



## DEVELOPING GUIDED PATHWAYS FOR STUDENTS THROUGH COLLEGE AND INTO CAREERS

### INTRODUCTION ▶

At a time when a college education has become critical to a professional career and a middle-class lifestyle, we as a nation continue to struggle with college completion and career preparedness. The effects of this challenge fall with special impact on the African American community, where unemployment and underemployment rates are significantly higher than the national average.

To respond to this challenge, UNCF and Lilly Endowment, Inc. have joined forces with 24 historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and predominantly black institutions (PBIs) to establish the UNCF® Career Pathways Initiative (CPI). CPI is a three-pronged, comprehensive approach to developing career pathways for students: guided pathways, curricular enhancements and integrated co-curricular engagement. The 24 institutions were chosen through a multi-phase competitive process from among 87 institutions eligible to submit applications. Fifteen of the 24 institutions were selected to receive grants that range from \$1 million to \$1.5 million. Nine additional institutions will work together in three-institution clusters, which will receive up to \$6 million each.

### THE CHALLENGE: THE BROKEN COLLEGE-CAREER PIPELINE ▶

In the highly-competitive global economy, a college education has become a fundamental requirement for employment in the economy's fastest-growing and best-paying jobs and career paths. According to the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, "Over 95 percent of jobs created during the recovery have gone to college-educated workers" and "by 2020, 65% of all jobs in the economy will require postsecondary education and training beyond high school." A college graduate with a bachelor's degree makes on average about one million dollars more in a lifetime than a worker with only a high school diploma.

But despite the advantages of producing more college graduates, the U.S. continues to fall short. According to the Census Bureau, 32.5 percent of the population



**Figure 1.** Gaps that must be addressed to develop career pathways that lead to greater economic success.

25 and older has a bachelor's degree or more, compared to just 22.5 percent for African Americans. The employment gap isn't just a concern for African American non-graduates; according to the Center for Economic and Policy Research, while only 5.6 percent of all college graduates ages 22 to 27 were unemployed, more than twice as many black college graduates (12.4%) were unemployed. And of the African Americans who were employed, 55.9% were underemployed or working in careers that do not require the degree they hold.

### THE RESPONSE: THE UNCF® CAREER PATHWAYS INITIATIVE ▶

The UNCF® Career Pathways Initiative is a seven-year, grant-funded pilot program designed to enhance selected institutions' capacity to help their students find meaningful employment in their desired career fields. CPI will be led by UNCF's pioneering institutional improvement initiative, the Institute for Capacity Building.

CPI aims to improve the ability of educational institutions to serve their two primary stakeholders: students who rely on these institutions to prepare them for life after graduation, and employers who look to them for well-prepared college graduates. To simultaneously serve both students and employers, institutions must deepen their support for students by:

- More intentionally integrating their education and career preparation through stronger internships, more effective experiential learning opportunities, career counseling and other activities
- Increasing their awareness of professional job market requirements
- Reconsidering the knowledge 21st century students need in the workforce of tomorrow



## CAREER PATHWAY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH ►

CPI's goal is to help four-year HBCUs and PBIs strengthen institutional career outcomes by increasing the number of undergraduates who transition to meaningful jobs in their chosen fields upon graduation. To achieve this goal, we've devised a three-pronged approach designed to shape an undergraduate experience that results in "Students Engaged to Learn" and "Graduates Ready to Earn," including the following strategies:

- 1. Guided Pathways** – Placing student success at the center of institutional operations by engaging students in their learning journey and ensuring that they get on, stay on, and graduate from an academic pathway that facilitates personal and professional growth.
- 2. Curricular Enhancements** – A collaborative redesign of current curricula to streamline course and program offerings and embed 21st century competencies in students' learning outcomes.
- 3. Integrated Co-Curricular Engagement** – Integration of learning activities from outside the classroom with coursework that increase students' skill development and competencies.

## LEARNING AGENDA ►

CPI will assist participating institutions by supporting experiential learning activities, faculty development, technical assistance, stronger campus-industry interactions, among other initiatives. It will leverage what is learned individually and collectively to support and execute a research agenda that seeks to understand how lower-resourced institutions can drive systemic change to improve student success and career outcomes. Our work will span three primary focus areas:

- 1. Improving career outcomes for graduates within one year of their graduation, as defined by:**
  - a. Improving measures of student success such as retention, persistence and graduation rates.
  - b. Improving quantity and quality of students' campus experiences.
  - c. Improving graduates' career placement rates, including postgraduate and career outcomes.

