The Coalition of Urban Serving Universities (USU) is a president-led network of 38 public urban research universities working to drive transformational change throughout their institutions and the communities they serve.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BY THE NUMBERS</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>38</strong> Universities</td>
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<tr>
<td>located across . . .</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>23</strong> States</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1,134,176</strong> Students</td>
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- **40%** Pell Recipients
- **52%** Racial/Ethnic Minority Students
- **20%** Adult Learners (>25)
Executive Summary

Year in Highlights

The Coalition of Urban Serving Universities has had a stellar year. Our membership has increased, our initiatives have grown, and we are being recognized for the significance of our work. The following are this year’s highlights.

Managed $9,473,000 in grant funding from six funding agencies supporting six current initiatives.

• **FUNDERS:** Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Lumina Foundation, Department of Education’s Institute for Education Science, Raikes Foundation, Kresge Foundation, and the California Wellness Foundation.

• **INITIATIVES:** Collaborative Opportunity Grant, Frontier Set, Completion Grants, Student Experience Project, Credentials Pathways Project and the Diversity Inclusion Culture and Climate Assessment Toolkit.

• **REACH:** Thirty-six members (95 percent of current membership) participated in these six initiatives.

Published [*Completion Grants Lessons from a Pilot Project*](#), an infographic report which summarized the impact of our completion grant initiative (1,213 grants distributed leading to 93% of recipients completing or retained, and over half the sites leveraging additional support).

Released [*Delivering 21st Century Skills*](#), the culmination of the work of the 21st Century Workforce Strand, outlining a framework for understanding 21st Century Skill needs, and examples of USU and other institutions moving the dial to get us there.

Garnered media visibility for USU and/or member campuses in *Forbes, Diverse, Campus Technology, Crains’ Business Cleveland, Hanford Sentinel, New England Journal of Medicine, Journal of Professional Nursing, Educause’s ROI Toolkit*, and *WAMC Falling into Place Series*.

Welcomed two new members: University of New Orleans and University of Alabama Birmingham.

Started the re-envisioning of a USU 2.0 at the Summer meeting, which we will launch in FY2019–2020.
Leadership

2018–2019 Board of Directors

- Michael Amiridis
  Chancellor, University Illinois at Chicago
- Mark Becker, Past Chair
  President, Georgia State University
- William Covino
  President, California State University, Los Angeles
- Taylor Eighmy
  President, University of Texas at San Antonio
- Sharon Gaber
  President, University of Toledo
- Dianne Harrison, Secretary
  President, California State University, Northridge
- Dorothy Horrell
  Chancellor, University of Colorado-Denver
- Mark Mone, Chancellor, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee
- Mark Pagano, Treasurer
  Chancellor, University of Washington, Tacoma
- Mary Papazian, President, San Jose State University
- Michael Rao, Vice Chair
  President, Virginia Commonwealth University
- Wayne Riley
  President, SUNY Downstate Medical Center
- Mark Rosenberg, Chair
  President, Florida International University
- Kim Wilcox
  Chancellor, University of California, Riverside
- M. Roy Wilson
  President, Wayne State University

2019–2020 Board of Directors

- Michael Amiridis
  Chancellor, University Illinois at Chicago
- Mark Becker
  President, Georgia State University
- William Covino
  President, California State University, Los Angeles
- Taylor Eighmy
  President, University of Texas at San Antonio
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- Mark Rosenberg, Past Chair
  President, Florida International University
- Kim Wilcox
  Chancellor, University of California, Riverside
- M. Roy Wilson
  President, Wayne State University
Membership

New Members

We extend a warm welcome to two new members:

- **Coalition of Urban Serving Universities**

  - **THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS**
  - **THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM**

  **New Members**

  We extend a warm welcome to two new members:

