

LUMINA FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATION  
CAN A CHAMPION  
FOR COLLEGE ATTAINMENT  
UP ITS GAME?

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BY **VICTOR KUO**



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Established in 2000, Lumina Foundation for Education's mission is defined by a specific goal: to increase the proportion of Americans with high-quality college degrees, certificates and credentials to 60 percent by 2025. The foundation's 2013–2016 strategic plan, called Goal 2025, has two main imperatives: Mobilizing to Reach Goal 2025 and Designing and Building a 21st Century Higher Education System. In 2012, the foundation had \$1,137,783,686 in assets and made grant payments of \$48,388,149.

NCRP's review found that Lumina Foundation meets and exceeds many of the criteria for exemplary philanthropy in its goals and strategies, but some areas have room for improvement as the foundation continues to grow and evolve. Overall, the extensive information and data gathered through this review process paint a picture of a highly focused, effective foundation with extremely savvy policy advocacy strategies, staff that are well respected and initiatives that are making early progress toward the foundation's ambitious goal of college completion.

Stakeholders view the foundation's singular purpose of higher education improvement and articulation of a concrete, measurable goal of 60 percent high quality degree, certificate or credential attainment for all Americans by 2025 as a starting point for success. Some aspects of its 2013–2016 Goal 2025 strategic plan are seen as more grounded in evidence or best practice than others. Its agenda is a long-term and comprehensive one.

Feedback from grantees and other stakeholders and NCRP's analysis of the data raise specific issues that warrant further examination. In particular, refinement of the Com-

munity Partnerships for Attainment, an initiative involving 20 metropolitan areas from across the country, and deeper engagement of community stakeholders in strategy development were highlighted by key informants during this review. As Lumina Foundation board and staff continue to refine and implement their 2013–2016 strategic plan, NCRP offers several recommendations that it believes will strengthen the plan, enhance partnerships with local communities and ultimately lead to greater impact.

## KEY FINDINGS

Below are the key findings from NCRP's assessment:

- 1. Lumina Foundation's goals and strategies have an explicit focus on systemic change, benefitting affected communities and addressing root causes of inequity.** Policy and program experts described the foundation's strategic plan as aimed forcefully and directly at addressing systemic inequities. The Achieving the Dream initiative was explicitly identified as a key investment in community colleges where significant proportions of low-income, first-generation and minority students pursue postsecondary education. The foundation's stance on balancing strategic and responsive approaches to philanthropy is unclear, and some expressed concern regarding the extent to which underserved communities are determining and leading their own strategies.
- 2. The foundation's varied strategies exhibited mixed levels of evidence or best practice.** The foundation's 2013–2016 strategic plan cites authoritative data and research. Some of the plan's strategies are well-

grounded in evidence or best practice, such as the academic, social and financial supports needed to aid students to complete degrees. However, strategies to mobilize metropolitan areas and the higher education sector and to develop new systems of quality credentials were identified as needing clarification, research and development.

**3. Lumina Foundation has been very effective in asserting its role among funders and policymakers to advance its postsecondary education agenda.**

Recognizing its niche in a broader ecosystem, the foundation has used its singular purpose of college completion and its national presence to influence a postsecondary policy agenda at federal and state levels. Supporters and critics alike described the foundation as very effective in advancing policy goals.

**4. Strategy development is perceived as having insufficient involvement of underrepresented communities and as occurring mostly through internal deliberations.**

The foundation has not emphasized engaging affected communities in developing strategy. It is better known for its policy advocacy approach and for engaging policy communities in developing and refining strategies and tactics. About two-thirds of grantees surveyed reported that the foundation had not asked them for feedback about grantmaking strategies or practices in the last three years.

**5. The newly launched, 20-metropolitan area Community Partnerships for Attainment (CPA) build on prior place-based work, but stakeholders expressed concern about the foundation's approach.**

Stakeholders noted that as a national funder, the foundation may not be best positioned for wide-

spread place-based work, that deeper more deliberate engagement is needed with local partners, and that greater financial resources are needed in the long term to ensure sustainability. Local partners working with Lumina expressed concern that national funders often struggle with fulfilling commitments; coordinating multiple, local efforts; and possessing the requisite staff with experience and credibility to successfully implement local reforms.

**6. The foundation is praised for making strong early progress in raising awareness of the need for postsecondary completion, but beneficiary outcomes remain modest.**

The most frequently cited success of the foundation was bringing attention to the need for higher levels of college attainment. The foundation has been effective in its thought leadership, use of policy networks, context setting and research dissemination. Program outcomes remain modest, and third party evaluations of major initiatives have yet to conclude that hallmark funded initiatives have significantly increased grades, college retention, credits earned or college completion.

**7. Foundation staff periodically consider data in strategy discussions; however, external partners lacked awareness of the foundation's use of data or grantee feedback for strategy adjustments.**

Lumina Foundation is recognized for having a strong learning and evaluation culture, and foundation staff value structured learning opportunities as well as the use of metrics to inform strategy conversations. Despite internal consideration of data by staff, interviewed experts and most surveyed grantees could not cite instances or express knowledge of the foundation modifying strategies based on feedback.

**8. Grantees overwhelmingly view Lumina Foundation as a highly effective partner, primarily because of high-quality relationships with staff and collaborative activities with partners.**

The foundation is praised for its relationships with grantees and for its nonmonetary support. On the whole, staff quality is highly rated, and program staff is perceived as well-liked and respected, open to dialogue, self-aware and humble, and supportive. The quality of the foundation's collective approaches with other philanthropic organizations and policy entities was perceived as very effective. Partnership quality with nonprofit, business and media sectors varied. Evaluation practices and multi-year funding are relevant, appropriate and valued.

**9. Lumina Foundation governance and internal processes support effectiveness, yet the foundation's ambitious goals may warrant greater allocation of resources.**

The foundation paid out grants at a rate higher than required to ensure that grantees' capacity and the foundation's mission were not adversely affected by the recession. Yet, given observers' concerns about the level of investment in place-based efforts, and the gradual progress to date in raising completion rates, greater payout amounts of grants dollars over the next decade may be needed to achieve a 60 percent degree attainment by 2025.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Below are NCRP's recommendations to Lumina Foundation that we believe will help further boost the foundation's effectiveness and impact:

**1. Continue strategies and practices the foundation is doing well.**

Maintain focus on clear, measurable goals. Continue momentum at state and national policy levels to draw policymakers' attention to college completion and equity. Continuing to serve as a thought leader will aid in realigning system actors toward Goal 2025.

**2. Heed stakeholders' concerns, retool the foundation's role and bolster its funding and capacity to effectively support community-based work.**

Distinguish levels of readiness and maturity for collective impact among metropolitan communities. Determine needs and provide resources to ensure approaches are culturally appropriate. Provide customized levels of technical assistance and funding, especially to ensure that intended beneficiary populations can meaningfully participate in shaping and implementing sustainable strategies. Build continuity among foundation staff and coordinate staff working on overlapping strategies in the same geographies. Recognize the foundation's limits as a national funder and prioritize deep site engagement over breadth. Building the foundation's knowledge, networks and capacity for fostering community partnerships in metropolitan areas will ensure that its place-based efforts add value to existing local initiatives.

**3. Strengthen strategies that will effectively engage targeted beneficiary populations in achieving Goal 2025.**

Partner with community organizing leaders as well as national advocacy organizations to ensure that community perspectives are invited and heard, and

identify ways that grassroots beneficiary engagement can accelerate progress toward Goal 2025.

- 4. Enlist credible voices to explain to external audiences the foundation's focus on both equitable access and quality educational outcomes.** Enlisting credible postsecondary institution actors to explain the issue of ensuring high-quality degrees, certificates and credentials while also boosting attainment numbers will facilitate alignment among partners. Applying effective communications strategies, including among equity-focused and targeted constituencies, will ensure that stakeholders see the foundation as a trusted partner committed to similar goals and, thus, are willing to align efforts accordingly.
  
- 5. Create structured and targeted opportunities for stakeholders' input to inform strategy adjustments.** Communicate to partners how the input was used and what changes were considered or made. Involving partners in revising strategies will contribute to understanding how strategies relate to one another, what strategies provide opportunities for innovation and learning, and provide better coordination among program staff who lead specific strategies and reinforce attention to long-term goals.
  
- 6. Implement effective grantmaking practices such as increasing grants payout to achieve a bold agenda.** Lumina Foundation should significantly increase grant payout dollars to achieve its highly ambitious 2025 postsecondary attainment goals. NCRP recommends that foundations pay out at least 6 percent in grants only, but a higher rate may be needed to achieve such bold aims. Additional funding over longer periods of time to metropolitan and community partnership sites

can support capacity and leadership development among partner organizations and targeted beneficiaries, increase impact and build partners' confidence in a sustainable strategy. Develop and implement guidelines for general operating support; provide core support to organizations of appropriate scale and at early stages of growth to ensure foundation funding has impact.



