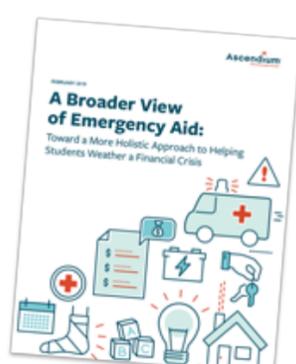




New Ascendium Report Outlines a More Holistic Approach to Helping Students Weather Financial Emergencies

We're pleased to share our new report, **A Broader View of Emergency Aid: Toward a More Holistic Approach to Helping Students Weather a Financial Crisis**, which outlines what we've learned over the course of four grant projects aimed at helping colleges establish, administer and sustain emergency grant programs.

The new report builds on the best practices for implementing an emergency aid program we shared in our **February 2016 report**. It reflects what we've learned from our grant partners: Effectively helping students in the midst of a financial emergency involves more than just cutting checks. It requires a holistic approach that gets to the root causes of students' financial challenges and helps them access the supports they need, whether on campus or in the community. That approach has led to cultural change at many of our partner colleges, resulting in better collaboration across departments, better connections with outside organizations and a keener focus on the needs of the whole student.



Training for Emergency Grant Decision-Makers

With support from Ascendium, the nonprofit group Equal Measure has developed tools that provide guidance for emergency grant administrators charged with making decisions that affect students' futures. Their new publication, **Emergency Aid for Higher Education: A Toolkit and Resource Guide for Decisionmakers**, will give both new and experienced program staff the confidence to make sound emergency aid award decisions that keep students on the path to success.



Who is Developmental Education Leaving Behind?

New Project Focuses on Students who are Not Well-Served by Existing Reforms

Ascendium has invested millions of dollars in developmental education reform over the years, and we're grateful to our partners in the field who have developed, tested and scaled new approaches that are proving to be effective for many students.

Despite the success of these initiatives, some students are still not being served well by developmental education. We want to learn who these students are, how many of them are being left behind and what obstacles are standing in the way of their success.

To explore this issue, we made a \$350,000 grant to The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to help the field shape a research agenda. NAS has assembled a committee of experts who will convene with stakeholders next month to share their insights on developmental education. The two-day workshop will be **webcast live March 18-19**.

NAS will share a summary of the March proceedings and later publish a book in both print and electronic format. We hope this project will spark discussion and ultimately uncover opportunities to build a more inclusive postsecondary system. **Read more.**



WSCA Conference Provides Some Face Time with Text Steps Partners

School counselors from across Wisconsin gathered in Madison February 5-7 for the annual Wisconsin School Counselor Association's Annual Conference. Ascendium staff took the opportunity to bring together counselors from districts participating in our **Text Steps** project. Ascendium is working with 13 Wisconsin school districts to reduce summer melt—the phenomenon of college-accepted students being unable to enroll in the fall because they do not complete critical tasks over the summer, like finalizing financial aid and scheduling orientation. We're helping those districts launch text nudging programs designed to help more students clear those final hurdles. The gathering included a workshop on effective use of data from the National Student Clearinghouse to identify which students may need support.



DREAM2019™
February 19-22, 2019 | Long Beach, California

Join us at DREAM 2019 in Long Beach, California!

We're looking forward to connecting with practitioners and partners at Achieving the Dream's (ATD) 15th annual DREAM conference next week. This energizing and inspiring event is sure to renew our collective commitment to student success.

Attending the conference? Put this session on your list: **Using a Multifaceted Approach to Institutionalizing Change and Promoting a Student Success Agenda at Small Colleges** at **10 a.m. PST Wednesday, February 20**. This Ascendium-hosted panel discussion will feature an ATD coach and representatives from Institute of American Indian Arts, Leech Lake Tribal College and Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College discussing how they moved the needle on equity, teaching and learning, and data strategies while overcoming challenges that small, rural institutions face.