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## Higher Learning Commission graduates first institutions from Student Success Academy

Eighteen U.S. colleges and universities have completed the Higher Learning Commission's newest program that provides guidance and a framework for improving student success.

A data-informed program, the Student Success Academy led the inaugural group of institutions to reflect on data, resources, priorities and past decision-making in order to come up with a new strategic approach to enhancing student outcomes.

From nine states and multiple sectors – including private, public, for-profit, a seminary, a college nursing school, as well as tribal and community colleges - the institutions worked with mentors and scholars in exploring one of higher education's biggest challenges – how to respond when students are left behind in reaching their higher-education goals.

"The first thing participants learn in HLC's Student Success Academy is the importance of defining what student success means in a way that reflects institutional mission and the educational intentions of students," said Barbara Gellman-Danley, president of HLC.

From there, HLC's Academy helps institutions identify numerous gaps in information, service and performance that need to be addressed if they are going to be able to support equitable student outcomes.

This system-wide view and approach to addressing student success led some of the colleges and universities to discover they were not as familiar with their student populations as they had thought. Others found they were not doing effective outreach with the students who needed it most. Still others learned that supporting their students' success simply wasn't a campus-wide effort.

Each institution graduated with a Student Success Plan for achieving better student outcomes and with planned improvement projects addressing shortcomings in policy, procedure and practice and supporting institutional priorities. Among initiatives being implemented are: targeted student success centers, permanent student-success teams/committees, program reviews of engagement initiatives and strategic interventions for reaching women and minority students.

Institutions that are first to graduate from the Student Success Academy include:

**Barton Community College**, Great Bend, Kansas; **Bismarck State College**, Bismarck, N.D.; **Central Lakes College**, Brainerd, Minn.; **Concordia University St. Paul**, St. Paul, Minn.; **Eastern Michigan University**, Ypsilanti, Mich.; **Elgin Community College**, Elgin, Ill.; **Goldfarb School of Nursing at Barnes-Jewish College**, St. Louis, Mo.; **Indiana University East**, Richmond, Ind.; **Indiana University Northwest**, Gary, Ind.; **Marquette University**, Milwaukee, Wis.; **Midwest Baptist Theological Seminary**, Kansas City, Mo.; **Monroe County Community College**, Monroe, Mich.; **New Mexico Military Institute**, Roswell, N.M.; **Ranken Technical College**, St. Louis, Mo; **Saginaw Valley State University**, University Ctr., Mich.; **Saint Paul College – A Community & Technical College**, Saint Paul, Minn.; **Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute**, Albuquerque, N.M.; and **University of Phoenix**, Phoenix, Ariz.

"This program sparks new ways of thinking about and responding to challenges," said Gellman-Danley. "We look forward to the continuing work of our inaugural graduates, whom we know can be leaders in designing practical models that can improve student outcomes."

The next cohort of the Student Success Academy begins in fall 2022.

*The Higher Learning Commission accredits approximately 1,000 colleges and universities. HLC is a private, nonprofit accrediting agency. It is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. Questions? Contact [info@hlcommission.org](mailto:info@hlcommission.org) or call 312.263.0456.*

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