



Now Available! 2020 Education Philanthropy Report, Empowering Possibilities

Our 2020 report, Empowering Possibilities, is now available. Our report tells the story of our philanthropy during an unprecedented time and the tremendous efforts of our grant partners who were able to advance their work despite numerous challenges.

[Read more...](#)



Work Underway for Creation of a Rural Postsecondary Education Research Agenda

A purposeful focus on closing rural attainment gaps and advancing upward socioeconomic mobility for rural learners from low-income backgrounds is much needed in our nation. Ascendium is aiming to fill that critical gap by funding a diverse working group to create a rural postsecondary research agenda. [Read more...](#)



Initiatives Address Transfer from Different Angles

One third of all college students transfer schools on their journey to a degree, but far too few institutions and systems have adapted to this reality, leading students to lose credits, money and time. Ascendium and funding partners are supporting several ongoing initiatives to improve transfer outcomes for learners from low-income backgrounds. [Read more...](#)



250 Wisconsin Apprentices Receive Tools of the Trade Scholarships

Financial pressure can make it hard for learners to complete apprenticeships, particularly if they are juggling school, work and family, while also completing their apprenticeship. It's why Ascendium supports the Tools of the Trade Scholarship Program and recently awarded \$375,000 in scholarships to 250 construction and industrial trades apprentices with financial need in the Wisconsin Technical College System. Each apprentice received a \$1,500 scholarship to assist with the cost of equipment, tools and clothing to help them overcome financial barriers and keep them on the path to success. [Read more...](#)



Convening Summary: Mapping the Future of Technology in Prison Higher Education

In February, Ascendium supported Open Campus Media's virtual convening of more than 100 attendees exploring the future of technology in postsecondary education in prison. Representatives from universities, advocacy groups, funders and state corrections systems examined such topics as student perspectives on technology in prison education and the lifting of the Pell Grant ban. This summary highlights the day's discussions. [View the summary...](#)



New Resources

Examining the Educational and Employment Outcomes of Reverse Credit Transfer

Reverse credit transfer is an emerging policy that awards an associate degree retroactively to students who hadn't been awarded one before transferring from a two-year to a four-year school. This **study** examines how reverse credit transfer impacts students' education and career outcomes using data from Texas, where the legislature mandated the policy in 2011. Ascendium funded this research as part of the **Degrees When Due initiative**.



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

The National Student Clearinghouse Research Center released the third of a nine-part series, which Ascendium co-funded to provide institutions and researchers with near real-time data on how the COVID-19 health crisis is impacting transfer students. This **report** shows the community college sector with a 15.2% transfer decline, a worrisome trend for learners from low-income backgrounds.



Caring Campus: An Initiative to Involve Community College Staff in Increasing Student Success

This research **brief**, developed by the Community College Research Center (CCRC) at Columbia University Teachers College, highlights the Caring Campus initiative with a special focus on evaluating the importance of nonacademic college staff to the student experience. With funding from Ascendium, the work draws on observations at six colleges, plus interviews with representatives and staff, to detail initial findings related to the initiative's potential to affect college culture and further change efforts for learners.



Investing in Student Success at Community Colleges: Lessons from Research on Guided Pathways

CCRC prepared this primer and federal policy **brief** on Guided Pathways, a comprehensive reform approach whereby community colleges fundamentally reshape themselves in ways that create clearer pathways to credentials with strong labor-market value. The brief draws heavily on research funded by Ascendium in the past several years.



On the Go: Find Ascendium Staff in the Field

Ascendium Education Group has cancelled all staff travel plans until further notice due to COVID-19 concerns, but we are supporting and attending virtual events. We hope everyone stays safe and we look forward to participating in live events in the coming months. We will continue to share past virtual event recordings, resource links and future opportunities to connect with Ascendium staff.

- GlobalMindED: 2021 Virtual Conference**
April 1-July 30, 2021
- ABFE: Harambee 2021**
April 21-23, 2021
- Partners for Education at Berea College: 2021 Rural College Access and Success Summit**
April 26-30, 2021
- National Association of System Heads (NASH): TS3 Convening**
April 29, 2021
- American Association of Community Colleges (AACC): Annual Convention Virtual**
Thursdays in May 2021
- PEAK Grantmaking: PEAK2021**
May 4-13, 2021
May 6, 2021
Rebecca Villarreal and Nikki Wachter, presenters, "Acting with Intention When Meeting Needs of the Field in Times of Crisis"
- CLOSE IT: The CLOSE IT Summit**
May 24-26, 2021
- JFF: Horizons**
June 15-16, 2021

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