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Gateway to College National Network receives \$13 million to expand programs

Four foundations support promising program to help students earn college degrees

PORTLAND, Ore. – The Gateway to College National Network has received \$13 million in grants from four leading foundations to expand a program that transforms high school dropouts into college-ready students.

Now in operation in 27 colleges in 16 states, these new investments will allow Gateway to College to expand into 15 new community colleges and to make the program a model for colleges serving students who need remedial academic help.

Without a program like Gateway to College, national statistics suggest only 19 percent of dropouts will get a diploma within eight years of their expected graduation date. Through dual credit, Gateway to College graduates earn not only a high school diploma, but also have an average of 41 college credits by the time they complete the program; 90 percent indicate that they will continue their educations in college. These are remarkable statistics when you consider that the average student entered Gateway to College with a high school GPA of 1.6.

The grants announced today include \$7.28 million from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, \$3.8 million from the Foundation to Promote Open Society, a sister organization of the Open Society Institute, and nearly \$1 million each from Carnegie Corporation of New York and The Kresge Foundation.

Ensuring that more young people in America have the opportunity to complete college is crucial to our country's economic growth and stability, as the U.S. Department of Labor estimates that by 2016, half of all U.S. jobs will require college-level skills. Between 2005 and 2007, the average high school dropout earned \$18,800 a year, while the average community college graduate brought home more than \$34,500.

"As a nation, we can't afford to write off any of our young people," said Laurel Dukehart, Executive Director of Gateway to College National Network. "We have to do everything we can

to reengage them and help them earn the high school and college credentials they'll need to become successful adults.”

In addition, the Gateway to College model will be adapted to serve 18 to 26-year-olds who need to hone basic skills in reading, writing and math. The Gateway to College National Network will work with nine colleges to pilot the new program, called Project DEgree.

Gateway to College's success is due to a combination of intensive academic and non-academic supports, and can be an important model for community colleges nationwide which are struggling with sky-high remedial rates. Nationally, as many as two-thirds of all community college students enter with inadequate academic skills.

“Gateway to College offers at-risk youth an opportunity to thrive,” said Mimi Corcoran, director of the Open Society Institute's Special Fund for Poverty Alleviation. “By providing a responsive education in a flexible environment, this program helps underserved students excel at school and beyond and aims to break the cycle of poverty.”

The Obama administration has called on states and education leaders to help the United States lead the world in percentage of college graduates by 2020. Until recently, education reform efforts and national policies have focused on increasing access to college, but have done little to help students graduate with credentials that employers value. Programs like Gateway to College are taking the important step of helping students succeed by developing individual college graduation plans, teaching time management and stress management skills along with note taking and communication skills.

“With our business leaders warning us that good-paying jobs require a college degree, we have to drastically improve the number of students completing college,” said Hilary Pennington, Director of Education, Postsecondary Success & Special Initiatives at the Gates Foundation. “Scholarships and tuition assistance aren't enough. Schools must look to programs like Gateway to College to improve the services they offer and to give students the support they need to finish what they start.”

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[Gateway to College National Network](#)

Gateway to College National Network is a non-profit organization headquartered in Portland, Oregon, that offers ongoing training, technical assistance and professional development opportunities to network partners. In some cases, the National Network provides start-up grants or local fundraising assistance to help community and technical colleges implement the Gateway to College program. Gateway to College serves youth, 16 to 21 years old, who have dropped out of school or are significantly behind in credits and unlikely to graduate. The dual credit program allows students to earn a high school diploma while progressing toward a college degree or certificate and it operates as a program within a community or technical college, or as a charter school located on the college campus. Learn more at www.gatewaytocollege.org.

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Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people's health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people—especially those with the fewest resources—have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life. Based in Seattle, Washington, the foundation is led by CEO Jeff Raikes and Co-chair William H. Gates Sr., under the direction of Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett. Learn more at www.gatesfoundation.org or join the conversation at [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).
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Open Society Institute

The Open Society Institute and its sister organizations work to build vibrant and tolerant democracies whose governments are accountable to their citizens. To achieve its mission, OSI seeks to shape public policies that assure greater fairness in political, legal, and economic systems and safeguard fundamental rights. On a local level, OSI implements a range of initiatives to advance justice, education, public health, and independent media. Investor and philanthropist George Soros in 1993 created OSI as a private operating and grantmaking foundation to support his foundations in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Based in New York City, OSI has expanded the activities of the Soros foundations network to encompass the United States and more than 60 countries in Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Media contact: Amy Weil at (212) 548-0381 or aweil@sorosny.org.

Carnegie Corporation of New York

Carnegie Corporation of New York was founded by Andrew Carnegie in 1911 to do "real and permanent good in this world." In the United States, its efforts are aimed at improving educational and economic opportunity by generating systemic change in education, with particular emphasis on secondary and higher education. The foundation also focuses its U.S. efforts on creating pathways to citizenship and on increasing integration of immigrants into American society through civic education and citizenship and increasing tolerance through education about immigrant cultures.

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The Kresge Foundation

The Kresge Foundation is a \$2.8 billion private, national foundation that seeks to influence the quality of life for future generations through its support of nonprofit organizations in six fields: health, the environment, arts and culture, education, human services and community development. Fostering greater access to and success in post-secondary education for low-income, minority and first-generation college students is increasingly becoming the focus of Kresge's Education grantmaking. In 2009, Kresge awarded more than \$26 million in grants to support higher education in the United States and South Africa, with nearly half benefiting U.S. community colleges. For more information, visit www.kresge.org.

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Gateway to College National Network currently has programs in the following 27 locations:

City College of San Francisco – San Francisco, CA
Clackamas Community College – Oregon City, OR
College of The Albemarle – Elizabeth City, NC
Community College of Philadelphia – Philadelphia, PA
Des Moines Area Community College – Des Moines, IA (*will begin serving students in Fall 2010*)
Durham Technical Community College – Durham, NC (*will begin serving students in Fall 2010*)
Eastfield College – Mesquite, TX (Dallas metro area)
Essex County College – Newark, NJ
Front Range Community College – Westminster, CO (Denver metro area)
Georgia Perimeter College – Clarkston, GA (Atlanta metro area)
Holyoke Community College – Holyoke, MA
Lake Washington Technical College – Kirkland, WA
Laney College – Oakland, CA
Massasoit Community College – Brockton, MA
Metropolitan Community College – Omaha, NE (*will begin serving students in Fall 2010*)
Monroe Community College – Rochester, NY
Montgomery College – Rockville, MD
Mount Wachusett Community College – Gardner, MA
Palo Alto College – San Antonio, TX
Portland Community College – Portland, OR
Pueblo Community College – Pueblo, CO
Riverside City College – Riverside, CA
San Antonio College – San Antonio, TX
Savannah Technical College – Savannah, GA
Spartanburg Community College – Spartanburg, SC
St. Louis Community College – Ferguson, MO (St. Louis metro area)
Tri-County Technical College – Pendleton, SC

Please contact Bernadette DeVito at (503) 267-8321 or bdevito@gatewaytocollege.org if you would like information on a specific Gateway program, or wish to arrange an interview with a local Gateway program director or student.