



Ascendium Education Philanthropy Strategy Refresh

June 5, 2019

Introductions



Amy Kerwin
Vice President
Education Philanthropy



Rebecca Villarreal
Director
Education Grantmaking



Agenda

- **Overview of Ascendium Education Group**
- **Grantmaking Focus Areas**
 - Removing Systemic Barriers to Success
 - Streamlining Transitions
 - Expanding Higher Education in Prison
 - Developing Rural Education and Workforce Training
- **Operationalizing the Strategy**
- **Questions & Answers**



Organizational Background



About Ascendium

Elevating opportunity through the power of postsecondary education since 1967

Ascendium Education Group (formerly Great Lakes Higher Education Corporation & Affiliates) is the nation's largest federal student loan guarantor, a leading postsecondary education philanthropy and a provider of student success services for postsecondary institutions. Ascendium, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, provides information, tools and counseling to help millions of borrowers nationwide avoid default and keep the door to re-enrollment open.



**Ascendium Education
Philanthropy**



Our Philanthropic History



Refreshed Strategy

Why now?

What stays the same?

What changes?



Our Philanthropic Mission

Ascendium's philanthropic mission is to elevate opportunities and outcomes for learners from low-income backgrounds so they can better achieve postsecondary educational and career success.



Our Philanthropic Mission

Our grantmaking focuses on increasing equity for **low-income populations**, especially those in historically underrepresented groups:

- first-generation students
- incarcerated adults
- rural community members
- students of color
- veterans



Grantmaking Focus Areas

- **Removing Systemic Barriers to Success**
- **Streamlining Transitions**
- **Expanding Higher Education in Prison**
- **Developing Rural Education & Workforce Training**



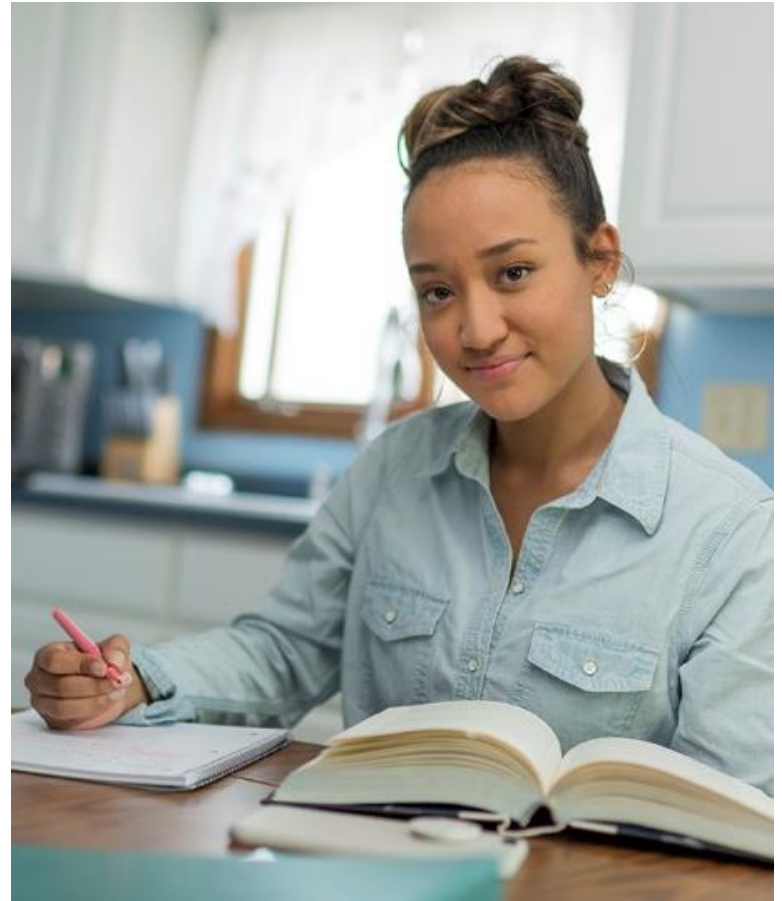
Removing Barriers to Student Success at the Institution and System Levels

- Support meaningful structural transformation
- Reduce or eliminate obstacles to student success
- Increase completion rates
- Shorten time to completion



Streamlining Key Learner Transitions: Matriculation, Transfer and Workforce Entry

- Align and leverage data systems
- Improve collaboration between systems and institutions
- Help education and workforce training systems work in concert with employers and labor markets



Expanding High-Quality Higher Education in Prison Programs

- Disrupt intergenerational transmission of poverty
- Capitalize on urgency around Second Chance Pell
- Build body of data to support best practices
- Forge connections between corrections systems, educational institutions and labor markets



Developing Rural Education & Workforce Training

- Reduce rural/urban disparities throughout postsecondary pipeline
- Listen and learn
- Establish connections with funders and researchers experienced in this space



Operationalizing the Strategy



Our Grantmaking Team



Amy Kerwin
VP Education
Philanthropy



Rebecca Villarreal
Director



Toya Wall
Senior Program
Officer



Sue Cui
Senior Program
Officer



Carolynn Lee
Program Officer



Maryann Rainey
Program Officer



Kirstin Yeado
Program Officer

Grants Management & Administrative Support

Nikki Wachter
Stephanie Nichols
Jennifer Bernicky
Monique Hicks



Two new positions:
Deputy Director and Senior Program Officer



How We Will Work



- Types of partners
- Co-fund with others
- Dissemination efforts
- What we do not fund



Connecting with Us



Conferences



Newsletter

ascendiumphilanthropy.org/community/news



Current Website / New Website Forthcoming
ascendiumphilanthropy.org



Questions?

Thank You

