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Michigan Community Colleges and Universities Partner in Grant to Expand Associate Degree Completion

Lansing, MI (October 10, 2012) – Five national foundations announced the recipients of \$6.4 million in grants supporting a multi-state initiative to help more students who have transferred from community colleges to four-year colleges and universities complete their associate degrees. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Helios Education Foundation, Kresge Foundation, Lumina Foundation, and USA Funds have joined forces in the initiative, “Credit When It’s Due: Recognizing the Value of the Quality Associate Degree.”

The initiative is designed to encourage partnerships of community colleges and universities to significantly expand programs that award associate degrees to transfer students when the student complete the requirements for the associate degree while pursuing a bachelor’s degree. This approach is commonly known as “reverse back” or “reverse transfer.” The funding will support expansion of programs in 12 states: Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Ohio and Oregon.

The Kresge Foundation is supporting Michigan’s initiative, which will create a statewide reverse transfer consortium that will implement consistent approaches to awarding associate degrees to students who transfer from community colleges to 4-year institutions without an associate degree. The Michigan consortium includes the 28 public community colleges and 15 public universities in the state, and will be administered by the Michigan Center for Student Success. The Center, also supported by The Kresge Foundation, operates under the umbrella of the Michigan Community College Association and serves as a hub for connecting leadership, administrators, faculty, and staff in efforts to improve student success.

Caroline Altman Smith, Senior Program Officer for The Kresge Foundation’s Education Program, underscored the importance of this initiative, “the Kresge Foundation is delighted to support the launch of a major reverse transfer initiative in Michigan. There are a large number of students in our state who transfer out of community colleges without receiving an associate degree, and then stop out of four-year institutions without graduating. They may have earned enough credits to qualify for the associate degree, but instead leave empty-handed. We know that college degrees change lives, and this is a great opportunity for Michigan’s two- and four-year institutions to partner to ensure that they identify these students and award them the degrees they deserve.”

Michael Hansen, President of the Michigan Community College Association, added “there is national momentum regarding the need to increase college attainment in this country. Credit When It’s Due’ is an

exciting partnership between the community colleges and public universities in Michigan to help students get a valuable credential on the path to a bachelor's degree.”

“Michigan’s public universities are pleased to participate in the Lumina and Kresge grant to improve reverse transfer agreements with our community college counterparts. It is an important step in helping students with credentialing and pointing out to the public the importance a degree makes in today’s knowledge driven economy,” said Michael Boulus, executive director, Presidents Council State Universities of Michigan.



The Michigan Center for Student Success, funded by The Kresge Foundation and operating under the umbrella of the Michigan Community College Association, provides state-level support to Michigan’s 28 community colleges by serving as a hub connecting leadership, administrators, faculty, and staff in their emerging and ongoing efforts to improve student outcomes, emphasizing linkages between practice, research, and policy. For more information, please visit the Center website: www.mcca.org



The Michigan Community College Association (MCCA) provides leadership and advocacy on issues affecting the 28 member community colleges. Since 1914, community colleges have striven to provide affordable and quality higher education to Michigan residents. The community college mission is one of access and success to both traditional and nontraditional students. Furthermore, community colleges also play an integral role in the preparation and development of the state’s workforce. For more information, please visit the MCCA website: www.mcca.org



The Presidents Council, State Universities of Michigan serves as a forum for the presidents and chancellors of Michigan's 15 public universities to discuss and frame positions on key higher education finance and policy issues. Among its major activities, the Presidents Council serves as an advocate in the state capitol by monitoring and providing analysis on public policy issues and legislation affecting Michigan’s 15 public universities. In cooperation with policymakers, trustees, students, faculty and campus administrators, the Presidents Council plays an active role in developing and proposing state higher education policy to better serve Michigan’s citizens and the public good. For more information, please visit the PCSUM website: www.pcsu.org



Based in metropolitan Detroit, The Kresge Foundation is a \$3.1 billion private foundation that seeks to influence the quality of life for future generations through its support of nonprofit organizations working in its seven program areas: Arts and Culture, Community Development, Detroit, Education, the Environment, Health, and Human Services. Fostering greater access to and success in postsecondary education for low-income, minority and first-generation college students is the focus of Kresge’s Education grantmaking. In 2011, Kresge awarded more than \$22 million in grants to support higher education in the United States and South Africa, with half benefiting U.S. community colleges. For more information, please visit the Foundation website: www.kresge.org or follow @kresgedu.

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