# ABOUT LUMINA FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATION

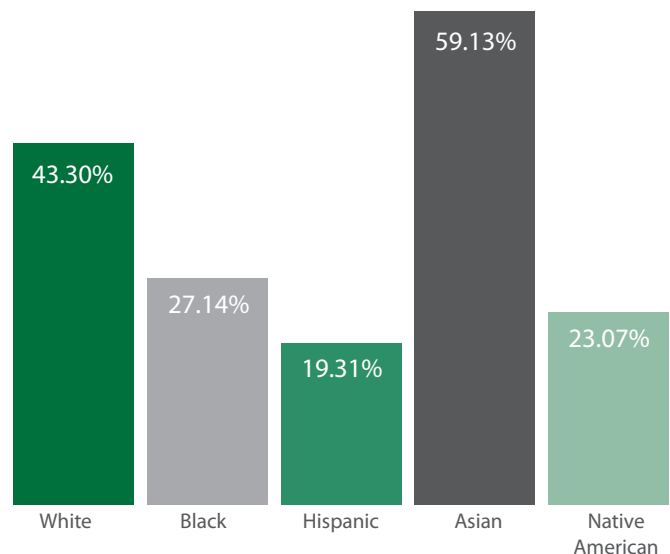
In 2000, Lumina Foundation for Education, originally known as USA Group Foundation, was established as a result of the sale of USA Group, Inc., to SLM Corporation (Sallie Mae).<sup>1</sup> USA Group, Inc., was the parent company of USA Funds, the nation's largest private guarantor and administrator of education loans. The sale price of \$770 million created a foundation that was among the 60 largest private foundations in America. The founding mission was "to provide special emphasis on the improvement of higher education through the strategic utilization of original and sponsored research, provision of educational grants and sponsorship of selected educational activities."<sup>2</sup> In 2012, the foundation had \$1,137,783,686 in assets and made grant payments of \$48,388,149.

In 2009, under the new leadership of Jamie P. Merisotis, the foundation's board approved the foundation's first strategic plan,<sup>3</sup> based on the goal that 60 percent of Americans obtain a high-quality postsecondary degree or credential by 2025.<sup>4</sup> The foundation called this the "Big Goal." In 2013, the foundation released a new strategic plan that described work through 2016. The goal of the foundation continues to be to increase the proportion of Americans with high-quality college degrees, certificates or other credentials to 60 percent by 2025. Citing a slow but steady rate of two- or four-year college degree attainment among 25–64-year-olds, the foundation's new strategic plan holds firm to its original goal and emphasizes urgency and greater understanding of the economic and social challenges that remain. Notably, the plan explicitly addresses the need for equity in postsecond-

ary education, especially for first-generation students, racial and ethnic minorities, immigrants and adults traditionally underrepresented among college students and graduates.<sup>5</sup>

Lumina Foundation for Education is explicit in its concern for equity. In its recent strategic plan, the foundation notes that the overall education attainment rate in 2009 was 37.8 percent for 25–29-year-old Americans. Specifically, the rates for racial and ethnic groups were: 65.5 percent for Asians, 44.9 percent for non-Hispanic whites, 24.7 percent for African Americans, 17.9 percent for Hispanics and 16.9 percent for American Indians.<sup>6</sup> Among Americans ages 25–65, the differences in degree attainment among different racial and ethnic groups are similarly troubling (Figure 1). The foundation cites similarly low trends for other key

**Figure 1: Degree-attainment rates among United States adults by population group<sup>7</sup>**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009–11 American Community Survey PUMS File

groups such as African American men, first-generation college students, immigrants and low-income students. These postsecondary completion disparities contribute to income inequality and make bitterly real the failure of the nation's aspirations for equity.

To achieve Goal 2025, the foundation estimates that an additional 23 million degrees will be needed. The strategic plan targets those not traditionally served well by higher education – specifically adult college students (ages 25–64), immigrants and veterans.<sup>8</sup> The 2013–2016 plan identifies two strategic imperatives: 1) Mobilizing to Reach Goal 2025: strategies to mobilize action at the local, state and national levels and in higher education systems, and 2) Designing a 21st Century Higher Education System: strategies to develop specific approaches to create the fundamental change needed in higher education.<sup>9</sup> Within these strategic imperatives, the foundation identifies eight strategies to organize its work, ranging from mobilizing metropolitan areas and regions to designing new systems of quality credentials.<sup>10</sup>

In the fall of 2013, the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (NCRP) approached Lumina Foundation for Education to review the foundation's work according to NCRP's framework for philanthropy.<sup>11</sup> NCRP was not contracted or given a grant to conduct the review, and NCRP maintained full discretion over the collection and analysis of data, as well as report writing.

Lumina Foundation is a grantmaking member and supporter of NCRP. During 2013 and early 2014, Lumina Foundation team members cooperated with NCRP to conduct the review, and Lumina Foundation staff were provided an opportunity to review findings. This report summarizes NCRP's main conclusions and recommendations.

# OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY

NCRP recently developed an assessment tool for foundations that addressed the strategic practices outlined in *Criteria for Philanthropy at Its Best* and its more recent report, *Real Results: Why Strategic Philanthropy Is Social Justice Philanthropy*. *Criteria for Philanthropy at Its Best* provides a comprehensive and nuanced set of benchmarks that foundations can use for effective operational and grantmaking practices. *Real Results* argues that to maximize impact, foundations must be both strategic and just. This means not only having clearly aligned goals and strategies and a way to measure impact, but also considering who benefits from the foundation's grantmaking and how, seeking input from affected communities and attempting to change systems that perpetuate inequity. A comprehensive, nuanced examination of foundation goals, strategies and practices is needed to understand how well a foundation can marry strategy and justice to be more impactful.

Key questions this assessment addressed were:

## OVERALL GOALS AND STRATEGY

- What are the foundation's primary goals, and is it employing strategies likely to achieve them?
- Which stakeholders and what sources of data and best practice have informed these strategies?
- Given its mission and goals, is the foundation appropriately seeking to benefit or empower underserved communities? Is the foundation applying an equity lens or analysis to its grantmaking? Is it addressing disparities in outcomes for the issues or constituencies it prioritizes?
- Does the foundation pursue systemic change strategies? Does it support grantees to use the full range of

advocacy tools legally at their disposal? Is the foundation leveraging its limited dollars in ways that are consistent with the foundation's mission and goals?

- Is the foundation looking at the ecosystem of actors within the sphere it seeks to influence and collaborating strategically with others?

## OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

- Has the foundation worked across sectors and silos to achieve impact?
- Has the foundation effectively supported community-driven collaboration and coalitions among grantees and other nonprofits?
- How does the foundation measure its progress and impact?
- Can the foundation and its stakeholders point to specific signs of progress?

## PARTNERSHIP WITH GRANTEES

- Does the foundation employ responsive grantmaking practices, such as providing core support and multi-year funding? How do the foundation's grantmaking practices advance or hinder achievement of its goals?
- How does the foundation go beyond the grant to leverage its relationships, convening power, expertise and other assets to help grantees achieve mutual goals?
- Does the foundation solicit feedback from its grantees and applicants and act on that feedback?

## OTHER EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

- How do the foundation's investment and payout policies and practices support its own mission and the goals of its grantees?

- Does the foundation operate in a transparent and ethical manner, with policies in place to prevent fraud and abuse?
- Is the board of directors large and diverse enough to allow for effective and ethical decision-making?

NCRP employed the following methods during the review process:

- 1. Extensive review of foundation materials** that could help answer the assessment questions, such as strategic plans, 990-PFs, annual reports, grantmaking guidelines, grant descriptions, application and reporting requirements, investing policies, transparency practices, ethical codes of conduct, recently completed assessments or evaluations and news articles referencing the foundation from the prior 12-month period.
- 2. Interviews with key staff** included Samuel Cargile, vice president and senior advisor to the CEO; Dewayne Matthews, vice president of policy and strategy; David Maas, vice president, treasurer and CFO; Kevin Corcoran, strategy director; Susan Johnson, director of equity and inclusion; Christine Marson, strategy officer; and Molly Martin, director of organizational learning and alignment. Martin was the point person for the project with whom NCRP had ongoing communication. At the time of the review, Lumina employed 53 staff; seven of them were interviewed.
- 3. Confidential survey of current and past grantees.** NCRP created a grantee survey and gave Lumina staff an opportunity to provide input, which they declined to do. A total of 274 grantees were invited to complete the survey during November and December of 2013. The participation rate of grantees in the survey was

47 percent. In general, responders were mostly larger organizations (85 percent) with annual budgets of \$1 million to \$10 million or more; current grantees (86 percent); worked primarily with institutions such as education, research and government agencies; and were engaged least in activities of civic engagement, community organizing and social services.

- 4. Interviews with selected grantees.** To delve more deeply into topics raised in the survey responses, NCRP conducted interviews with select grantees based on the relevance of their survey responses to identified themes and their willingness to be interviewed. For example, NCRP interviewed grantees that could address community and place-based strategies. Seven additional grantees were interviewed during early 2014.
- 5. Interviews with local, regional and national stakeholders.** NCRP interviewed a cross-section of individuals in the sector who are familiar with the foundation's work. Interviews occurred in November and December of 2013 and January of 2014. Experts included funder peers (6), program or technical assistance providers (6), researchers (6), policy experts (4), media experts (4) and community organization leaders (4). As stakeholders suggested additional names, NCRP reached out to other experts and interviewed them as well. In all, NCRP contacted 59 stakeholders and interviewed 30 of them. Of the 30 interviewed, 12 were past or current recipients of grants and were asked to speak about the foundation's overall work and not just their funded project.
- 6. Analysis of survey and interview data.** NCRP analyzed the survey data to discern if any correlations existed between the grantees that held certain

characteristics (e.g., program initiatives, approaches) and their responses to key topics such as foundation effectiveness and partnership with grantees. Researchers used an iterative process to categorize and analyze the content of open-ended survey responses. Interview notes and transcripts were organized by assessment criteria themes and analyzed for frequency and content. Some themes were further explored in follow-up interviews with Lumina staff and grantees.

# KEY FINDINGS

## GOALS AND STRATEGIES

**Lumina Foundation's goals and strategies have an explicit focus on making systemic change, benefitting affected communities and addressing root causes of inequity.**

The foundation's 2013–2016 strategic plan explicitly describes the “equity imperative” to increase college completion attainment. It states:

“Low-income and first-generation students, racial and ethnic minorities, immigrants and adults have traditionally been underrepresented among college students and graduates. We must now realize that these Americans are bearing a disproportionate share of the increasingly severe consequences of not completing postsecondary education.”<sup>12</sup>

The foundation's plan outlines strategies to address multiple system levels such as federal and state policies, institutional and organizational structures, program and business models and local and regional partnerships.

