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U.S. Department of Education

OPE Spring 2022 Grantee Voices From the Field Newsletter

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U.S. Department of Education
Office of Postsecondary Education

Grantee voices from the field

Spring 2022 Newsletter

First Lady Dr. Jill Biden visits OPE’s CCAMPIS grant recipient, Bergen Community College



First Lady Dr. Jill Biden (left) and Kezia Bontempo Rodriguez (right) at Bergen Community College.

Submission by Michelle Asha Cooper, Ph.D. Delegated the Authority to Perform the Functions and Duties of the Assistant Secretary, Office of Postsecondary Education

[First Lady Dr. Jill Biden](#) and Secretary of Education, Dr. Miguel Cardona, made a historic visit to [Bergen Community College](#) in Paramus, New Jersey, in January 2022, to recognize students who participated in the Child Care Access Means Parents in School grant ([CCAMPIS](#)) program and to learn of their accomplishments. Bergen Community College is using the CCAMPIS grant, as well as the pandemic-relief [Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund \(HEERF\)](#) to provide child care for students during the COVID-19 pandemic. The grant assistance removes barriers to student success for students who are also parents. At the event, Dr. Biden remarked, “The child care center here at Bergen is so

important. ... I hope more schools will follow your lead.”

Bergen has used federal pandemic assistance funds to launch new programs and initiatives in each of the resources – including tuition-free enrollment at the Child Development Center for 25 student-parents enrolled at the College. Kezia Bomtempo Rodriguez, one of the student-parents who benefits from the program praised the CCAMPIS program and spoke at the event to share her educational success.

Bomtempo Rodriguez, an aspiring nurse, took advantage of the tuition-free enrollments at the early learning facility for her twin three-year-old daughters. Bomtempo Rodriguez credits the child development center for her success. "The child development center is not just child care. It is the beginning of my educational journey. Applying to [another institution] would be hard to manage [with] costly tuition and childcare."

“In speaking with students from across the country at all different types of higher education institutions, I have heard consistently that the pandemic has exacerbated challenges in meeting students’ basic needs, from housing, to food, to transportation, and more,” said Secretary Cardona. “We cannot let this be a barrier to student success, particularly for students who have contended with these issues for far too long.”

“For the first time ever, I am enrolled full-time,” Bomtempo Rodriguez said at the event. “The Child Development Center has given my family a priceless opportunity to thrive and fulfill our full potential. Thank you for believing in dreams and working with families like mine to turn dreams into reality.” The CCAMPIS program allowed her family to fulfil their full potential and allow them to flourish as a family. Reflecting on the weight on this opportunity, Bomtempo Rodriguez said, “As a student-parent, my husband says I am his greatest investment.”

Learn more about Bergen Community College and the CCAMPIS program [here](#).

PSLF/TEPSLF April 2022 Update

HOW TO GET YOUR STUDENT LOANS FORGIVEN (NO, REALLY)

Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) is a program that could eliminate some of your student loan debt—as long as you meet all the requirements, that is. Sound interesting? Here's what you should know.

Federal Student Aid
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Federal Student Aid makes updates to Public Service Loan Forgiveness

Submissions by U.S. Department of Education Federal Student Aid

As of April 2022, the Department of Education (Department) will provide borrowers with an interim online submission process to request reconsideration of Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) and Temporary Expanded Public Service Loan Forgiveness (TEPSLF) qualifying employment or payment determinations. With this online process, borrowers will be able to submit one or more reconsideration requests through [StudentAid.gov](https://studentaid.gov) and upload documentation for review and consideration by Federal Student Aid (FSA) officials.

Additional documentation is not needed to submit a reconsideration request. However, during review of requests, FSA may require borrowers to provide additional information. Borrowers are encouraged to review and update their contact information in [StudentAid.gov](https://studentaid.gov) [account settings](#) to ensure proper communication with the Department.

HEERF Emergency Response Unit update



University of West Alabama's Black Belt Museum develop 3D printed face shields using HEERF funds.

