

Features



Foundation Grant will help more Missourians Complete Associate Degrees

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JEFFERSON CITY – Gov. Jay Nixon today announced that Missouri is receiving a \$500,000 competitive grant to help more Missourians complete their associate degrees from community colleges. The Governor said the grant from the Lumina Foundation supports his stated goal of increasing the percentage of working-age Missourians with post-secondary degrees from 35 percent to 60 percent by 2020.

The Missouri Department of Higher Education will use the grant to create a statewide system for reverse transfer among the state’s two- and four-year institutions, both public and independent. A reverse transfer policy will enable students who have accumulated sufficient credit, in combination from those institutions, to earn an associate degree. Nearly 2,000 Missouri students are expected to be able to earn associate degrees as a result of the two-year grant.

“This will particularly help those students who transfer from a community college before earning an associate degree but who are unable to complete their degree at a four-year university, because of financial or other reasons,” Gov. Nixon said. “The reverse transfer of the credits they earned at the four-year school can help put an associate degree in their hands, strengthening their value in the job market.”

The Lumina Foundation grant supports the provisions of House Bill 1042, signed into law this past June by the Governor. The bill authorizes the Coordinating Board of Higher Education to develop a reverse transfer policy among Missouri’s public colleges and universities, and requires all two- and four-year public institutions to

create a core of at least 25 undergraduate courses by July 1, 2014, that are transferable among all public institutions.

The grant will help the state:

- *Develop statewide technology and communication infrastructure, and appropriate supporting policies;

- *Provide a venue for institutions to share information regarding both best practices and barriers to implementation; and

- *Provide guidance and direction to focus institutions on collaboration and cooperation in support of House Bill 1042.

Gov. Nixon has held several statewide higher education summits with leaders of the state's universities and colleges, both public and independent, to develop and implement strategies for increasing the number of Missourians with post-secondary degrees, and to prepare students for careers for high-demand occupations.

“Some 750,000 Missourians have college credits but no degree, and by 2018, nearly two-thirds of all jobs in the United States will require some kind of post-secondary education.” Gov. Nixon said. “Higher education is the key to Missouri's sustained economic progress and quality of life, and essential to our nation's ability to compete and win in a global economy.”

The Lumina Foundation joined with four other national foundations – The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Helios Education Foundation, Kresge Foundation and USA Funds – in the initiative called, “Credit When It's Due: Recognizing the Value of the Quality Associate Degree.” The foundations today announced a total of \$6.4 million in grants to support initiatives in Missouri and 11 other states.

‘Credit When It's Due’ will provide a way to fairly credit community colleges for their work in preparing transfer students; clarify the value of sub-baccalaureate degrees by awarding them consistently; help individuals – especially those who drop out of college before earning a baccalaureate degree – by providing them a post-secondary credential with proven currency in the labor market; and promote efforts to more clearly define the learning outcomes inherent in all associate degrees,” said Jamie Merisotis, president and CEO of the Lumina Foundation.

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