Program and policy experts described the foundation's strategic plan as aimed forcefully and directly at addressing systemic inequities. One expert observed:

“Certainly, the policies they're pushing are directly aimed at helping to rebalance inequities. College completion is a way to help people who are less well-off earn a decent living. That is aimed at rebalancing inequities.”

And another expert noted:

“I would not diminish the transformative power of that attainment goal ... this new strategic plan is to change systemic inequities ... attainment is a radical social justice strategy.”

Overall, the foundation's visibility, presence and continued commitment to targeting community colleges has been widely praised as addressing a fundamental problem of inequity faced by minority and low-income communities. Specifically, the Achieving the Dream initiative, launched by the foundation in 2004, was designed to close the gap and accelerate student success among students in more than two dozen community colleges in multiple states. The recognition of community colleges as an important contributor to low-income and racial and ethnic minority student success was itself deemed a major accomplishment. According to a community organization stakeholder:

“The choice to work with the community college system is an equity choice in itself. They are raising the stakes by saying that community colleges are as important as four-year colleges. It is fantastic. The Achieving the Dream initiative to improve the effectiveness of community colleges has been huge.”

Among grantees responding to NCRP's survey, a large majority saw the foundation's strategies as very or somewhat effective in supporting underserved communities. More than 73 percent of 130 respondents considered the foundation to be “very” or “somewhat” effective in achiev-

ing more equitable opportunities or outcomes for underserved communities (Table 1).

While the foundation is recognized by many for its plans to address systemic inequities, four stakeholders from community organizations perceived a lack of clarity or explicit attention to race and ethnicity, especially within strategies to mobilize communities and metropolitan areas. One noted:

“I think Lumina cares about equity but not as a social justice foundation. ... You don’t see in their statements enlisting students and communities as partners.”

And another observed:

“I do believe they have a commitment ... but I’m not clear on whether they have work directly in the minority community. A lot of the work seems generally aimed.”

Experts also noted that with the foundation’s recently launched 20 metropolitan area initiative, there may be opportunities for the foundation to demonstrate higher levels

of engagement directly with communities.<sup>13</sup>

Finally, the foundation’s stance on balancing strategic and responsive approaches to philanthropy is unclear. Stakeholders’ perceptions suggested a directive or prescriptive approach as well as uncertainty. Six stakeholders described the foundation as leaning toward being directive and proactive in seeking grantee partners, as well as imposing its “brand” on key initiatives. A small number of critics described Lumina as increasingly controlling and less inclusive, particularly to the detriment of minority communities. At the same time, about half a dozen experts “could not tell” or did not know what the foundation’s approach seemed to be. And, as seen in Table 1, just half of surveyed grantees reported that they believed the foundation allowed underserved communities to determine and lead their own strategies for change; 29 percent answered “I don’t know.” One Lumina Foundation executive parsed the issue and said:

“It is not an easy answer. ... We are directive about the goal, and we are trying to be intentional about ap-

**Table 1: How effective were the foundation’s strategies in supporting underserved communities?**

One of the things we are interested in learning is how the foundation’s work benefits and engages underserved communities. To the best of your knowledge, how effective were the foundation’s strategies in supporting underserved communities to:

	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Not Very Effective	Completely Ineffective	I Don’t Know	N/A
Determine and lead their own strategies for change?	17.7% (23)	31.5% (41)	5.4% (7)	0.8% (1)	29.2% (38)	15.4% (20)
Have a more powerful public voice?	20.0% (26)	35.4% (46)	6.9% (9)	0.8% (1)	21.5% (28)	15.4% (20)
Gain greater access to resources?	29.2% (38)	38.5% (50)	6.9% (9)	0.0% (0)	16.9% (22)	8.5% (11)
Achieve more equitable opportunities or outcomes?	27.7% (36)	45.4% (59)	3.8% (5)	0.0% (0)	16.2% (21)	6.9% (9)

n = 130

proaches, but we have to be open to what we're learning. We are at our best when we're skeptical about our own knowledge."

**Lumina Foundation's varied strategies exhibit mixed levels of evidence or best practice.**

The foundation's 2013–2016 strategic plan cites a variety of studies from Georgetown University, the Brookings Institution, the College Board, the U.S. Census Bureau, the National Center for Educational Statistics and scholarly journals and texts. Foundation representatives also described extensive conversations with experts and referenced prior work of the foundation to inform its new strategic approaches. Examples of efforts building on prior knowledge and experience include the Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP), the Latino Student Success initiative, credentialing systems, and alternative pathways to a degree, certificate or credential. One foundation representative stated:

"We based our strategies on a fair amount of internal discussion and debate and with some colleagues who were knowledgeable. We bring people here [as foundation staff] with experience in practice and policy and have conversations with a wide range of partners."

Perhaps most importantly, foundation representatives acknowledged that different strategies have different levels of evidence, and that the foundation is open about what it knows and what it does not. One foundation representative described this variation, noting:

"There is tremendous knowledge about low-income, minority, first generation students and how to get them to and through college. We know how to do that. ... So our focus has been on how to be effective in our met-

ropolitan area strategy and mobilizing resources. Fresh thinking is needed in other strategies."

Another senior leader at the foundation acknowledged:

"An area we're still trying to figure out is mobilizing higher education. What is it that we mean about mobilizing: governance or faculty engagement? That's an area that we're still trying to figure out, and hopefully we'll have a much more workable framework."

Foundation representatives articulated a desire to focus research resources on those strategies that require greater development and to engage internal colleagues as well as external partners in further learning and reflection.

While the foundation makes a compelling case for its work, other stakeholders expressed concerns. Among interviewed stakeholders, nine perceived the evidence base for the foundation's strategies to be questionable, recognizing that foundation staff and external experts note limitations in the research and data available. Strategies to mobilize metropolitan areas and the higher education sector, and to develop new systems of quality credentials were identified as needing greater clarification.

Criticisms regarding the foundation's approach to strategy development included strategy adoption by copying or modifying other foundations, a policy approach due to the CEO's network and historical preferences, and overlooking research and promising program models. Cited examples of the latter include the potential for further research on performance-based scholarships, and shying away from studies on costs of higher education and of benefits access programs, such as rental assistance or child care, to higher education programs.



Underrepresented community voices noted that the foundation's strategy to engage and mobilize communities and reform policy could be better grounded in best practice to ensure learning, engagement and sustainable change. For example, one expert stated:

"It would buy them a lot if they worked more deeply in the community itself. Be closer to the direct service providers. They could learn a lot from it, and it would get them better awareness of what they're doing. ... It would inform their strategy overall and their work with minority communities."

And another expert from a community organization observed:

"I think the reason we're not winning is that the equity agenda is not being driven by people who have a stake in the system. ... I think funders other than Lumina are distinguished ... they have learned that at a state level, the interests of presidents or faculty ends up trumping; policy has to do better around these groups."

**Lumina Foundation has been very effective in asserting its role among funders and policymakers to advance its postsecondary education agenda.**

The foundation effectively uses its reputation, resources and voice to advance an agenda of higher education completion for all Americans, including those historically underserved. Lumina Foundation is recognized as the main funder consistently and solely dedicated to higher education and a "60 percent completion" agenda. The foundation also is noted for framing issues and problems, setting context and being an overall thought leader. While technically smaller on some dimensions than other national

foundations, Lumina Foundation was described by a media expert as "punching above its weight class," saying, "Lumina Foundation is the primary voice in higher education reform in all aspects: transition, access, funding, costs and quality."

Concerns raised by the media and interviewed experts focused on the undue influence, the narrowing of the "marketplace of ideas" and perceived detriment to the public policymaking process that Lumina has had as it collaborates with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the U.S. Department of Education. In 2013, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* illustrated some of these criticisms,<sup>14</sup> and stakeholder interviews also revealed apprehensions. One respondent cited an example directly addressing the issue of degree quality. They described the use by the federal government of a rating system, developed with Lumina funding, of postsecondary institutions that relies on salary data. The use of salary data, according to the critic, can be seriously misleading. For example, some degrees are associated with initially low salaries, but as students progress in their careers, those degrees may lead to lucrative professions (e.g., biology as a pre-med degree). Another expert cited an example of integrating an unproven set of standards, the degree qualifications profile, into state regulations and accreditation processes.

Foundation staff acknowledged that perceptions of influence exist. However, they also asserted that funder and policy community collaboration is ultimately better for grantees and the field. One foundation representative stated:

"The role of the foundation is to bring people together, to gather ideas and to figure out what the next steps are. If we didn't talk to one another, we wouldn't be effective. In any field, the folks in the field talk to each other."

And in specific response to the *Chronicle* article, another foundation representative described collaboration as necessary for results: “No one foundation can complete the agenda. We have to co-fund a lot to reach the goals we want.” The foundation continues to play a leading role, relative to peer funders and policy-setting entities, to achieve impact.

**Strategy development is perceived as insufficiently involving underrepresented communities and as occurring mostly through internal deliberations.**

The foundation’s strategy development process is perceived as mostly accomplished through internal deliberations rather than through engaging external stakeholders comprehensively or in a structured way.

In developing the 2013–2016 strategic plan, senior foundation representatives noted that internal discussions and debate were informed by the experience of staff as well as years of prior work by the foundation. They described executive staff developing strategies based on their expertise and the cumulative conversations they have had with experts and partners over years. Once an initial version had been developed, strategy directors and other staff were engaged in structured, iterative processes to refine the strategy. Among some stakeholders, especially those from

the policy community, drafts were “previewed” at half a dozen conferences. In some cases, specific meetings were held with state policy leaders. Refinements were made to key elements, such as honing the meaning of a “quality credential.” Metrics for select strategy elements were also developed in consultation with the foundation’s board.