Submission by Karen Epps, director of the Higher Education Emergency Response Unit (ERU) in the Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE)

The University of West Alabama's (UWA) [Black Belt Museum](#) allocated institutional Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund ([HEERF](#)) to develop 3D printed face shields and shifted its focus from class field trips and guest lectures to a technology-based solution that directly impacted the safety of students, staff, and the local community. With the Black Belt Museum's two 3D printers, and borrowed 3D printers from the University Charter School, UWA's College of Education and Robotics Lab, the museum has printed over 1,600 face shields and counting. The Black Belt Museum's first batch of face shields landed at the Livingston Fire and Rescue Squad. In addition, Grove Hill's police department, along with their emergency services and Rush Medical Center nurses, received delivery of personal protective equipment (PPE) from the Black Belt Museum over several weeks. Since the beginning, face shields have been distributed to the following counties: Lauderdale in Mississippi, Sumter, Hale, Greene, Pickens, Clarke, Marengo, Wilcox, Dallas in Alabama and even to Essex County in New Jersey.

HEERF extends performance periods to June 2022

Submission by Karen Epps, director of the Higher Education Emergency Response Unit (ERU) in the Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE)

The performance period for all ERU (HEERF) grant recipients with awards in open status and a \$1,000 balance or more will be automatically extended to June 30, 2023. When the Federal Register Notice publishes later this year, it will serve as the institution's new grant award notification (GAN). All institutions of higher education that received HEERF (a)(2) grant awards can use the funds for construction, renovation, and the acquisition of real property. This is applicable to:

- Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), ALN 84.425J
- Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities (TCCUs), ALN 84.425K
- Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), ALN 84.425L
- Strengthening Institutions Program (SIP) ALN 84.425M

Prior approval is required for grantees to use the funds for construction, renovation, and the acquisition of real property. ERU will host webinars to review the new requirements with applicable HEERF grant recipients. Grantees may contact the HEERF Customer Care Center at HEERF@ed.gov or at (202) 377-3711.

Yes, SHE Can! MSEIP and Upward Bound join forces to bridge gender gaps in STEM fields



UTEP brought together their Yes, SHE Can! and Upward Bound programs to develop DNA necklaces.

Submission by Dr. Bernadette Hence, director of the Minority Science and Engineering Improvement Program (MSEIP)

The [University of Texas at El Paso's](#) (UTEP) [Yes, SHE Can! program](#) is working hard to increase enrollment of women and minorities pursuing careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. Uniquely, the program's funding is now a joint effort between two ED-funded programs, [MSEIP](#) and [Upward Bound](#). Programs funded by MSEIP focus on increasing minorities' interest in STEM, increasing persistence in STEM academic fields to graduation, and increasing students' financial literacy. The goal of [Upward Bound](#) is to increase the rate at which participants complete secondary education and enroll in and graduate from institutions of postsecondary education.

To meet the challenges posed by the pandemic, UTEP combined the two programs' resources to create and maintain highly interactive experiences for students at the school. The program uses a virtual platform for mentorship meetings, matching students with STEM professionals for weekly sessions and STEM development workshops. These events evolved into a STEM workshop series. UTEP offered 400 El Paso area high school students quality STEM programming and strong opportunities.

UTEP personnel delivered a virtual biochemistry lesson to four groups of 40 high school students in the UTEP Upward Bound program, teaching students to collect deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) from their mouths and extract the DNA with chemicals. Each student created a unique DNA necklace to wear and show off.

Diane Golding, director of the Yes, SHE Can! program, sees the success stories. "Our most recent workshop engaged 50 high school seniors who participate in the Upward Bound program, and their parents, on topics to facilitate their fiscal success as they become university students and beyond," she said.

