



CMSI awarded \$745,000 for "MSI Aspiring Leaders"

Philadelphia, Pa., Dec. 14, 2016—The Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions ([CMSI](#)) announced today that it has been awarded over \$745,000 in grants from [ECMC Foundation](#) and the [Kresge Foundation](#) to host a new program called "MSI Aspiring Leaders." The program will bring together prominent Minority Serving Institutions' (MSI) leaders to engage with mid-career aspiring leaders from the education, non-profit, and business sectors in an effort to prepare the next generation of MSI presidents.

"The leaders at Minority Serving Institutions are some of the most innovative and dedicated educators in the nation—they have to be because they're at institutions that educate students who are historically underserved," said Marybeth Gasman, professor and director of CMSI. "Strengthening leadership pathways for these colleges and universities is one way to ensure institutional commitment to diversity and equity in higher education."

MSI Aspiring Leaders includes both a leadership forum and mentorship program and has been designed to help promote diversity among higher education

leadership, where nearly 60% of sitting university presidents are over the age of 60 and where many see a lack of opportunity for women and people of color. By providing professional development workshops focused on 21st-century skills as well as two years of post-forum mentorship, MSI Aspiring Leaders hopes to cultivate future MSI presidents by strengthening pathways to leadership and building connections between peers with similar aspirations and abilities.

"ECMC Foundation supports the MSI Aspiring Leaders forum and mentorship program because it will enable MSI leaders to coach, mentor, and transfer knowledge and skills to the next generation of leaders," said Sarah Kirschenbaum, Program Director, College Success at ECMC Foundation. "The program plays an important role in enabling future leaders to implement tools and techniques that improve college success among underserved students."

The forum will include discussions and workshops on topics such as the presidential nomination process, managing relationships with faculty, using data to make decisions, fiscal management, strategic fundraising, assessing student learning, and navigating the media. After the forum, mentors and their mentees will participate in a one-on-one mentoring relationship through in-person meetings, conference calls, and email over two years. CMSI will facilitate these relationships and provide benchmarks to be completed at various points throughout the two years, with the hope that these relationships may be part of a future longitudinal study to measure the influence of such mentorship on mentees' career trajectories.

"Kresge is proud to help launch this Forum because we want to see a stronger pipeline of leaders of color in higher education," said Caroline Altman Smith, Kresge's deputy director, Education Program. "Leading a university is a challenging job, and that can be especially true at Minority Serving Institutions. Given how many presidents will be retiring in the current years, and how important Minority Serving Institutions are to the nation's college completion agenda, we believed it was critical to invest in the professional development of those who will

lead MSIs in the next decade and beyond.”

The first forum is anticipated to be held over a three-day period in Nov. 2017 and will be provided without program fees to all invited participants. The nomination and application process will open soon and will be shared widely.

Future updates about the forum will be announced on [CMSI's website](#).

About the Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions

The Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions brings together researchers and practitioners from Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and Asian American, Native American, and Pacific Islander Serving Institutions. CMSI’s goals include: elevating the educational contributions of MSIs; ensuring that they are a part of national conversations; bringing awareness to the vital role MSIs play in the nation’s economic development; increasing the rigorous scholarship of MSIs; connecting MSIs’ academic and administrative leadership to promote reform initiatives; and strengthening efforts to close educational achievement gaps among disadvantaged communities. The Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions is part of the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania. For further information about CMSI, please visit www.gse.upenn.edu/cmsi.

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