Members of racial and ethnic minority communities described a notable absence or unawareness of the foundation in their communities, even in the strategy development. Two respondents, who work extensively in African American and Latino communities on a range of educational and social issues, indicated that they were not part of any strategy development. One emphasized the need for large foundations, including Lumina, to engage communities in planning conversations to ensure that community members do not feel disconnected and negative about foundations.

Finally, higher education faculty was another stakeholder group identified as being excluded from the foundation’s strategy development. One interviewed expert characterized the exclusion as “a recipe for really bad thinking.”

Observers have sympathized with these perceptions and have noted the foundation’s deliberate and strategic consideration to engage faculty less intensively

**Table 2: Has the foundation asked for feedback from you about its grantmaking strategies or practices in the last three years?**












	Response Percent	Response Count	
Yes	32.6%	42	
No	67.4%	87	

than other groups given the foundation's priorities. Even among program partners and researchers, perceptions of a lack of inclusion in strategy development included: "No, not with me or anyone I know. ... They do all the work internally," and "They don't listen to enough people." These observations were generally supported by findings from NCRP's grantee survey. More than two-thirds of grantee respondents indicated that they had not been asked for feedback about grantmaking strategies in the recent past (Table 2).

**The foundation has not emphasized engaging affected communities in the recent past and is better known for its policy advocacy approach.**

Lumina Foundation recently prioritized and highlighted working directly with and engaging communities. As part of its mobilizing efforts in its strategic plan, the foundation announced in December 2013 a new community mobilization initiative targeting a first cohort of 20 metropolitan areas with a total investment of \$4 million over three years.<sup>15</sup> The

**Table 3: Which activities did your organization undertake in your program area?**

	Response Percent	Response Count	
Internal capacity building or strategic planning	46.9%	61	
Program development/implementation	85.4%	85	
Leadership development	27.7%	36	
Civic engagement (encouraging people to get involved in the democratic process, e.g., conducting voter registration, education, get out the vote; promoting volunteerism; hosting community forums)	11.5%	15	
Community organizing (bringing individuals together to develop their leadership and collective power to hold public agencies and businesses accountable for addressing a common problem such as crime, pollution or failing schools)	16.9%	22	
Policy advocacy (promoting specific ideas or policies with policy makers, through activities such as meetings with legislators, research, public education, litigation and media outreach)	46.9%	61	
Research	48.5%	63	
Social services	3.8%	5	
Provide training/technical assistance	37.7%	49	
Capital project	0.8%	1	
Marketing/communications	24.6%	32	

foundation intends to eventually reach more than 70 communities with additional funding. The new effort connects cities to significant technical and planning assistance, data, funding and access to networks of thought leaders. Cities selected have already demonstrated momentum toward boosting attainment rates; thus, the foundation's support is intended to expand and deepen existing work. The new emphasis has its seeds in other place-based efforts historically supported by Lumina. For example, the Achieving the Dream initiative and the foundation's work with Strive, a community-based approach to supporting child success,<sup>16</sup> have had characteristics of on-the-ground mobilizing and partnering with local, institutional stakeholders. The new 20 metropolitan community-oriented approach evolved from prior experiences and provides opportunities for further learning and development.

Foundation staff recognized that Lumina's work in the recent past has prioritized policy approaches at the national and state levels. They observed that with limited resources, investments at the policy level are likely to deliver greater impacts than through direct service grants. "We've been about national policy," said one foundation representative. One executive also asserted that the foundation's role is more to act as a catalyst and to build public will rather than direct on-the-ground services.

Grantees shared in the perception that Lumina has given grants for policy advocacy activities more so than for community- or "street"-level activities such as services, civic engagement or community organizing (Table 3). Nonetheless, foundation staff characterized the foundation's work, overall, as a good balance of policy and community-level approaches, and the metropolitan-focused work stands as an opportunity to learn about engaging local employers, workforce leaders, mayors, smaller nonprofit organizations and community-based organizations.

The Latino Student Success (LSS) initiative is a current foundation initiative that utilizes a collective impact approach to directly engage communities already working on education issues. In one site, the community partnership has been at work for more than 25 years; participants include community college faculty, four-year universities, the local United Way, students and families. The partnership has facilitated development of transfer agreements, sharing of data, availability of scholarships and raising of awareness among families. The LSS initiative is designed to engage communities directly and has informed Lumina's approach to its new metropolitan work. In particular, LSS has demonstrated the importance of working in communities where partnerships already exist or are nascent, of making extensive efforts to understand local needs, and of identifying how Lumina funding could boost plateauing efforts or otherwise add value. (See sidebar on Page 19.)

A range of stakeholders perceived the foundation's hallmark approach to be engaging large policy and research entities, so reactions to the new place-based, metropolitan strategy ranged from "wait-and-see" to worry. One stakeholder participating in one of the regional sites stated:

"I'm happy to see them move in that direction, but it's too new to know. ... This is new from my perspective."

A member from the funding community observed:

"I think they started off with eight or nine places ... and then all of sudden there's a new 70-city focus ... 70 is too big and too much. You can make a big splash but then what is the extent of real engaged and substantive work?"

Experts who represent minority and low-income communities generally welcomed the shift, but also sought

# LATINO STUDENT SUCCESS INITIATIVE

The Latino Student Success (LSS) partnerships are designed as collaborations to strengthen efforts in key metropolitan areas showing promise in improving the postsecondary attainment of Latino students. Following two years of planning and consultation with other funders and members of Latino communities, Lumina Foundation for Education launched the LSS in November 2011. LSS invited applications and funded 13 partnerships in 11 states; it made a total investment of \$11.5 million over four years, with each site receiving \$600,000.<sup>17</sup>

Lumina Foundation funding has been used in LSS sites for planning and implementation of a range of projects to boost attainment. Collaborative activities are generally aligned with a “collective impact” model that includes: having a common agenda, using shared measurement systems, working with a lead or “backbone” organization and implementing mutually reinforcing activities. The approach intends to organize and mobilize the assets within a community to take coordinated action for transformational change. Illustrative projects from select sites are: developing K12-to-college

transfer and transition issues, improving developmental courses designed to move students more efficiently toward credit-bearing courses, and employing the use of common data systems to better track education and career success.

The foundation has partnered with Excelencia in Education to serve as an intermediary organization to offer technical assistance to the 13 sites. Excelencia is a national nonprofit organization that aims to accelerate higher education success for Latino students by providing data-driven analysis of the educational status of these students and by developing effective policies, engaging diverse stakeholders and enhancing responses to serve Latino and all students. Another key partner is the Foundation Strategy Group (FSG), whose role is to provide evaluation support to each site.

In press releases, Lumina cited the increasing significance of supporting Latino communities to achieve greater rates of college attainment towards meeting Lumina Foundation’s Goal 2025 of 60 percent of Americans with some form

of college completion. By 2025, half of the nation’s workers, or more than 50 million, will be of Latino descent. Furthermore, Latinos represent the largest and fastest-growing minority population group in the United States.

One exemplary LSS site is Santa Ana College (SAC). SAC received funding in 2011 to create a guaranteed admission pathway to California State University Fullerton and to the University of California Irvine. SAC’s program serves one of the nation’s communities that is almost entirely Latino (more than 90 percent) and expects to achieve an 80 percent overall college-going rate from its feeder high school district and an 80 percent associate degree completion rate. The Santa Ana program engages Latino families, local businesses and postsecondary institutions to elevate Latino college attainment. Collaboration across educational institutions in Santa Ana has been in place for more than 30 years, and key actors have great depth and capacity for collaboration. Lumina’s funding has facilitated advanced project implementation stages with a focus on demonstrating early attainment results among student cohorts. ■



Parent volunteers from Padres Promotores de la Educación out in the Santa Ana community. Photo courtesy of The Santa Ana Partnership.

## LSS SITES

Arizona	Phoenix College
California	Long Beach City College, Santa Ana College
Florida	Miami Dade College
Georgia	Armstrong Atlantic State University
Kentucky	Bluegrass Community and Technical College
New Mexico	University of New Mexico
New York	The Hispanic Federation
North Carolina	Hispanics in Philanthropy
Tennessee	The Tennessee Higher Education Commission
Texas	The San Antonio Education Partnership, Southwest Texas Junior College

greater clarity on how the foundation intends to engage and work with communities, as well as the types of organizations to be selected. One representative of a national ethnic-based organization stated, “From the outside, it’s clear they care ... but I don’t see the specifics in there.”

And another reflected:

“I’ve never known Lumina to fund the community to make systems better. Lumina has made their bets on the inside players and policy think tanks rather than students and communities. I could be wrong, but I’ve not seen a lot of our [racial justice] partners get funding.”

Finally, while the new strategy appears to focus more attention on communities directly, at least four experts questioned the level of investment and observed that \$200,000 in each community over multiple years is very small relative to the foundation’s overall portfolio, and is unlikely to bring about deep change.

An analysis of grants data showed that Lumina Foundation committed significant financial amounts to marginalized populations<sup>18</sup> and for social justice purposes in 2008-2010. Lumina’s giving nearly met NCRP recommendations and exceeded national averages. Using the latest available data from the Foundation Center, NCRP estimated that Lumina Foundation committed 46 percent of its total grantmaking dollars to the economically disadvantaged, ethnic and racial minorities, and women and girls.<sup>19</sup> NCRP encourages grantmakers to provide at least 50 percent of grant dollars to benefit underserved communities, and the 2011 national average was 42 percent.<sup>20</sup> Lumina also granted 21 percent of its dollars for social justice purposes.<sup>21</sup> NCRP encourages grantmakers to provide at least 25 percent of grant dollars for advocacy, organizing and civic engagement to promote equity, opportunity and justice.<sup>22</sup> The 2011 national average was 12 percent.

