



U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education

Grantee Voices from the Field Newsletter

U.S. Department of Education Releases the "Raise the Bar" Playbook for College Excellence and Equity

U.S. Department of Education



ATTAINING COLLEGE EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY



Using Data Effectively to Drive Equitable
Improvements in Postsecondary Student Success

A PLAYBOOK

[Download](#) the new playbook, "[Using Data Effectively to Drive Equitable Improvements in Postsecondary Student Success](#)".

"[Raise the Bar: Lead the World](#)" is the Department's call to action to transform education and unite around what truly works—based on decades of experience and research—to advance educational equity and excellence.

A new playbook, "[Using Data Effectively to Drive Equitable Improvements in Postsecondary Student Success](#)," is now posted on the Raise the Bar: College Excellence and Equity page. This playbook focuses on four key tactics that institutions can consider using to promote data-driven inquiry and continuous improvement on their campuses:

1. Creating a culture and capacity for data-driven improvement
2. Using the metrics that matter for increasing student success
3. Conducting key analyses to identify and remove barriers to student success
4. Using data to select and evaluate success strategies.

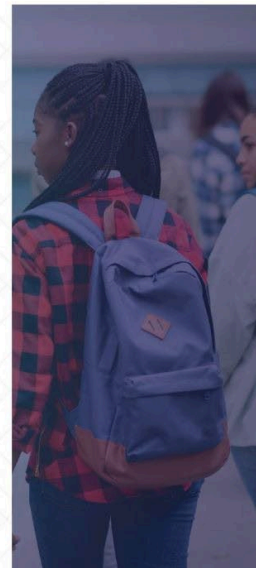
[MORE ON RAISE THE BAR: COLLEGE EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY](#)

The National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Conference Returns in September 2024



Raising the Bar: Where Excellence and Opportunity Meet

SEPTEMBER 15-19, 2024
PHILADELPHIA MARRIOTT DOWNTOWN, PHILADELPHIA, PA



The [White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities will host the 2024 Annual National HBCU Week Conference, “Raising the Bar: Where Excellence and Opportunity Meet,”](#) Sept. 15–19, 2024, in Philadelphia.

Aligning with the Department’s [“Raise the Bar: Lead the World”](#) call to action, the Initiative will continue to identify and target tangible opportunities to connect federal and private resources to the HBCU community. To that end, the conference will feature the sixth annual Career and Recruitment Fair, a celebration of the 10-year anniversary of the HBCU Scholar Program, the Federal Agency Meet and Greet, and 50+ sessions and workshops.

[MORE ON THE 2024 HBCU CONFERENCE](#)

Education Secretary Miguel Cardona Visited the Cheshire Correctional Facility to Discuss the Impact of the Second Chance Pell Program



Secretary Cardona and students discuss the academic benefits of the Second Chance Pell project.

CHESHIRE, Conn. — In [April, U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona visited Connecticut to discuss educational opportunities for incarcerated youth](#). His visit began at the Cheshire Correctional Institution, where he met with students preparing for re-entry into society and future careers post-incarceration.

Prior to 2021, the Higher Education Act barred students in federal or state correctional facilities from participating in the Federal Pell Grant program, which offers need-based grants to low-income undergraduates and certain post-baccalaureate students to facilitate access to higher education.

In 2015, the Department issued a *Federal Register* notice inviting higher education institutions (IHEs) to apply for participation in an initiative under the Experimental Sites Initiative (ESI). The ESI evaluates the impact of statutory and regulatory flexibility for IHEs administering Federal student aid.

Through this initiative, IHEs, in collaboration with federal or state correctional facilities, are authorized to extend Federal Pell Grant funds to eligible incarcerated students nearing release, especially those expected to rejoin the community within five years of program enrollment.



Secretary Cardona discussed the progress and success stories with staff and student recipients of the Second Chance Pell project.

A [2014 RAND Corporation study](#), funded by the Department of Justice, found that incarcerated individuals who engaged in high-quality correctional education, including postsecondary programs, were 43 % less likely to re-offend and return to prison within three years compared to those who did not participate in such educational programs.



Secretary Cardona visited incarcerated students benefiting from the Second Chance Pell project.

Students at Cheshire and York Correctional Institutions can earn associate degrees through a partnership with [Connecticut State Community College, Middlesex](#), and Bachelor of Liberal Studies (BLS) degrees directly from [Wesleyan University](#). The BLS degree program, initiated in 2019, aims to broaden student opportunities within liberal arts education.

In June, Secretary Cardona returned to deliver the commencement speech to the Wesleyan University Center for Prison Education graduates.

[MORE ON SECOND CHANCE PELL](#)

The "Climate Optimists" Workshop at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Showcases Progress and Fosters Engagement



The workshop featured international presenters, such as Li-Ching Ho, a professor of social studies education at UW–Madison.

Submission by: Kayla Daum and Eleanor J. Conrad, Assistant Director of European Studies Outreach Specialist, University of Wisconsin-Madison

The International Foreign Language (IFLE) and Education Title VI National Resource Center program at the [University of Wisconsin-Madison hosted a virtual workshop titled "Climate Optimism – Finding Creative Solutions and Making Positive Impacts"](#) for K-12 educators on June 28. The workshop, organized by the Wisconsin International Resource Consortium (WIRC) within the International Division at UW–Madison, was designed to provide educators with innovative methods for teaching about climate change, promoting optimism and proactive engagement over despair. The workshop showcased speakers like Li Ching Ho, who delved into the power of hope as a catalyst for action. By distinguishing hope into "pragmatic" and "visionary" types, she sought to equip educators with the tools and case studies necessary to inspire action among their students.

