Dismantling Barriers, But More Work to Do

The U.S. college access and success field has matured. We have a strong cohort of go-to solutions that dismantle barriers to student success, such as improving remedial math and English courses, redesigning advising practices and clarifying pathways to graduation.

Now we need to expand effective reforms while reviewing chronically underexamined obstacles to student success, including off-campus issues like hunger and housing. A 2017 Kresge-supported study from the Wisconsin Hope Center found 14 percent of community college students are homeless; two-thirds are food insecure.

Still, real change — progress — is happening. In early 2018, the National Center for Education Statistics reported that the number of low-income students going to college now stands at 65 percent. That’s up from 50 percent just five years ago, and is now on par with middle-income student college enrollment.

Clearly, low-income students and families know they must go to college to succeed. What we need to ensure now is that those newly enrolled students complete their college degree programs.

In 2017, the Kresge Education team doubled down in several areas. We supported Strong Start to Finish, joining The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Great Lakes Higher Education Corporation & Affiliates to promote more effective developmental math interventions and pathways.

We tapped our partner, Institute for Higher Education Policy, to launch Degrees When Due, a combination of two previously funded initiatives (Project Win-Win and Credit When It’s Due) that combine reverse transfer and degree reclamation efforts.

We invested, through AGB Investment Strategies, in a cohort of historically black colleges and universities to ensure they build sustainable paths toward the future. This marked our team’s second program-related investment in partnership with Kresge’s Social Investment Practice team — and we hope to make more. This is why we also partnered with The Lumina Foundation last spring to publish a landscape analysis on impact investing in higher education.

We also celebrated the success of cities that raised FAFSA completion rates through the FAFSA Completion Challenge. Working with our partner, the National College Access Network, 22 cities in the challenge raised FAFSA completion rates by nearly 5 percentage points, and eight won small grants to continue their work. And we were inspired by stories from some of the students who received student financial aid through FAFSA at FAFSTories.org.

In South Africa, we brought together 200 success-minded university leaders at the Siyaphumelela (“We Succeed”) student success conference in Johannesburg. And in our hometown of Detroit, we supported Detroit Drives Degrees, an effort of the Detroit Regional Chamber to increase college attainment in the region.

But this is no time to rest. While national statistics indicate progress in getting more low-income students into college, not all is well. In addition to the risk of low-income students failing and dropping out, equity gaps remain for many students of color.

There’s more work to do. That’s where you’ll find us, and our partners, in 2018.
### 2017 Education Program Grants

Promoting postsecondary access and success for low-income, first-generation and underrepresented students.

**Grants: 76  Total Committed:** $21,116,064

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>Achieving the Dream</td>
<td>Silver Spring, Md.</td>
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<td>Africa Grantmakers’ Affinity Group</td>
<td>Warrenton, Va.</td>
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<td>American Indian College Fund</td>
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<td>Arkansas Community Colleges</td>
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<td>The Aspen Institute, Inc.</td>
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<td>Civic Nation</td>
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<td>CollegeSpring</td>
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<td>Complete College America</td>
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<td>Con Mi MADRE</td>
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<td>E3 Alliance</td>
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<td>Excelencia in Education, Inc.</td>
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<td>$750,000</td>
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*Inyathelo (South African Institute of Advancement) works with eight South African universities to help build their advancement capacity and increase private fundraising revenue.*
Gateway to College National Network
Portland, Ore.
$375,000

Goddard-Riverside Community Center
New York, N.Y.
$100,000

Grantmakers for Education
Portland, Ore.
$20,000

iMentor
New York, N.Y.
$125,000

Indiana University
Bloomington, Ind.
$100,000

Institute for College Access and Success, Inc.
Oakland, Calif.
$500,000

Institute for Higher Education Policy
Washington, D.C.
$1,500,000

Inyathelo
Cape Town, South Africa
$857,734

Leadership Memphis
Memphis, Tenn.
$25,000

Macomb Community College Foundation
$100,000

Michigan College Access Network
Lansing, Mich.
$260,000

Michigan Community College Association
Lansing, Mich.
$750,000

National College Access Network, Inc.
Washington, D.C.
$850,000

National College Advising Corps, Inc.
Chapel Hill, N.C.
$50,000

National Student Clearinghouse
Herndon, Va.
$100,000

Nelson Mandela University
Port Elizabeth, South Africa
$100,000

New America Foundation
Washington, D.C.
$420,000

New America Foundation
Washington, D.C.
$20,000

Oakland University
Rochester, Mich.
$100,000

Oakland University
Rochester, Mich.
$75,000

Paul Quinn College
Dallas, Texas
$250,000

Postsecondary National Policy Institute
Washington, D.C.
$180,000

Results for America
Washington, D.C.
$150,000

Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors
New York, N.Y.
$781,250

State Higher Education Executive Officers Association
Boulder, Colo.
$10,000

Student African American Brotherhood
Notre Dame, Ind.
$100,000

Teachers College, Columbia University
New York, N.Y.
$55,000

Temple University*
$350,000

Three Frame Media
Santa Monica, Calif.
$150,000

Universities South Africa
Pretoria, South Africa
$50,000

University of Cape Town
Rondebosch, South Africa
$275,000

University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Mich.
$98,000

University of Notre Dame Du Lac
Notre Dame, Ind.
$275,000

University of Pretoria
Hatfield, South Africa
$325,000

University of Pretoria
Hatfield, South Africa
$100,000

The University of Texas at Austin
Austin, Texas
$95,000

University of the Free State
Bloemfontein, South Africa
$100,000

University of the Witwatersrand
Johannesburg, South Africa
$100,000

University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Va.
$45,000

University System of Maryland
Adelphi, Md.
$150,000

Wayne State University
Detroit, Mich.
$275,000

Young Invincibles
Washington, D.C.
$200,000

YouthBuild USA, Inc.*
Somerville, Mass.
$300,000

*Denotes cross-team grant

Detroit Drives Degrees
A three-year grant supports the Detroit Regional Chamber Foundation’s Detroit Drives Degrees initiative. This comprehensive student success campaign is designed to boost education attainment among underrepresented students.