**The newly launched Community Partnerships for Attainment (CPA) builds on prior place-based work, but stakeholders expressed concern that as a national funder, the foundation may not be best positioned for place-based work.**

The recently announced Community Partnerships for Attainment (CPA) grant program, which currently involves 20 metropolitan areas, reflects Lumina Foundation’s enhanced interests in community-based, multi-sector efforts where coordinated and aligned work reflects a common agenda and use of data to inform decision-making. The grant program also highlights the role of cities in supporting economic prosperity.<sup>23</sup> The foundation’s CPA program targets areas that are already taking steps to address postsecondary attainment and that have been recommended by a variety of national organizations working in key communities.<sup>24</sup> The effort also intends to build on lessons from the Latino Student Success initiative (LSS) and to bring LSS sites into the CPA effort.

Grantees and other partners interviewed during this review noted some of the challenges in developing strategies, coordinating LSS and CPA sites, selecting sites and implementing evaluation measures. Three partners noted that LSS sites were not brought into conversations in developing the effort or with potential CPA partners until late in the process. One partner described the development of the strategy and said:

“I don’t think the community has been very involved in the creation of the strategy. ... We would never have designed it in the way they did. ... They did not select communities that had a strategy; they selected sites if they could get other funders.”

Another described an initial lack of cultural perspective:

“Some of us felt that there was not enough Latino expertise around the room. I felt there was a lack of Latino relevance.”

With respect to LSS and CPA site coordination, two site representatives expressed concern about integrating the two efforts. One partner stated, “I don’t feel our site was included in that [CPA] partnership, and I didn’t even learn that they were putting together a proposal until a few days before it was due.”

Finally, two sites noted the need to introduce the evaluation tool developed by a third-party evaluator earlier on or to allow its customization.

In considering ways to improve collaboration between LSS and CPA sites, one partner suggested:

“You don’t have the authentic relationships in some cases ... the foundation has an opportunity to think more, go slower, be more intentional and recognize community dynamics. ... I wish we had been more involved in the early stages of it.”

And one site representative suggested being more intentional about choosing a range of sites that are on a spectrum of “early” to “mature” and distilling and sharing lessons learned among the sites.

While a number of key challenges were raised, interviewed grantees expressed appreciation and great admiration for the foundation’s “not waiting for a perfect pathway” and for seeding what is a long-distance journey.

## OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

**The foundation is praised for making strong early progress in raising awareness of the need for postsecondary completion, but beneficiary outcomes remain modest.**

Consistently, respondents in interviews and grantee surveys identified the foundation’s biggest success as bringing attention to the need for higher levels of college attainment. The foundation won credit and praise for increasing the awareness of the dismal rate of college completion and how critical higher education is to national and local success. Experts point to the use of thought leadership, policy networks, dissemination of research and context setting as effective ways the foundation has set the agenda and framed the problem. One program partner observed:

“When you look at large foundations, even though strategies change, they’ve [Lumina] stayed in this space and hammered on these issues for low-income populations. They made sure there was a table to gather around when it comes to access and completion.”

Lumina’s consistent and long-term dedication to postsecondary issues has enabled its success in setting the national higher education agenda. One policy expert said, “Lumina Foundation has done an extraordinary job of creating urgency around one simple concept: improve the number of people with high quality credentials.”

Foundation staff also identified Lumina’s role in bringing awareness to degree completion as a major success. One foundation executive observed that early in the foundation’s history, the main focus was on access and opportunity. Lumina has subsequently changed the conversation to address credential completion and even learning and employment.

Another major success identified by foundation staff was the Achieving the Dream initiative, which brought to the forefront the importance of community colleges, especially to improve equity for underserved communities. Foundation representatives emphasized that while focusing on enrolling underrepresented students in elite institutions may be important to others, Lumina's work with community colleges reflects a focus on expanding opportunities – “the whole pie” – for diverse populations. This emphasis not only reflects the foundation's systemic and equity orientation but also an acknowledgement of the practical realities of targeting populations to achieve the numeric goals of Goal 2025. According to a grantee:

“Until Lumina Foundation put a spotlight on this goal, it was an under-represented issue. The numerical goal helped us rally around something. It was very good thing to have a discrete target.”

With respect to early policy and program outcomes, results are modest. The president of the United States, his administration and some states have adopted similar college attainment policy goals.<sup>25</sup> One stakeholder observed that in the state of Indiana, Lumina has been very influential in establishing the target rate of 60 percent completion by 2025 and stated: “Just putting the call out there to the states and setting an ambitious goal has changed the conversation. . . . If you look at our strategic plan, Lumina was very influential in that plan.”

The Achieving the Dream initiative has generated some positive outcomes among participating students; however, results in some content areas, such as completion of developmental math, showed no improvement.<sup>26</sup> A more focused study on one participating community college site also revealed modest positive results in grades, college retention and credits earned.<sup>27</sup>

Significant questions regarding outcomes and impacts remain. Interviewed experts speculated about whether or not long-term outcomes (college completion statistics) have actually increased, and there is a strong desire among those interviewed for credible analysis and reporting of actual results. At least five experts raised questions regarding how the foundation's work will address not just the numbers of adults completing degrees but also the quality and meaning of those degrees.

While the foundation, in its strategic plans, described high-quality credentials as “having well-defined and transparent learning outcomes that provide clear pathways to further education and employment,”<sup>28</sup> experts worried that some certificates or credentials do not lead to learning or employment with the likelihood of promotions. Also, some definitions that link quality to salaries can be very misleading because some degrees compensate poorly early on in students' careers but may eventually become lucrative (e.g., biology or pre-med). Some experts appreciated that the foundation is even seeking to define quality, and it appears to be focusing resources on a “second-generation degree qualifications profile.” While the field grapples with these challenges, three experts expressed the concern that institutions, especially those serving low-income and racial and ethnic minority communities, might resort to selective admissions (“creaming”) or to simply pushing students through to graduation to boost completion numbers.

Among grantees surveyed, more than 80 percent of 130 respondents believed that the foundation was having an impact in their program area (Table 4). The majority of grantees (82 percent) also strongly or somewhat agreed that the foundation's strategies are likely to achieve the foundation's intended objectives (Table 5), and that the foundation's strategies would likely achieve more equitable



outcomes (79 percent, Table 5) and greater access to opportunities for populations served (82 percent, Table 5).

**The foundation has been highly effective in collaborating with other major funders and policy entities to raise awareness toward its goals; the quality of the foundation’s collective approaches with other sectors varies.**

As described earlier, Lumina Foundation has been very effective in working with large funders and education policy agencies to establish college completion goals. Other foundations, such as the Gates Foundation, the Kresge Founda-

tion and the U.S. Department of Education share similar goals, funding partners and strategies. This collaboration focuses attention, helps prioritize and marshal funding, and streamlines grantmaking processes among funders and grantees. Simultaneously, this close collaboration is perceived by critics as “too close” or, even worse, “colluding behind closed doors” to the detriment of democracy.

In response, one foundation representative noted that change would be much greater if there were collusion: “I don’t know if there’s undue influence, but if there were, I think you would see a lot more movement in D.C.”

**Tables 4 & 5: Grantee perspectives on impact, likelihood of achieving objectives, equitable outcomes and greater access.**

**TABLE 4:** Do you think the foundation is having impact in the program area you are working on and, if so, what evidence do you see that the foundation is making a difference?

	Response Percent	Response Count	
Yes	82.3%	107	
No	3.1%	4	
I don't know	14.6%	19	

**TABLE 5:** To what extent do you agree the foundation’s new strategies in your program area are:

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I Don't Know	N/A	Rating Average
Likely to achieve the foundation’s intended objectives in the program area?	42.3% (55)	39.2% (51)	3.8% (5)	1.5% (2)	13.1% (17)	–	2.96
Likely to achieve more equitable outcomes for the populations served?	40.0% (52)	39.2% (51)	4.6% (6)	0.8% (1)	10.0% (13)	5.4% (7)	2.88
Likely to achieve greater access to opportunities for the populations served?	46.9% (61)	34.6% (45)	5.4% (7)	0.0% (0)	10.0% (13)	3.1% (4)	3.02

n = 130

Other funding partners dismissed these concerns as distractions and pointed to strict internal controls implemented by foundations' general counsels preventing staff from crossing ethical or lobbying boundaries.

Finally, Lumina Foundation staff and their funder peers noted that to whatever extent there is collaboration, they find it to be on the side of "right," in service to those drowned out by industry associations and in the face of the reality that in any sector, networks and influence are always at play.

With regard to other types of organizations and social sectors, Lumina has had varied experiences. It has had strong ties with educational institutions and nonprofit organizations, emerging relations with the business sector and a contested relationship with the media. Table 6 summarizes grantees responses that illustrate these trends. Given the nature of its mission, Lumina Foundation has partnered

extensively with large minority-serving institutions (i.e., historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic serving institutions, and tribal colleges and universities), community colleges and entities implementing innovative education delivery models, such as Western Governors University, a nonprofit, competency-based, online university that offers bachelor's and master's degrees. More than 80 percent of respondents perceived working relationships with educational institutions to be "very" or "somewhat effective."

Grantees reported that nonprofit organizations had effective working relationships with Lumina Foundation. Of 102 grantees, a strong majority (83 percent) indicated that the foundation worked "very" or "somewhat effectively" with nonprofits. Survey respondents noted that the most effective aspects of working with the foundation were the quality of communication, the program staff and collaborating and convening events. Grantees specifically noted that the

**Table 6: How effectively has the foundation been working with the following types of organizations to achieve the foundation's goals?**

	Very Effectively	Somewhat Effectively	Not Very Effectively	Completely Ineffectively	I Don't Know	Rating Average	Rating Count
Business	14.6% (19)	23.8% (31)	6.2% (8)	0.8% (1)	54.6% (71)	1.43	130
Educational institutions	51.5% (67)	31.5% (41)	3.1% (4)	0.0% (0)	13.8% (18)	3.07	130
Government	30.8% (40)	31.5% (41)	4.6% (6)	0.0% (0)	33.1% (43)	2.27	130
Media	38.8% (50)	21.7% (28)	6.2% (8)	0.0% (0)	33.3% (43)	2.33	129
Nonprofits	45.4% (59)	33.1% (43)	2.3% (3)	0.8% (1)	18.5% (24)	2.86	130
Philanthropy	39.5% (51)	24.0% (31)	1.6% (2)	0.0% (0)	34.9% (45)	2.33	129

clarity of the foundation's goals was helpful in defining an appropriate scope of work.

