
NEWS RELEASE

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Cohort Catalyst® Loan Repayment Support Empowers Students through Outreach, Education and Counseling

Madison, Wis.— Each year, millions of students rely on federal student loans to help them achieve their postsecondary academic and career goals. While many borrowers successfully repay their loans, others struggle and a significant number default.

With more than 50 years of experience helping student loan borrowers avoid and recover from default, Ascendium Education Solutions (formerly Great Lakes Higher Education Guaranty Corporation), knew it had a unique opportunity to help students take control of their debt. Last fall, Ascendium launched [Cohort Catalyst](#), part of its [Attigo](#) suite of student success solutions. Cohort Catalyst helps borrowers sort out their student loan repayment challenges by offering a path to college completion and financial independence. Cohort Catalyst features include: school-branded outreach, data management, inbound call center, expert counseling and personalization for the unique needs of each school and student.

In its first year, Cohort Catalyst partnered with all types of higher education institutions across the country to drive repayment success. The key to that success is a dedicated Higher Education Support Services (HESS) team that works as an extension of the school to provide comprehensive repayment support. With an average tenure of five years, this team stands out in an industry where call center employees typically have high turnover. The HESS team uses a decades-in-the-making approach—one that helped Ascendium prevent 1.3 million student loans totaling \$12.6 billion from going into default just this past year.

One early Cohort Catalyst partner, the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS), achieved system-wide promising results in under 12 months with an average default rate reduction of 11.7%. Now, after 20 months of collaboration and close to 10,000 cures, their system-wide average default rate reduction is expected to reach 22%.

“It was critical for us to work with a credible expert who could help us go after student success from multiple angles and make measureable impacts,” said Keyimani Alford, Ph.D., director of student financial support services for Madison College, a WTCS member. “Our partnership with Ascendium is strong and I’m confident we’ll be able to make huge positive impacts with our students.”

Ascendium is excited to use its expertise to partner with even more colleges and systems. As Ascendium continues to develop Cohort Catalyst and the Attigo Suite, they look to a future where student loan indebtedness and loan repayment are no longer barriers to college completion or career success.

“Everything we do is in service of our mission to ensure the success of learners,” said Ascendium’s Vice President-Repayment Solutions Beth Erickson. “Importantly, we are not a student loan servicer, but rather an extension of the school’s efforts to provide loan education and a comprehensive understanding of the student’s loan responsibilities and repayment options.”

Visit attigo.com to learn more about Cohort Catalyst and [the impact](#) it’s making across the country.

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About Ascendium:

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’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. To learn more, visit ascendiumeducation.org.