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U.S. Department of Education

U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education Grantee Voices From the Field Newsletter

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U.S. Department of Education
Office of Postsecondary Education

Grantee Voices From the Field

Summer 2020 Newsletter

We Listen to OPE Grantees

The Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE) would like to thank you for your hard work and dedication during these especially challenging times. We should all be proud that every OPE grant program helps thousands of students, families, communities, and schools across the United States.



As the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Higher Education Programs, I am committed to listening to you. Each year, we survey grantee project directors through the Grantee Satisfaction Survey (GSS), to learn how to improve our service delivery, technical assistance, monitoring, and overall guidance to our grant community. We use the results of this survey to improve the way we do our work and the services we provide.

The 2019 GSS survey results indicate that OPE scored our highest Customer Satisfaction Index score (78) since 2011. This is also the first year OPE measured how much grantees “trust” their respective program offices, and OPE scored a very promising 85. We hope to build upon that success by improving our customer service in the future. Learn about the results by visiting the Grantee Satisfaction Survey [webpage](#).

We also learned from the GSS that grantees would like to receive more regular communications about upcoming U.S. Department of Education and grantee events because you are eager to learn from each other. We are pleased to create this OPE newsletter to provide our stakeholders with important deadlines, OPE staff profiles, grantee success stories and other news items relevant to your community.

Thank you for your continued hard work.

Sincerely, Dr. Christopher McCaghren

COVID-19 RELIEF FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

On March 27, 2020, the *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (the CARES Act)*, was enacted into law and provides approximately \$14.25 billion



to support institutions of higher education and their students. Of the total appropriation, Congress divided the funding among the following programs:

Institutional Formula Grants: Almost \$12.6 billion for formula grants for all eligible institutions of higher education. The formula is based upon total FTE students and weights funding toward institutions with higher Pell Grant enrollment. No less than 50% of the grant must be used to provide direct grants to students.

Institutions must upload a funding certification and agreement for both the student and institutional portion of the funds. Institutions must upload their funding certification and agreement by August 1, 2020, to be eligible to receive the funds.

Funding for Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribally Control Colleges and Universities, Minority Serving Institutions, and the Strengthening Institutions Program: Approximately \$1 billion for institutions that have previously received funding under these Department grants programs.

Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education Grants: Almost \$349 million for grants to institutions with greatest unmet needs related to COVID-19, with priority given to institutions that have received less than \$500,000 through the other *CARES Act* higher education grant programs.

For more information about these grants programs, please visit OPE's website by clicking [here](#). If you have questions concerning these relief grants, please submit them via e-mail to HEERF@ed.gov.

The Department has also published guidance for institutions participating in non-*CARES Act* grant programs. This guidance provides grantees with flexibility in implementing their grants due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To access this guidance, please click [here](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/caresact.html). <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/caresact.html>

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION COVID-19 UPDATES

The Department continues to update ed.gov/coronavirus with information for students, parents, educators, and local leaders about how to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Information on institution-level funding for students, including data tables, can be found [here](#). The Secretary's letter to college and university presidents with additional information on funding allocations can be found [here](#).

HEALTH AND SAFETY

For more information about COVID-19, please visit the following websites:

coronavirus.gov, cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html, and usa.gov/coronavirus.

Health officials are currently taking steps to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 into communities across the United States. [Coronavirus.gov](https://coronavirus.gov) offers the most up-to-date information about this rapidly evolving situation.

Through collaboration and coordination with State and local health departments, State and local educational agencies, other education officials, and elected officials, schools can disseminate critical information about the disease and its potential transmission to students, families, staff, and community.

[The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](https://www.cdc.gov) has provided [guidance for school settings](#). The U.S. Department of Education's guidance to schools, communities, parents, and students is available [here](#). Please contact your program specialist with questions that might not be addressed by these available resources and guidance announcements.