While the foundation is perceived to work effectively with nonprofits, at least three interviewed grantees noted the need for further development and coordination of collective impact efforts in metropolitan areas, and five stakeholders noted that Lumina Foundation has not tended to work directly with grassroots organizations or community-based organizations, including those that serve underrepresented communities.

As seen in Table 6, relationships with businesses were perceived as less effective, or unknown; about half of respondents answered "I don't know." One foundation representative noted that the newly initiated metropolitan strategy will engage chambers of commerce, employers and mayors in partnership with education and community organizations and will provide opportunities for learning and evolution.

Partnerships with the media were perceived mostly as "very" or "somewhat effective;" however, media experts conveyed wide-ranging opinions about the foundation's role. One media expert working for an organization with policy perspectives similar to those of Lumina Foundation expressed high praise for the foundation being upfront about its goals and values:

"For us, it's a great partnership. We're not being told one way or another. We've never experienced censorship. ... They don't pretend to be about pure journalism and whatever people want to do. They are investing in journalism that advances their goal."

Another media expert said, bluntly:

"I am very uncomfortable of their funding journalism. ... Everything we know about how they are with their grantees is that they are very directive. ... If you're dependent on that work, you can't afford to offend them too much."

A foundation executive clarified Lumina's role in funding journalism, stating, "Every media partner is guaranteed editorial independence." Another foundation representative stated that operating grants are reserved for some entities, including media organizations, to develop their capacities to cover higher education stories but never to influence the actual writing.

**Foundation staff periodically consider data in strategy discussions; however, external partners lacked awareness of the foundation's use of data or grantee feedback for strategy adjustments.**

Foundation staff described at least two frequent, structured ways in which data and feedback were used to consider ongoing progress. One foundation executive described metrics used in foundation processes to guide strategy and work. The metrics are in three categories or "levels" that reflect varying degrees of control or influence by the foundation. For example, Level 1 metrics represent broad goals, such as degree attainment, and other level metrics represent the specific work of grantees. These metrics are tracked regularly, and some are reported to the board to generally guide strategy conversations. Other metrics are used by program officers and grantees to formulate grant agreements or to update the executive team on progress. A second way in which information is considered is at an organization-wide level through a "learning agenda" with a series of themed all-staff learning events twice a quarter. Topics addressed in the past have included the connection of the new strategic plan to each staff

member’s role, the degree qualifications profile, equity, immigration and timely topics being considered by the foundation’s CEO. In one specific instance, an external expert on equity in higher education was brought in to present and facilitate discussions among staff. One foundation representative recalled the benefit of the event, saying:

“We looked at each strategy with the directors and looked at how we saw equity taking place in 2013 and then through 2016. ... Talking about it in this was really healthy.”

Three interviewed stakeholders recognized that Lumina is intentionally a learning organization with a strong evaluation culture, and that the foundation provides structured and regular opportunities for staff to consider data or observations from the field. One expert recounted, “I think

they are a learning organization, but if they’ve specifically asked and acted on information, I have not seen that happen.” And a peer funder observed:

“Everything they do is grounded in data ... but I don’t know along the way if they have continuous feedback loops. ... They do participate in the Center for Effective Philanthropy review, but I don’t know if they made any changes because of that data.”

No interviewed experts could identify specific instances of strategy modifications based on feedback or data. Among the 33 percent of grantees surveyed who responded that the foundation had asked for their feedback, almost all (88 percent) answered “I don’t know” regarding whether the foundation had made changes to its strategies or practices based on that feedback (Table 7).

**Table 7: Has the foundation made changes to its strategies or practices based on your feedback?**

	Response Percent	Response Count	
Yes	9.5%	4	
No	2.4%	1	
I don't know	88.1%	37	

**Table 8: How effective has your partnership with this foundation been compared to partnerships you have had with other grantmakers?**

Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Not Very Effective	Completely Ineffective	I Don't Know	Rating Average
70.8% (92)	23.1% (30)	4.6% (6)	0.8% (1)	0.8% (1)	3.62

n = 130

## PARTNERSHIPS WITH GRANTEES

Grantees overwhelmingly viewed Lumina Foundation as a highly effective partner, primarily because of high quality relationships with staff and collaborative activities with partners.

Nearly all of the survey respondents viewed their relationship with the foundation as effective (Table 8). As one grantee noted:

“I think they do a better job than any other. ... They have gone well beyond what any other organization would ever consider is reasonable in trying to assist and to better understand where their constituents are.”

The most frequently reported factors that contributed to an effective partnership included:

- **Communication:** The foundation’s purpose is singular and clear, allowing grant seekers to determine if they are or are not within the scope of the foundation’s funding; clear and firm on desired outcomes, while flexible on approaches to achieve goals. A grantee said, “Most effective was a shared understanding that progress toward policy change may not be linear and that tactics have to be adjusted to make the most of external conditions.”
- **Staff Quality:** Program staff are well-liked and respected, seeking dialogue, perceived as self-aware and humble, and supportive of grantees. A grantee shared: “Our program officer spent time with us to help us continue to build a bigger vision and increase our impact.”
- **Collaboration and Convenings:** The foundation brings grantees and other stakeholders together, helps build networks and supports or requires collaboration. One grantee noted: “There is a collaborative iterative

spirit about the work that is essential to continued growth. Topical convenings are of immense value.”

Grantees also reported factors that contributed to diminished partnership effectiveness. Overall though, three surveyed grantees perceived the foundation to be “not very effective” and one rated it as “completely ineffective.” Frequently cited factors contributing to “less effectiveness” were:

- **Communication:** This included irregularity, unclear expectations on required collaboration, unclear alignment of purpose and lack of feedback on reports. One grantee noted: “There were limited check-ins and partner meetings. We needed more contact with the foundation.” Another grantee said, “I would have loved to have more engagement surrounding dissemination of the final product.”
- **Grant Application:** This included the grant application process and goal setting. Specific shortcomings included efforts to align mutual goals as problematic and excessive iteration on grant application. One grantee said, “It took a mighty long time to go from concept paper to proposal to grant.” Another described “reworking *ad nauseam* of the original grant application.”
- **Staff Continuity:** This included frequent staffing changes, different or multiple points of contact to discuss progress and added layer of management subsequent to grant award. One grantee noted, “Lumina’s organizational changes made it harder to maintain continuous relationships.”
- **Collaboration and Convenings:** This included lack of collaboration on strategy, lack of integration with other projects and instances when third-party coordinators were not helpful or got in the way. One grantee said, “There was an occasional lack of notable coordination across efforts that should be related and are complementary.”

**Table 9: Has the foundation provided your organization any support, either monetary or nonmonetary for the following? If so, please rate its usefulness.**

	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not Very Useful	Not at all Useful	N/A	Rating Average
Brought us together with other stakeholders to work on a common issue	68.2% (88)	13.2% (17)	0.0% (0)	1.6% (2)	17.1% (22)	3.79
Invited us to funder convenings to share and discuss our work	48.8% (63)	10.1% (13)	1.6% (2)	0.8% (1)	38.8% (50)	3.75
Provided opportunities for us to learn from our peers	55.0% (71)	14.7% (19)	3.1% (4)	1.6% (2)	25.6% (33)	3.66
Provided us with access to other donors	12.4% (16)	20.9% (27)	3.9% (5)	2.3% (3)	60.5% (78)	3.10
Provided us with access to policymakers	21.7% (28)	20.2% (26)	5.4% (7)	1.6% (2)	51.2% (66)	3.27
Provided us with technical assistance/capacity building	31.0% (40)	17.1% (22)	3.1% (4)	2.3% (3)	46.5% (60)	3.43
Other	6.2% (8)	1.6% (2)	0.8% (1)	0.0% (0)	91.5% (118)	3.64

n = 129

**Table 10: Think about the outcome measures the foundation employs to evaluate its grantees. Have these measures been relevant and useful for your work?**

	Response Percent	Response Count	
Yes	82.2%	106	
No	17.8%	23	

**Table 11: Has the foundation provided sufficient guidance and resources to enable you to fulfill the outcomes measurement requirements for your grant?**

	Response Percent	Response Count	
Yes	86.8%	112	
No	13.2%	17	

In the course of conducting interviews, NCRP learned of a handful of past instances when partners perceived foundation leadership failing to live up to high standards of respect and inclusion. The foundation's previous administrators, most of whom have left the foundation, were cited as responsible. Interviewed stakeholders acknowledged that the foundation's current leadership had extended efforts to repair a few of these relationships, gaining back respect and even admiration.

**The foundation is generally praised for its relationships with grantees and for their support “beyond the check.”**

Most notably, the foundation's leadership, in attracting attention to a common goal – college attainment – has been a boon for organizations with similar goals. Bringing stakeholders together around a common issue was the highest rated form of useful non-monetary support at 68 percent (Table 9). Other highly valued types of support included opportunities for grantees to learn from peers (55 percent) and invitations to funder convenings to share and discuss work (49 percent). Grantees also expressed appreciation for the foundation's efforts to engage the media on related topics and to maintain regular, high quality contact with grantees on progress. Some grantees expressed dissatisfaction on these very same dimensions, and a consistent request among respondents was for the foundation to connect grantees with other funders.