## 2. Defining, refining, and illustrating our three-pronged approach by addressing questions such as:

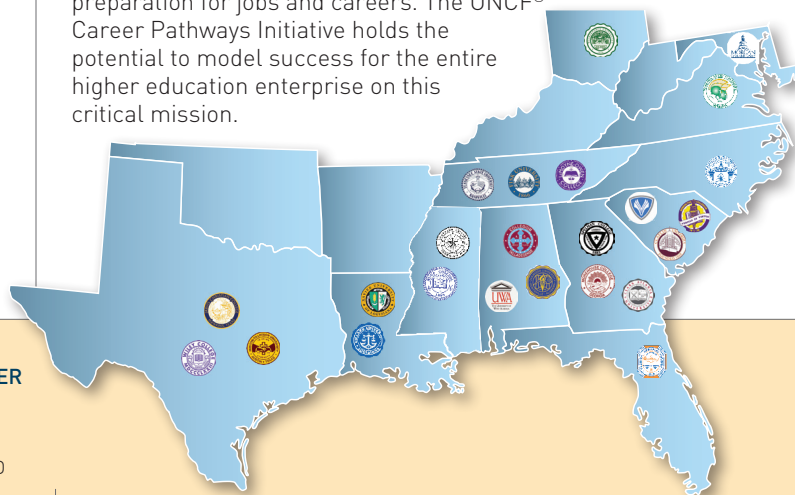
- a. What does it mean to develop guided pathways, supported by an enhanced and integrated curricular and co-curricular program of study?
- b. How can the model we develop drive better outcomes for students and graduates?
- c. Which components are most critical in maintaining fidelity to the model?
- d. How do institutions approach the development of career pathways?
- e. How can institutions prioritize, sequence and resource this work to reach its objectives?

## 3. Sharing and learning from cohort institutions to inform best-practice models:

- a. How can we leverage our institutions' experience to drive greater reform across higher education?
- b. What strategies worked and how were barriers overcome?
- c. What does an institutional model that supports and facilitates greater student academic and career outcomes look like?

## CONCLUSION ►

UNCF's track record—its status as the largest private provider of scholarships to students of color and its level of long-term public support (more than \$4.7 billion in contributions over seven decades) attests to its ability to lead change and improvement in sending students to and through college and on to successful careers. Today's economy demands not only a college education, but a high level of preparation for jobs and careers. The UNCF® Career Pathways Initiative holds the potential to model success for the entire higher education enterprise on this critical mission.



**States represented: 12 (AL, FL, GA, LA, MD, MS, NC, OH, SC, TN, TX, and VA)**

**Number of students served: Over 54,000**

**Total credentials awarded annually by recipient institutions: Over 8,000**

**Average Pell-eligible pop. served: 73%**

**Range of grants: \$1 million – \$6 million**

**Sample activities: Annual convenings, acceleration grants, faculty development and training, developing certification programs and alternative credentials, establishing industry advisory councils, student internships and experiential learning**

### INSTITUTIONS RECEIVING INDIVIDUAL IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS:

Clark Atlanta University - Atlanta, GA  
 Dillard University - New Orleans, LA  
 Fayetteville State University - Fayetteville, NC  
 Fisk University - Nashville, TN  
 Florida Memorial University - Miami Gardens, FL  
 Huston-Tillotson University- Austin, TX  
 Jarvis Christian College - Hawkins, TX  
 LeMoyné-Owen College - Memphis, TN  
 Morehouse College - Atlanta, GA  
 Rust College - Holly Springs, MS  
 Spelman College - Atlanta, GA  
 University of West Alabama - Livingston, AL  
 Wilberforce University - Wilberforce, OH  
 Wiley College - Marshall, TX  
 Xavier University of Louisiana - New Orleans, LA

### INSTITUTIONS RECEIVING CLUSTER IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS:

**Cluster 1:**  
 Morgan State University - Baltimore, MD  
 Norfolk State University - Norfolk, VA  
 Tennessee State University - Nashville, TN

**Cluster 2:**  
 Oakwood University - Huntsville, AL  
 Talladega College - Talladega, AL  
 Tougaloo College - Tougaloo, MS

**Cluster 3:**  
 Benedict College - Columbia, SC  
 Claflin University - Orangeburg, SC  
 Voorhees College - Denmark, SC