  - Michael M. Crow, President, Arizona State University
  - Joseph I. Castro, President, California State University, Fresno
  - Framroze “Fram” Virjee, President, California State University, Fullerton
  - William Covino, President, California State University, Los Angeles
  - Dianne Harrison, President, California State University, Northridge
  - Harlan M. Sands, President, Cleveland State University
  - Mark Rosenberg, President, Florida International University
  - Mark Becker, President, Georgia State University
  - Nasser H. Paydar, Chancellor, Indiana University—Purdue University Indianapolis
  - David Wilson, President, Morgan State University
  - Stephen Percy, Interim President, Portland State University
  - Nancy Cantor, Chancellor, Rutgers University—Newark
  - Mary A. Papazian, President, San Jose State University
  - Havidán Rodríguez, President, SUNY, University at Albany
  - Wayne Riley, President, SUNY, Downstate Medical Center
  - Richard M. Englert, President, Temple University
  - Michael V. Drake, President, The Ohio State University
  - Ray L. Watts, President, University of Alabama at Birmingham
  - Kim Wilcox, Chancellor, University of California, Riverside
  - Thad Seymour, Jr., Interim President, University of Central Florida
  - Neville Pinto, President, University of Cincinnati
  - Dorothy Horrell, Chancellor, University of Colorado-Denver
  - Renu Khator, President and Chancellor, University of Houston
  - Michael Amiridis, Chancellor, University Illinois at Chicago
  - Freeman Hrabowski III, President, University of Maryland, Baltimore County
  - Katherine Newman, Interim Chancellor, University of Massachusetts Boston
  - M. David Rudd, President, University of Memphis
  - Garnett S. Stokes, President, University of New Mexico
  - John Nicklow, President, University of New Orleans
  - Philip L. Dubois, Chancellor, University of North Carolina at Charlotte
  - Neal J. Smatresk, President, University of North Texas
  - Vistasp M. Karbhari, President, University of Texas at Arlington
  - Taylor Eighmy, President, University of Texas at San Antonio
  - Sharon Gaber, President, University of Toledo
  - Mark Pagano, Chancellor, University of Washington, Tacoma
  - Mark Mone, Chancellor, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee
  - Michael Rao, President, Virginia Commonwealth University
  - M. Roy Wilson, President, Wayne State University
USU has had a stellar year in 2018–2019. We are pleased to see our partnerships continue to prosper, our initiatives evolve, and our membership grow. This year, we managed $9,473,000 in grant funding from six funding agencies supporting 36 USU institutions (95 percent of membership) across six initiatives. Additionally, 29 members participated in our strands, working groups that support our four priorities - Improving the Health of a Diverse Population, 21st Century Workforce Development, Fostering Student Achievement, and Building Smart Resilient Cities.

This annual report summarizes the progress and results of our four strands and six initiatives in 2018–2019: Collaborative Opportunity Grant, Frontier Set, Diversity and Inclusion Culture and Climate Assessment Toolkit, Credentials Pathways Project, Student Experience Project and Completion Grants.
**Initiative 1. Collaborative Opportunity Grant**

**WHAT:** Our Collaborative Opportunity Grant is a seed fund from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Kresge Foundation to support university partnerships to scale innovative practices in five areas: (1) engaging faculty; (2) rethinking financial aid; (3) leveraging community assets; (4) aligning and engaging employers; and (5) strengthening K–16 systems.

**HOW:** The initiative is in its final year in which all award holders were invited to participate in a Summer Meeting at Wayne State University this past July. As part of the grant, campus teams received technical assistance to develop stronger capacity to institutionalize and advocate for their respective student success projects.

Specific deliverables included:
- Pro forma templates/examples that detail project cost distributions both at present and forecasted over time
- Pitch decks in which teams succinctly communicate the value proposition of the student success effort and associated return on investment (ROI)
- Blogs, op-eds, and report features

**WHO:** Collaborative Opportunity Grant (COG) institutions operate as a network committed to piloting student-centered institutional transformation through external partnerships. This initiative includes the universities and their external partners: community colleges, K–12 districts, employers, and community-based organizations (CBOs).

**Participating institutions include:**
- California State University, Fresno
- California State University, Los Angeles
- California State University, Northridge
- Cleveland State University
- Georgia State University
- University at Albany (SUNY)
- University of California, Riverside
- University of Cincinnati
- University of Maryland Baltimore County
- University of New Orleans
- The University of Memphis
- University of Texas at San Antonio
- University of Toledo
- University of Washington, Tacoma
- University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee
- Wayne State University

**Staff:** Shannon Looney, Adrianne Thomas
WHAT: The Frontier Set is the second component of a $4.8 million Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) Grant. The Frontier Set is a group of high-performing colleges, universities and state systems committed to increasing student success and erasing attainment gaps by transforming how they operate. USU works with three sites as part of this project. The first grant ended this year, but has been renewed until 2021.

HOW: Frontier Set members work to creating student-centered missions, data informed decision-making, collaborative environments, and commitment to goals and continual improvement. USU’s work with Frontier Set Institutions centers on achieving two major outcomes:

- Making progress on near-term Key Performance Indicators related to student success; and
- Understanding the relationship between institutional transformation and student success.

WHO:

- Florida International University
- Georgia State University
- Portland State University

Coming in FY2020: Case-studies with specific research questions pertinent to the sites’ campus climate and understanding around university transformation.

Staff: Shannon Looney, Andréa Rodriquez
Initiative 3.
Diversity and Inclusion Culture and Climate Assessment Toolkit

**WHAT:** USU/APLU and AAMC have partnered in a three-year effort to develop and pilot a Diversity and Inclusion Culture and Climate Self-Assessment Toolkit and Scorecard at four California-based institutions.

**HOW:** The sites are in the process of implementing action plans based on the results of their campus-wide assessment, with funding from the project. Some of the efforts underway include the following: This project is in the wrap up phase. Toolkit functions have been tested and finalized barring final edits in late summer 2019. An annotated bibliography and case studies to accompany toolkit are the final deliverables. The annotated bibliography was completed in early summer 2019.

**WHO:**
- California State University, Fullerton
- California State University, Northridge
- University of California, Davis
- University of California, San Francisco

**Coming in FY2020:** Case studies will be completed Fall 2019. The toolkit will be hosted on the AAMC website. Due to be published early 2020.

