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The Pell Institute, in Partnership with NACAC, Receives Lumina Foundation for Education Grant to Study Alternative College Admissions Strategies

Washington, D.C., February 9, 2009 – The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education, in partnership with the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC), has received a \$315,000 grant from Lumina Foundation for Education to study the use of alternative and innovative approaches to college admissions and academic support.

The goal of this project is to examine the effectiveness of innovative strategies and programs that institutions are using to enhance educational opportunity and success for historically underserved student populations – specifically racial/ethnic minorities, low-income, and first-generation college students. Particular emphasis will also be placed on strategies employed to assist students in the transfer process from two-year to four-year institutions.

A series of site visits to select institutions, along with a national survey of admissions policies and practices, will assess the implementation, effects and prevalence of such alternative admissions strategies and approaches to academic support. This collaborative effort is expected to yield a handbook that may potentially serve as a valuable resource for both high school guidance counselors and college admission officers at community colleges and four-year institutions.

Dr. Chandra Taylor Smith, Director of the Pell Institute and Vice President of Research for the Council for Opportunity in Education commented: “We are excited to undertake this groundbreaking research for Lumina Foundation, along with NACAC, in an attempt to better understand and inform the public of these non-traditional, innovative, and much needed policies and programs. Alternative strategies to college admissions and support are critical to increasing postsecondary enrollments and easing the college transition for historically underrepresented students. It is our hope that this study will yield exemplary practices and recommendations that are both insightful and accessible as a framework for institutions nationwide to follow.”

The Pell Institute’s expertise on college access and opportunity for underserved populations (especially low-income and first-generation college students) coupled with NACAC’s extensive

knowledge of the college admission process, bring together a unique set of resources that will greatly inform our work on this project. “On behalf of NACAC members, we are proud to be part of this effort,” noted Joyce Smith, CEO of NACAC. “At a time when college access and success are primary policy concerns, we appreciate the opportunity to draw attention to effective practice in helping all students succeed.”

Please see below for additional information about the Pell Institute, NACAC, and Lumina Foundation.



About the Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Education

The Pell Institute conducts and disseminates policy analysis and independent research on educational issues pertaining to college access and success of students who come from low-income backgrounds, are first-generation college-goers, or have physical or learning disabilities. Our mission is: 1) to serve as an information resource to the public, educators, and policymakers through the presentation of high-quality, rigorous research and policy analysis that is user-friendly and accessible; 2) to facilitate a dialogue about higher education opportunity and educational equity; and 3) to work in partnerships at national, regional, state, and institutional levels to maximize the impact of research in this area as it relates to postsecondary education policy.

About the National Association for College Admission Counseling

The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) strives to support and advance the work of counseling and enrollment professionals as they help all students realize their full educational potential, with particular emphasis on the transition to postsecondary education. NACAC is committed to promoting high professional standards that foster ethical and social responsibility. NACAC, founded in 1937, is an organization of more than 11,000 professionals from around the world dedicated to serving students as they make choices about pursuing postsecondary education.

About Lumina Foundation for Education

Lumina Foundation for Education, an Indianapolis-based, private, independent foundation, strives to help people achieve their potential by expanding access and success in education beyond high school. Through grants for research, innovation, communication and evaluation, as well as policy education and leadership development, Lumina Foundation addresses issues that affect access and educational attainment among all students particularly underserved student groups, including adult learners. The Foundation bases its mission on the belief that postsecondary education remains one of the most beneficial investments that individuals can make in themselves and that society can make in its people. For more details on the foundation, visit www.luminafoundation.org.