The event was funded by the National Resource Center program, which provides grants to establish, strengthen, and operate language and area or international studies centers that will be national resources for teaching any modern foreign language.

[MORE ON NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER PROGRAM](#)

Graduate Students Specializing in STEM Fields Present at the National Environmental Justice Conference in Washington, D.C.



Congressman James E. Clyburn of South Carolina's 6th District congratulates (from left to right), Dr. Adrian Gale, Anthony Stubbs, and Tony Munnings after their presentations on Sniffer4D, a multi-gas detection system with advanced analytic software.

Graduate students who participated in the [Minority Science Engineering Improvement Program \(MSEIP\)](#) showcased their research at the National [Environmental Justice Conference in Washington, DC, in April 2024](#). The MSEIP Student Environmental Research Team from Benedict College in Columbia, South Carolina, was chosen from among 100 teams to present their study titled "Detecting Spatial Changes in Fugitive Methane in Urban Communities." The team demonstrated the use of Sniffer4D methane detection equipment on their campus to monitor and map methane emissions,

highlighting the technology's ability to accurately detect methane leaks by pinpointing areas with varying concentrations.



(From left to right) Tony Munnings of Benedict College, SC; Kevin Mason, Jr. from Miles College, AL; Mark Rupp, Assistant Deputy Administrator of the EPA; Teleya Montgomery from Winston-Salem State University, NC; and Anthony Stubbs of Benedict College, Columbia, SC.

Students met with Mark Rupp, Assistant Deputy Administrator at the Environmental Protection Agency, to discuss their research. The National Environmental Justice Conference and Training event brings together leaders from diverse sectors to exchange ideas and strategies for achieving environmental justice. Additionally, MSEIP programs provide funding for graduate students to attend and present their research at the conference.

[MORE ON MSEIP](#)

Employee Spotlight

Emily Maldonado, Works with Grantees and Programs to Aid Adults in Resuming Postsecondary Education



Emily Maldonado, an employee in the Office of Postsecondary Education, is dedicated to helping grantees provide adult students returning to postsecondary education with the essential support needed to graduate.

Maldonado serves as a program specialist in the Office of Postsecondary Education's Higher Education Programs, where she works with grantees as a part of the [Educational Opportunity Centers](#) grant program. Grants through this program offer counseling and information on college admissions to qualified adults aiming to start or continue their postsecondary education.

She finds her reward in the success stories of her grantees. Having recently earned her associate degree in accounting and business management, followed by a bachelor's degree in business management, Emily looks back on her journey as an adult learner with appreciation. "I had such a strong support system throughout my college years. Programs like these are vital in our communities. It doesn't matter your age or socioeconomic status; if you're determined, you can achieve your goals. Never let anyone discourage you," she advises.

Maldonado encourages those seeking a career change or furtherance of their education to never be afraid. "Don't let fear hinder your career progress or personal growth." She continues to stay motivated by the grantees who positively impact students' lives.

[MORE ON EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY CENTERS](#)

Announcements

PEER REVIEWERS NEEDED

The Department's Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE) is seeking peer reviewers (also called field readers) to read and evaluate discretionary grant program applications. If you are interested in serving as a peer reviewer for OPE grant competitions, you must register in G6 at <https://g6.ed.gov/>.

Peer reviewers will receive a flat fee honorarium and a stipend for supplies (paper and ink) for the entire review period based on the established number of reading days and applications. Since the number of reading days and applications to be reviewed may vary, you will be informed of the amount of the honorarium at the time of your selection as a peer reviewer.

Contact the G6 help desk at 1-888-336-8930 (Washington, DC area 202-401-6238), if you need help registering with or logging into the G6 system.

[LEARN ABOUT THE PEER REVIEW PROCESS](#)

BETTER FAFSA

Learn more about the simplified FAFSA process.



THE BETTER FAFSA

What Colleges and Universities
Need to Know

Higher Education Opens Doors to Opportunity

The U.S. Department of Education is making transformational changes to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) form. The FAFSA form is an application that students and families need to complete to apply for federal student aid, such as federal grants, work-study funds, and loans. Completing and submitting the FAFSA form is free, and it gives students access to the largest source of financial aid to help pay for higher education.



The [Better FAFSA](#) is simplified, redesigned, and streamlined. It is faster and easier to fill out, with most students and families completing it in less than 15 minutes. It ensures that 665,000 more students will receive Federal Pell Grants to pay for college. Additionally, more than 1.7 million more students will receive the maximum Pell Grant.

[BETTER FAFSA](#)

Engage with OPE

Share your good news with the OPE community! Email your videos, photos, stories, announcements, and achievements to OPEComs@ed.gov.



If you're having trouble reading this message, [click here](#)

Please subscribe to the OPE Newsletter [here!](#)

To unsubscribe, please click [here](#).

Disclaimer:

Newsletter Disclaimer:

This newsletter contains resources that are provided for the reader's convenience. The inclusion of these materials is not intended to reflect its importance, nor is it intended to endorse any views expressed, or products or services offered. These materials may contain the views and recommendations of various subject matter experts as well as hypertext links, contact addresses, and websites to information created and maintained by other public and private organizations. The opinions expressed in any of these materials do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education. The U.S. Department of Education does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of any outside information included in these materials.

This email was sent by:
U.S. Department of Education
Office of Postsecondary Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202