Lumina Foundation for Education Awards $1.4 Million Grant to the Education Commission of the States, UMass Boston

DENVER, CO – Today the Education Commission of the States (ECS), in collaboration with the National Access and Remediation Policy Project (NARPP) at the University of Massachusetts Boston, announces receipt of a Lumina Foundation grant. The focus of the $1.4 million award will be on “Getting Past Go,” an initiative to improve college success rates of students enrolled in developmental or remedial education.

“As states look to become more globally competitive by increasing the number of their residents who attain a college degree, it will be critical to explore how developmental studies programs at colleges can become a solution to low college attainment rates,” explains Bruce Vandal, ECS Postsecondary and Workforce Development Institute director. “Rather than viewing developmental courses as a symptom of the failure of our education system, we hope to work with policymakers and education leaders to drive better policy that increases college completion by providing high-quality support to students who need it.”

Data from the National Center for Education Statistics shows that almost 30% of students who enroll in postsecondary education require some level of developmental education. The purpose of the initiative will be to help support state policies that increase the college attainment rate of this demographic.

“Often these students have been written off as incapable of succeeding in college. Currently, little research exists to support policies and practices that reduce developmental education programs and ultimately exclude many students from higher education. This grant will focus on different approaches to developmental education and the extent to which existing policies either promote or hinder access to postsecondary opportunities for all students, especially those from historically underrepresented populations.” Tara Parker, principal investigator of the NARPP at UMass Boston.

“Getting Past Go” involves a network of state postsecondary education leaders who will generate a clearer picture of how states can create highly effective developmental study programs. The collaborative effort will identify and integrate model policies and practices into state P-20 efforts. Technical assistance to states will help align developmental studies policy with state P-20 efforts and goals to increase college attainment.

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The Education Commission of the States (ECS) is the only nationwide, nonpartisan interstate compact devoted to education. ECS helps governors, legislators, state education officials and others identify, develop and implement public policies to improve student learning at all levels. A nonprofit organization, ECS (www.ecs.org) was formed in 1965 and is located in Denver, Colorado.

Lumina Foundation for Education is an Indianapolis-based, private foundation.
UMass Boston, established in 1964, prides itself on providing challenging teaching, distinguished research, and extensive public service to Boston and the Commonwealth. Through its six colleges — Liberal Arts, Science and Mathematics, Management, Nursing and Health Sciences, Public and Community Service, and Graduate College of Education — the McCormack Graduate School of Policy Studies, and the Division of Corporate, Continuing, and Distance Education, UMass Boston offers undergraduate and graduate study to 13,400 students in more than 150 fields. For more information, visit www.umb.edu.