmental Education Reform Research and Next Steps

Last month, members of the Ascendium team attended a convening hosted by the **Center for the Analysis of Postsecondary Readiness (CAPR)**, an organization led by the Community College Research Center and MDRC. The two-day conference represented the culmination of CAPR’s work over the last five years to build an extensive evidence base around developmental education reform. The event also provided a venue for stakeholders to reflect on the field’s next steps to support student success.

Ascendium is among the funders that sponsored the conference. While CAPR’s current work is wrapping up, we remain deeply committed to supporting developmental education reform through our support of **Strong Start to Finish**, **National Academy of Sciences** and **MDRC’s Multiple Measures project**, and we look forward to future partnerships in this space.



Reflections on the First Year of the Ascendium Fellowship Program

Throughout the year, Ascendium receives requests from student success practitioners to attend conferences organized by our grant partners. In an effort to respond to these requests more systematically and fairly, we launched a two-year program to establish fellowship funds that enable practitioners across the country to attend our grant partners’ signature learning events. Fellows then share reflections on their experiences to help grant partners evolve their events and help deepen our own understanding of issues affecting student success.

Ascendium Senior Program Officer Sue Cui notes that “the beauty of this initiative is that it enables us to react quickly when a request comes up to support the learning of others in the grantees’ space by providing the funding for them to attend.”

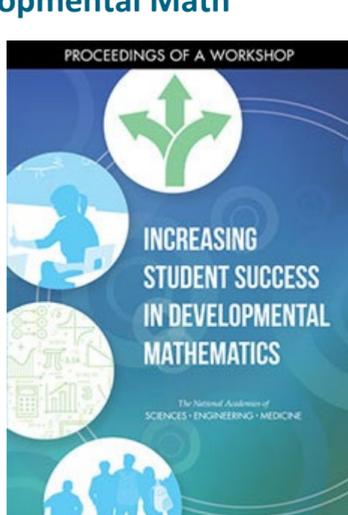
Events attended by Fellows in the project’s first year include two Achieving the Dream conferences and a summit on education and technology hosted by Arizona State University and Global Silicon Valley (ASU + GSV). Grants for the remainder of 2019 are being awarded to Teachers College, Columbia University; Wisconsin School Counselor Association; Center for the Analysis of Postsecondary Readiness; and ASU + GSV for next year’s summit.

New Book from NAS Spotlights Strategies for Helping Those Not Benefiting From Developmental Math

In a recent issue, we told you about **an exciting partnership with the National Academy of Sciences (NAS)** to help educational leaders develop a research agenda behind better serving students being left behind by developmental math reforms.

To that end, NAS assembled a committee of experts in developmental mathematics as well as equity and inclusion in March of 2019 for a **workshop and webcast** exploring challenges and strategies for change. The proceedings of that workshop have now been published in book form.

Increasing Student Success in Developmental Mathematics: Proceedings of a Workshop outlines a number of possible areas for future research and steps for sustaining momentum over the next five years. We look forward to participating in the ongoing conversation, and being a part of the movement to promote success among students whose needs are not being met through current practices.



Recent Grants

Recipient	Grant	Amount
Institute for Evidence-Based Change	Implementing and Evaluating Caring Campus Faculty Engagement	\$1.7 million
Excelencia in Education	Ascendium-Sponsored Convening	\$55,000
Dana Center, University of Texas at Austin	Moving Mathematics Pathways to Normative Practice in Arkansas	\$1.5 million

On the Go: Find Ascendium Staff in the Field

JFF Postsecondary State Network Meeting

January 29–30, Seattle, WA

National Skills Coalition Summit

February 3-5, Washington, DC

American Association of State Colleges and Universities: 2020 Academic Affairs Winter Meeting

February 6-8, New Orleans, LA

Achieving the Dream: DREAM 2020 National Convening

February 18-21, National Harbor, MD

Wisconsin School Counselor Association 55th Annual Conference

February 18-20, Madison, WI

SXSW EDU 2020

March 9-12, Austin, TX

WEBCAST

Success at Scale

Strategies to Improve Outcomes for Underserved Students

With Support From Ascendium Education Group

December 9, 2019 | Monday 2 P.M. ET

Register

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