**The foundation conducts evaluation practices in ways that are widely seen as relevant and appropriate among grantees; furthermore, grantees reported that the foundation provided guidance and the needed resources to measure outcomes.**

Given the foundation's focused attention on a numeric

goal of college attainment and its overall strategic approach, evaluation plays a key role in grantee relations. Among surveyed grantees, more than 80 percent (Table 10) reported that measures used were relevant and useful to their work. Grantees also perceived measurement and reporting requirements to be appropriate to the size of their grant at 84 percent and to the size and capacity of their organizations at 87 percent (Table 11). One grantee expressed being very satisfied with the measures used in their grant:

“I was happy, as a grantee, that they worked with us to develop metrics. They are so focused on their goal, so when they select you as a grantee, they are open to working with that organization's culture.”

Foundation staff also described their practice of engaging grantees in evaluation. One foundation representative described the process:

“We always have dialogue with a potential grantee before putting pen to paper. ... We have to negotiate indicators and make sure they are aligned to internal metrics and to Goal 2025.”

Another foundation representative noted that while evaluation is key, processes are flexible and dealt with on case-by-case situation with involvement by the foundation's evaluation staff.

“There are not set rules. As evaluation professionals, our evaluation director and her colleagues would think it [evaluation plan] through and provide their professional opinions.”

The foundation has sponsored professional external evaluators to review major initiatives. MDRC and SPEC Associ-

ates have conducted studies of the Achieving the Dream initiative and a seven-state policy initiative, respectively.

One aspect of using evaluation that requires additional exploration is how the foundation consults with grantees about outcome measures used for evaluation. Survey responses were divided with respect to whether the foundation consulted grantees. About half said “yes” and half said “no” (Table 12). Possible explanations include: consultation did not occur because certain student outcome measures were “givens” or “understood” as being dictated by federal and state reporting requirements, or some research grants concluded with a deliverable (e.g., a report) and did not require outcome measures. In contrast, some policy and advocacy grants were context specific and required customized measures; hence, consultation was needed and occurred.

## OTHER EFFECTIVE PRACTICES AND GOVERNANCE

**The foundation is exemplary in its provision of multi-year funding; it can do more to advance effective practices and good governance.**

Lumina Foundation approaches but still falls short of NCRP’s recommendations for effective practices and good governance. As noted in greater detail below, additional attention can be given to offering more general operating support, greater payout amounts of grants-only dollars, and board and staff diversity. Progress in these areas will

enhance the foundation’s effectiveness as well as its external relationships.

- General operating support.** Lumina Foundation committed about 1 percent of its grant funds for general operating support from 2008–2010, according to NCRP analyses of Foundation Center data. Among surveyed grantees, 25 percent, representing a range of organizational types and sizes, indicated they received general operating support. Among general operating support recipients, elements of an effective partnership with the foundation included flexibility, open communication with foundation staff and collaboration with other projects, organizations and funders.

A foundation representative explained that the foundation did not have a policy on general operating support, and that each request is considered on a case-by-case basis. In principle, the foundation seeks to support the growth of select organizations without over-influencing their direction. Examples of organizations receiving general operating grants are Independent Sector and media organizations requesting organizational capacity development. NCRP recommends that foundations provide at least 50 percent of grant dollars for general operating support.<sup>29</sup> Given that Lumina Foundation often funds large educational institutions to achieve targeted aims, general support grants may not be appropriate in many instances. The median foundation share of giving for general operat-

**Table 12: Has the foundation consulted with you about the outcome measures used to evaluate your organization?**

	Response Percent	Response Count	
Yes	49.6%	64	
No	50.4%	65	



ing support was 7 percent in 2011 as reported by the Foundation Center.

- **Multi-year funding.** The foundation has invested from 59 to 92 percent of grant funds in multi-year grants in the years 2004–2009. In 2009,<sup>30</sup> the most recent year with available data, Lumina Foundation invested 88 percent. NCRP recommends that foundations invest 50 percent of its grants dollars as multi-year grants.<sup>31</sup> Doing so allows nonprofits to build and strengthen their infrastructure, increase effectiveness and invest in leadership development and organizational capacity. The average among funders in 2011 was 29 percent.
- **Payout rate.** Lumina Foundation's overall payout rate, including qualifying operational and administrative expenses, averaged 5.8 percent from 2008 to 2012 according to NCRP's analyses of 900-PF asset and expense data. Foundation representatives reported an overall payout rate of 5.9 percent over the 2009 to 2011 time span. The foundation intentionally paid out at higher rates than the federally mandated minimum of 5 percent during the financial crisis to ensure that grantees were not negatively affected or paid less. In recent years, the foundation's management has had ongoing conversations about letting the mission drive payout. In other words, if staff see high value opportunities and supportive environmental conditions, the board would be willing to release necessary funds, even beyond 5 percent, to achieve its mission. Thus far in 2014, no such opportunities have arisen. NCRP encourages a grants-only payout rate of 6 percent or more.<sup>32</sup>
- **Mission-related investing.** Lumina Foundation has dedicated up to 2 percent of its asset base for mission-related investing. No program-related investments (PRI) have been made yet. In 2010, Lumina led the establishment of and invested in a postsecondary education fund, the New Markets Education Fund. NCRP encourages

foundations to invest 25 percent of their assets as MRIs.

- **Board Composition and Staff Diversity.** The board of directors has diversified significantly since the foundation's establishment in 2000. Four experts observed that the foundation's early board members had direct ties to the student loan industry and were demographically homogeneous. The board's early composition was shaped, in part, by drawing from existing legal entities in order to create the conversion foundation. As of 2013, three of 11 board members are black or Latino and five of 11 are women. The current board represents a broader range of interests, genders and racial and ethnic backgrounds, but one stakeholder noted the need for more community representatives to give greater credibility to the foundation's equity and community mobilization rhetoric. NCRP does not recommend a target number or minimum number of minorities or women on boards of directors or among staff; however, in one industry study, having three or more minority members on a board was associated with higher perceptions of equal opportunity for influence.<sup>33</sup>

As of April 2014, among seven senior foundation executive team members, two are black and one is Latino. Of the seven, six are female. Lumina Foundation had 53 staff at the time of this review. Interviewed stakeholders, including two funder peers, also questioned if foundation staff had the requisite experience and credibility among community-based organizations to guide community mobilization efforts.
- **Board Compensation.** Board members each received from \$23,000 to \$37,000 in compensation in 2012 for their service. One expert questioned why board members were typically wealthy individuals or compensated when the foundation does not fund-raise. NCRP recommends that board members serve voluntarily. If some compensation is to be provided, NCRP recom-

mends no more than \$8,000 per member.

- **Transparency.** The foundation did post its 990s and audited financial statements for years 2009–2012 on its website. During this report’s review period, Lumina Foundation did not post its conflict of interest policy, code of conduct policy, whistleblower procedures or executive compensation procedures on its website.<sup>34</sup> The Foundation Center lacks data from Lumina Foundation for the years 2011 and 2012 regarding general operating support grants, multi-year grants, grants to underserved populations and grants for social justice. However, a foundation representative indicated that the foundation intends to submit these data.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Continue strategies and practices the foundation is doing well.** Maintain focus on clear, measurable goals. Continue momentum at state and national policy levels to draw policymakers' attention to college completion and equity. Continuing to serve as a thought leader will aid in realigning system actors toward Goal 2025.
- 2. Heed stakeholders' concerns, retool the foundation's role and bolster its funding and capacity to effectively support community-based work.** Distinguish levels of readiness and maturity for collective impact among metropolitan communities. Determine needs and provide resources to ensure approaches are culturally appropriate. Provide customized levels of technical assistance and funding, especially to ensure that intended beneficiary populations can meaningfully participate in shaping and implementing sustainable strategies. Build continuity among foundation staff and coordinate staff working on overlapping strategies in the same geographies. Recognize the foundation's limits as a national funder and prioritize deep site engagement over breadth. Building the foundation's knowledge, networks and capacity for fostering community partnerships in metropolitan areas will ensure that its place-based efforts add value to existing local initiatives.
- 3. Strengthen strategies that will effectively engage targeted beneficiary populations in achieving Goal 2025.** Partner with community organizing leaders as well as national advocacy organizations to ensure that community perspectives are invited and heard, and identify ways that grassroots beneficiary engagement can accelerate progress toward Goal 2025.
- 4. Enlist credible voices to explain to external audiences the foundation's focus on both equitable access and quality educational outcomes.** Enlisting credible postsecondary institution actors to explain the issue of ensuring high-quality degrees, certificates and credentials while also boosting attainment numbers will facilitate alignment among partners. Applying effective communications strategies, including among equity-focused and targeted constituencies, will ensure that stakeholders see the foundation as a trusted partner committed to similar goals and, thus, are willing to align efforts accordingly.
- 5. Create structured and targeted opportunities for stakeholders' input to inform strategy adjustments.** Communicate to partners how the input was used and what changes were considered or made. Involving partners in revising strategies will contribute to understanding how strategies relate to one another, what strategies provide opportunities for innovation and learning, provide better coordination among program staff who lead specific strategies and reinforce attention to long-term goals.

**6. Implement effective grantmaking practices such as increasing grants payout to achieve a bold agenda.**

Lumina Foundation should significantly increase grant payout dollars to achieve its highly ambitious 2025 postsecondary attainment goals. NCRP recommends that foundations pay out at least 6 percent in grants only, but a higher rate may be needed to achieve such bold aims. Additional funding over longer periods of time to metropolitan and community partnership sites can support capacity and leadership development among partner organizations and targeted beneficiaries, increase impact and build partners' confidence in a sustainable strategy. Develop and implement guidelines for general operating support; provide core support to organizations of appropriate scale and at early stages of growth to ensure foundation funding has impact.

# CONCLUSION

Lumina Foundation for Education is on its way toward being an exemplar of high-impact philanthropy in its goals and strategies. The foundation is evolving and should continue developing strong communications strategies and well-balanced messages to frame its current goals, approaches and its role as a leader in postsecondary educational attainment within a larger ecosystem of actors.

