



GFE Annual Conference to Highlight Ascendium Grant Partners' Great Work

We are proud to be a sponsor of this year's Grantmakers for Education conference, "**Supporting Students in Overcoming Adversity: Agency, Justice, Equity**," October 22-24 in New Orleans. Ascendium Vice President of Education Philanthropy Amy Kerwin, who is serving as conference chair, is excited about the many speakers who bring deep expertise and the slate of sessions offering opportunities for learning and collaboration.



Five Ascendium program officers will participate in sessions highlighting the work our grant partners are doing to advance the field. Toya Wall will join colleagues from The Aspen Institute, Sova Solutions and HCM Strategists to discuss how informing policy, engaging leadership and accelerating implementation can move the needle on transfer reform in "**Tackling Transfer: Why it Matters and How to Leverage Locally for State Buy-in**." Wall will also contribute to the conversation on helping incarcerated learners thrive after release when she moderates another session, "**The Economic and Equity Imperative of Supporting Incarcerated Students**."

Maryann Rainey and Kirstin Yeado will join a faculty member and a student from Salish Kootenai College to explore success strategies within the cultural context of Tribal Colleges and Universities in "**Operationalizing Equity in Grantmaking Practice and the Power of Storytelling**."

In "**GFE-SREE Research Fellows Pilot: Reflections & Future Plans**,"Carolynn Lee will participate in a conversation about how we leveraged a pilot program of GFE's Data Impact Group to work with summer fellows on research projects of interest to funders.

In "**How Colleges Can (and Should) Transform Themselves to Meet Real Student Needs**," Sue Cui will reflect on funding strategies that support colleges in changing policies, practices and cultures to address the needs of the whole learner.

We're grateful for these opportunities to learn and share with leading practitioners, researchers and fellow funders, and look forward to seeing many of you at the conference.



Mesa, Arizona Wins the FAFSA Completion Challenge

At its annual conference this week, the National College Access Network (NCAN) announced that Mesa, Arizona is the "grand prize" winner of the **2018-19 FAFSA Completion Challenge**, a project we co-funded with The Kresge Foundation. The city saw a 9.32% increase in FAFSA completions over the previous year—well above the 5% challenge—and will receive \$100,000 to continue the momentum. NCAN is also awarding monetary prizes to runner-up Denton, Texas and three other cities: Rochester, Minnesota; Corpus Christi, Texas; and West Valley City, Utah. Congratulations to all five cities on their terrific results and well-earned prizes! NCAN will be sharing best practices from the award winners both at the conference and later **on their site** so others can benefit from lessons learned about what worked.



New NAS Report Explores Strategies for Helping More Students Succeed in Math

Despite the demonstrated effectiveness of recent developmental education reforms, some students arrive on campus too far behind in math to benefit, and are still not being served well by dev. ed. Last year, we provided a **grant to the National Academy of Sciences (NAS)** to bring together leaders in the field to take stock of progress in this realm and develop a research agenda around better serving students left behind by current dev. ed. reforms. NAS convened a two-day workshop March 18-19 in Washington, DC to explore how to best support these students. NAS has published a **comprehensive summary of the proceedings**, providing an overview of the discussions that took place and outlining the path forward through future research areas and action items over the next five years. We look forward to remaining engaged in the ongoing conversation.

On the Go: Find Ascendium Staff in the Field

Comnet19: The Communications Network Annual Conference

October 2-4, Austin, TX

Close It Annual Summit

October 15-16, Santa Fe, NM

Grantmakers for Education Annual Conference

October 22-24, New Orleans, LA

National Conference on Higher Education in Prison

November 14-17, St. Louis, MO

Center for the Analysis of Postsecondary Education 2019 Conference: Reimagining Developmental Education

November 21-22, New York, NY