Student Voices: Coping With COVID in the Bronx

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the [Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Program \(GEAR UP\)](#) at [The Bronx Institute at Lehman College](#) continues to help their students cope with the effects of learning while in a quarantine. The students shared their experiences with a project called “Voices from the Bronx.” Students expressed their feelings about the GEAR UP support and maintain hope in the midst of the global crisis.



Student 1- Anonymous

“GEAR UP has offered so much support, not only do I receive emails from my coach checking in on me but also information about college. GEAR UP is my only true support right now when it comes to getting ready for college, although I feel lost due to this crisis I know I have somewhere to fall back.”

Student 2- Nadia Monira

“During this hard time GEAR UP offered support for me a lot. The coach from GEAR UP always helped me. Even though school is closed she still sets up meetings and helps us with college information.”

Student 3- Mikita Vasileuski

“All my hope is in the hands of GEAR UP. They have really been there for me in a rough time. They put me on a right path. They offered me new information about colleges and scholarships. And, any time I knew I could call them to ask any questions, and they would help me. They make me feel confident in my college future. And I am thankful for their help. In this hard time, we all need support. I hope it will all be over soon.”

Submission by Director Professor Herminio Martinez, Ph.D., GEAR UP, [The Bronx Institute, Bronx, New York](#)

OPE GRANTEE SUCCESS STORIES!



The [Developing Hispanic Serving Institutions- STEM](#) Program proudly celebrates grantees who enable students like Johnathan Smart to pursue his STEM dreams. In 2019, Smart attended the Great Minds in STEM Conference in Orlando, Florida. During the conference, he interviewed with Northrop Grumman. He received an offer to work for the company as a software engineer in Los Angeles or Utah. Six other STEM scholars attended the conference and received offers from Northrop Grumman, Lockheed Martin, and Raytheon.

Pictured, U.S. Department of Education Hispanic Serving Institutions Director Beatriz Ceja (left), student Johnathan Smart (center), and U.S. Department of Education Program Specialist Njeri Clark (right).

Submission by [Dr. Kamal Hamdan, \(CSI3\) California State University, Dominguez Hills](#)

Congratulations to the Graduates of 2020

Congratulations to the graduating class of 2020 at Lawrence High School (Massachusetts) and participants of the [TRIO Upward Bound program at Salem State University](#).

Submission by Mona Savastano, [TRIO Upward Bound Program Director, Salem State University](#)



OPE Employee of the Month

[Dr. Bryan Jenkins, U.S. Department of Education International and Foreign Language Education \(IFLE\)](#)

Dr. Bryan Jenkins is a program specialist in the Advanced Training and Resources division of [IFLE](#). Dr. Jenkins' portfolio includes conducting surveys about research and training in international and foreign language fields of study, working with grantees to offer opportunities for instruction and research on important issues in world affairs, and managing National Resource Centers and Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowships projects focused on the Africa, International, and Western Europe world regions. He also represents IFLE on the OPE



Grantee Satisfaction Survey committee, and he is a participant in the 2019-2020 Pathways to Leadership cohort. Dr. Jenkins encourages real-time creativity, which he views as a part of innovation for students across America. Dr. Jenkins is also a child psychologist and earned his Ed.D. from The George Washington University. Dr. Jenkins' purpose is about the journey. He says, "We're all taking small steps to bring us one step closer to realizing our true passions. What matters most to me is to enjoy every day and think of life as a journey."

Calendar of Events and Opportunities

OPE Peer Review Opportunities

Ongoing opportunities to serve as an OPE peer reviewer.

The U.S. Department of Education announces opportunities for individuals to participate in its peer review process by reviewing applications for competitive grant funding. Learn how to become a peer reviewer by clicking here: [US Department of Education Peer Review Opportunities.](#)

Peer Reviews for OPE Discretionary Grant-funded Programs

Learn about upcoming funding opportunities with OPE.

[Visit the OPE website for updates and additional information.](#)

Share Your Good News with the Grantee Community

Email photos, stories, updates and other news to OPE Management and Support Unit, at Sariane.leigh@ed.gov or call 202-453-7768 



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