The CEO's leadership and highly-valued staff are well-regarded, especially among policy and think tank communities, and are strong assets to the foundation. The metropolitan place-based approach offers a key opportunity for stronger engagement with historically marginalized communities, including low-income, racial and ethnic

minorities, immigrants and others. The foundation can better establish and communicate its presence, increase resources for place-based work, seek feedback, further develop foundation staff and hone sustainable strategies to engage affected communities and reach its ultimate goals of college attainment and social mobility.

The foundation's goals are the right ones, and its singular attention to higher education allows the foundation to commit long-term to its ambitious goal. Stakeholders urge the foundation to maintain its commitment to increasing postsecondary attainment for all Americans, continue to listen well and build long-lasting relationships with the communities it intends to serve.

# APPENDIX

"IF YOU WERE CEO OF THE FOUNDATION ..."

Top Six Answers from Grantee Survey and Illustrative Comments

## Which approaches would you continue to use?

### CONVENING

"There is a collaborative iterative spirit about the work that is essential to continued growth. Topical convenings are of immense value."

"Annual cohort meetings and technical assistance for grants have been useful. I'd continue to provide these support mechanisms to grantees."

### COMMUNICATIONS

"Open discussions with grantees to craft grants that work for the foundation and the grantee."

"We learn about good fit opportunities through regular communication with project officers and would continue to encourage and provide space for those relationships to develop."

### COLLABORATION

"I would continue to promote place-based, data driven collaborations and the stories/lessons learned at these sites to advocate for the high-level systems changes needed for improved student degree attainment."

"The technical assistance and the theoretical approach to collective impact and collaborative work."

### STAFF

"Continued 'high touch' with program officers."

"I would continue the way that staff leaders work within and across each other's' primary strategic domains. They are naturally integrated and this dynamic reflects the way that the work has to happen on the ground as well."

"Maintain the caliber of staff – extremely collegial, smart, authentic and caring."

## STRATEGIC PLAN

"Alignment with the 'big goal' of college attainment."

"I would continue the eight strategies that became central to the foundation's work this past year. They reflect a lot of thought and experience, and deserve sufficient testing time before any changes are attempted."

"Focus on college completion and focus on Latino student success."

## FLEXIBILITY IN USE OF FUNDS

"Funding planning and capacity building grants. There are too few of these and the ability to take time away from the everyday work to think creatively about how we can change our work to improve it is invaluable."

"Focus on college completion, multi-year commitments, flexibility, support for the expansions of successful programs."

## What would you do differently to increase the foundation's impact?

### CONVENING

"Possibly convening more frequent 'gatherings' in conjunction with major higher education meetings to communicate the foundation's priorities, current funding profile and future plans."

"I might find ways to engage in a broader public dialogue about higher education. So often with education, we're always talking to each other, using terms and phrases that are industry-specific. However, trying to reach the 'everyman' about why they should care and take action around these issues is quite different."

### COMMUNICATIONS

"Ensure clearer communication about the foundation's new strategies. Really, the field is confused. Lead work to get to a parsimonious set of common, mission-appropriate metrics for measuring success."

"For some grantees their approach is rigid. Their approach is right and they are closed to the work of others. Increased focus on aspects of the work rather than the brand would be helpful."

### COLLABORATION

"Coordinating with other foundations to reduce duplication in the field. And developing internal processes (or even contracts with external organizations) to help synthesize learning within portfolios to ensure that future work is well informed by previously funded work to move the field further and faster."

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## **COLLABORATION (continued)**

"We need many more opportunities to connect with all the grantees, not just in our area, so we can continually learn about good practice, effective policy and research that links to our work."

## **EVALUATION**

"Change reporting structures to a more flexible year-end report, based on the academic year, not fiscal year."

"Have clearer interim measures for progress."

## **POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

"Build greater capacity within governors' offices and in the capacity of other state leaders to enact good policy and support its implementation."

"Spend more time and resources on practical application of activities and outcomes at the local grant level and less on statewide/national level. Yes, we need to move state and national policy, but good practices at the local level should drive that thinking."

## **CONSTITUENT ENGAGEMENT**

"I would focus on grassroots, specific schools districts, community partnerships/collaborations and parents. Big picture focus is valuable but until we take what we already know to the parents and educators in a meaningful way, with support for implementation or change, our parents and children will continue to struggle and not strive for a college/workforce-ready education."

"Broaden their reach with youth serving organizations. Rethink the strategic focus."



# NOTES

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3. Lumina Foundation for Education, *Lumina Foundation's Strategic Plan Goal 2025* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Lumina Foundation for Education, 2009).
4. Lumina Foundation for Education, *Lumina Foundation Strategic Plan 2013–2016* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Lumina Foundation for Education, 2013), p. 2.
5. *Lumina Foundation Strategic Plan 2013–2016*, p. 4.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 5. Also Young M. Kim, *Minorities in Higher Education Twenty-Fourth Status Report 2011 Supplement*, (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 2011).
7. *A Stronger Nation Through Higher Education: An Annual Report from Lumina Foundation* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Lumina Foundation for Education, 2013), p. 4.
8. *Lumina Foundation Strategic Plan 2013–2016*, p. 8.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 21. Listed strategies under Mobilizing to Reach Goal 2025: 1) build a Goal 2025 social movement, 2) mobilize employers, metro areas and regions to increase attainment, 3) mobilize higher education to increase students success, 4) advance state policy for increased attainment, and 5) advance federal policy for increased attainment. Listed strategies under Creating a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Higher Education Systems: 1) design new models of student financial support, 2) design new higher education business and financial models, and 3) design new systems of quality credentials.
11. Niki Jagpal and Kevin Laskowski, *Real Results: Why Strategic Philanthropy is Social Justice Philanthropy* (Washington, DC: National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, 2013).
12. *Lumina Foundation Strategic Plan 2013–2016*, p. 5.
13. "Twenty Communities Commit to Postsecondary Attainment Goals," Lumina Foundation for Education Press Release, December 4, 2013, [http://www.luminafoundation.org/newsroom/news\\_releases/2013-12-04.html](http://www.luminafoundation.org/newsroom/news_releases/2013-12-04.html).
14. Katherine Mangan, "How Gates Shapes State Higher-Education Policy," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 14, 2013.
15. *Lumina Foundation for Education Press Release*, op cit.
16. The Strive Partnership, also known as StriveTogether, is a community-based approach that contributes to improved child outcomes. The Partnership engages executive and grassroots partners in sharing a vision, bridging silos and using data to inform decision-making. StriveTogether started in the greater Cincinnati area in 2006. See [www.strivetogether.org](http://www.strivetogether.org).
17. "Latino Student Success: A Key Driver on the Road to Goal 2025," Lumina Foundation for Education Press Release, November 7, 2011.
18. NCRP used eleven of the special populations tracked by the Foundation Center: economically disadvantaged; racial or ethnic minorities; women and girls; people with AIDS; people with disabilities; aging, elderly and senior citizens; immigrants and refugees; crime/abuse victims; offenders and ex-offenders; single parents; and LGBTQ citizens.
19. 2008–2010 estimates based on data provided by the Foundation Center.
20. Niki Jagpal and Kevin Laskowski. *The State of Giving to*

*Underserved Communities 2011* (Washington, DC: National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, 2011), <http://www.ncrp.org/files/publications/PhilanthropicLandscape-StateofGivingtoUnderservedCommunities.pdf>.

21. 2008–2010 data. Criteria for social justice grantmaking is established by the Foundation Center. NCRP defines social justice philanthropy as funding “work for structural change in order to increase the opportunity of those who are the least well off politically, economically and socially.”
22. Niki Jagpal, *Criteria for Philanthropy at Its Best: Benchmarks to Assess and Enhance Grantmaker Impact* (Washington, DC: National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, 2009), <http://www.ncrp.org/paib>.
23. “Invited Request for Partnership Application Mobilizing Metro Areas and Regions to Increase Postsecondary Attainment: Lumina Community Partnership for Attainment” (Indianapolis, Ind.: Lumina Foundation for Education, 2013), [http://www.luminafoundation.org/advantage/document/grants/community\\_partnership/Lumina-Community\\_partnership\\_invitation.pdf](http://www.luminafoundation.org/advantage/document/grants/community_partnership/Lumina-Community_partnership_invitation.pdf).
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29. Niki Jagpal and Kevin Laskowski, *The State of General Operating Support* (Washington, DC: National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, 2012), <http://www.ncrp.org/files/publications/PhilanthropicLandscape-StateofGeneralOperatingSupport.pdf>.
30. The Foundation Center has not received 2010 and 2011 multi-year funding data from Lumina Foundation.
31. Jagpal and Laskowski, *The State of General Operating Support*.
32. NCRP identifies a payout rate of 6 percent of assets allocated for grants (only) as best practice to maximize foundation impact. For details, see Jagpal, *Criteria for Philanthropy At Its Best*.
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34. See also Glasspockets: <http://www.glasspockets.org/glasspockets-gallery/who-has-glass-pockets/lumina-foundation>.

## ABOUT PHILAMPLIFY

Philamplify is an initiative of the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy that aims to maximize the impact of our country's grantmakers. At the center of Philamplify is a series of comprehensive reports conducted by highly regarded researchers assessing foundation grantmaking and operations. Assessments include key findings and recommendations, along with in-depth analysis of foundations' funding strategies and feedback from peer funders, nonprofit leaders, issue experts, community members and more. By making these assessments public, Philamplify seeks to build a culture of transparency, mutual accountability and knowledge sharing.

[www.philamplify.org](http://www.philamplify.org)



**Address** 1331 H Street NW, Suite 200  
Washington, D.C. 20005

**Phone** (202) 387-9177

**Fax** (202) 332-5084

**Web** [www.ncrp.org](http://www.ncrp.org)