Golding is very excited for the future of the partnership. "As we look to how to sustain the mission of the Yes, SHE Can! grant, our talented students have decided that the future is in their hands, and it is indeed!" she said. Led by sophomore Ruby Ryan, one of the MSEIP research assistants, the Yes, SHE Can! Student Organization has been formed and become a reality. This helps achieve a goal of providing support for other students, including incoming Upward Bound participants, in reaching their dreams in STEM.

Miami Dade College "STICHES" together a STEM DAY for aspiring scientists



Submission by Jymece Seward, analyst for Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI)

The Developing Hispanic Serving Institutions (DHSI) Program at Miami Dade College's Kendall Campus, Student and Teacher Integrated Center for Health Sciences ([STICHES](#)), hosted a STEM DAY in October 2021.

The STEM DAY targeted college and high school students from health sciences academies. Approximately 150 high school students were transported to Kendall Campus, where many departments across the college, as well as external vendors, collaborated to create a vibrant atmosphere where students learned and explored different educational pathways and career opportunities. Some of the departments present were Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, Engineering and Technology, Mathematics, Nursing and Dental Hygiene, Student Services, Recruitment, and Advising. The STEM Day also featured a HoloHuman presentation by STICHES, which displayed the potential for mixed virtual-augmented reality instruction that will be used in curriculum for the upcoming 2022 summer semester. Current students presenting research were also present, detailing their studies and speaking to visiting high school students about the importance of conducting research and the positive aspects of research projects.

Learn more about Miami Dade College and the STICHES program [here](#).

Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellow reporting from Ukraine



Submission by Carolyn Collins, analyst for International Foreign Language and Education (IFLE)

Former [Foreign Language and Area Studies \(FLAS\) Fellow](#), Terrell Starr, is currently in Kyiv reporting on the ongoing conflict between Ukraine and Russia. While a student at the University of Illinois' Center for Global Studies, Terrell studied Georgian and Russian with the support of several FLAS fellowships. He applies those languages and area studies skills on a daily basis through his work as a journalist for Foreign Policy and as a senior nonresident fellow at the Atlantic Council's Eurasia Center. Terrell provided a first-hand look at the situation in Kyiv during a CNN interview on February 25th.

To see the interview visit: <https://twitter.com/GoGlobalED/status/1497233683140550658?s=20&t=sUHFJeY-4q3SwH9mspXlvw>

OPE Employee Spotlight with Jorgina Parks

Submission by Sariane Leigh, analyst for Management Support Unit (MSU)

Jorgina Parks is the government information specialist for the Management and Planning Division (M&P) of OPE. Her job is to ensure that OPE releases the appropriate information to requesting parties seeking information in accordance with the [Freedom of Information Act \(FOIA\)](#). Since 1967, FOIA has provided the public with the right to request access to records that are the custodial property of the federal government. Jorgina applies her strong values of integrity, consideration of others, and a commitment to service as it applies to her work within OPE. Prior to joining OPE, Jorgina taught for two years as a substitute teacher in the Prince George's County public school system in Maryland and supported U.S. military veterans while working at the Department of Veterans Affairs.



Calendar of Events

OPE peer review opportunities

Ongoing opportunities to serve as an OPE peer reviewer. The Department provides opportunities for individuals to participate in its peer review process, reviewing applications for competitive grant funding. Learn how to become a peer reviewer by clicking here: [US Department of Education Peer Review Opportunities.](#)

The Grantee Satisfaction Survey Results

View the final results of the 2021 Grantee Satisfaction Survey

The Department invites you to view the results of the [2021 Grantee Satisfaction Survey](#). Thank you to the 900 OPE grantee project directors for sharing feedback and suggestions for improvement with the Department. Our programs use the feedback you provide in the survey to improve the delivery of services to our grantee community. Contact your program officer to learn more about the [2021 Grantee Satisfaction Survey](#).

Look out for the 2022 survey this summer!

Share Your Good News with the Grantee Community

Email photos, stories, updates and other news to OPE Management Support Unit, at OPECOMS@ed.gov or call Sariane Leigh 202-987-1977



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