**Staff:** Jennifer Danek, Christel Perkins
Initiative 4.
Credential Pathways Project

WHAT A partnership with APLU, USU, and Workcred, an affiliate of ANSI focused on strengthening workforce quality by improving the credentialing system, and the University Professional and Continuing Education Association (UPCEA) to connect degrees and certifications that result in new credential pathways and thereby create more opportunities for students to earn credentials with labor-market value.

HOW: We are holding six regional, industry specific or theme centered convenings that bring together universities and credentialing organizations for workshop style discussions focused on certifications relevant to the convening theme. In FY19, we held a convening focused on health at the APLU offices and one on cyber security hosted by San Jose State University.

WHO:

- Florida International University
- George Mason University
- Morgan State University
- The Ohio State University
- University of California-Riverside
- University of Louisville
- University of Texas-Austin
- University of Memphis
- Virginia Commonwealth University
- Wayne State University

Coming in FY2020: We will hold three more convenings next year – Liberal arts hosted by Lumina Foundation in Indianapolis in October, Manufacturing and Hospitality. Using the meeting results, develop a model pilot project for integrating certificates into degree programs. If interested in participating, let USU know.

Staff: Shari Garmise, Andréa Rodriguez

- West Virginia University
- San Jose State University
- Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis
- University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee
- University of Cincinnati
- California State University-Northridge
- University of Alabama, Birmingham
- Purdue Global
- University of Maryland-College Park
- University of Colorado, Denver
- Georgia Institute of Technology
- University of North Carolina at Charlotte
Initiative 5. Completion Grants

WHAT: Ten USU members and one APLU member participate in a research practice partnership led by Temple University to evaluate and expand completion grant programs. Completion Grants are microgrants ($1,000-$2,000) distributed by universities to support students with unmet financial need but academically on track to graduate within a year who have an unpaid university balance.

HOW: In fall 2018, participating campuses distributed a total of 2,200 completion grants to their students. A research team at Temple and APLU/USU, using a random controlled trial, will be evaluating the results of these programs over the next two years. Data collection is in process.

WHO:
• Arizona State University
• Colorado State University, Denver
• Florida International University
• Florida State University
• Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis
• Portland State University
• University of Illinois, Chicago
• University of Memphis
• University of North Carolina Charlotte
• University of Rutgers-Newark
• Virginia Commonwealth University

Coming in FY2020: We will be sharing the initial results from the Fall pilot, and have a second year of data collection. The goal is to follow students over several years.

Staff: Shari Garmise
Initiative 6. Student Experience Project

**WHAT:** The Student Experience Project is a research practice partnership funded by the Raikes Foundation to investigate and address the ways in which students’ experiences of their learning environments (e.g. the messages and signals they receive on campus and in the classroom) impact success in gateway STEM particularly for students who have been historically disadvantaged or underserved. Partners include College Transition Collaborative (CTC), the Project for Education Research that Scales, EducationCounsel, and Shift Results.

**HOW:** The research practice partnership and cohort learning experience launched with six campuses in January, 2019. The USU team is working with our research partners at the CTC to collect data from institutions (through an aggregate data pull, surveys, and focus groups with students, faculty and administrators). As part of this project, USU also launched a Peer Learning Network (PLN) of twelve institutions working to explore the ways in which messages and communications delivered by faculty on the first day of class impact students’ sense of belonging, growth mindset and purpose.

**WHO:**

Research Practice Cohort
- University of New Mexico
- University of Colorado at Denver
- University of Toledo
- University of North Carolina Charlotte
- Portland State University
- Colorado State University

Peer Learning Network
- Cleveland State University
- Florida International University
- Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis
- Middle Tennessee State
- Morgan State University
- North Carolina A&T
- University of Rutgers-Newark
- University of North Texas
- University of Texas, San Antonio
- University of the Virgin Islands
- Wayne State University
- West Virginia State University

**Coming in FY2020:** For the cohort campuses, We will conduct site visits, and CTC will produce campus specific reports identifying areas where the student experience may be influencing Gateway STEM course success. Universities will pilot strategies using continuous improvement methodologies. For the PLN, we will identify areas where changes might improve the messages students receive.

**Staff:** Jennifer Danek, Lynn Brabender, Shari Garmise
**Strand 1. Improving the Health of a Diverse Population**

**CHAIR:** Wayne Riley, President, SUNY Downstate

**STAFF:** Jennifer Danek, Christel Perkins

**ACHIEVEMENTS:**
- Established a Working Group on Wellness, with an emphasis on Mental Health
- Developed a Social Determinants of Health innovation series to grow institutional capacity for innovation and creativity. The first workshop—The Systematic Thinking Process with Drew Boyd—will be held in the Fall.

**RELATED GRANTS:**
- Diversity & Inclusion Culture and Climate Self-Assessment
- Student Experience Project Collaborative Opportunity Grant

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**Strand 2. 21st Century Workforce Development**

**CHAIR:** Mark Mone, Chancellor, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

**STAFF:** Shari Garmise, Andréa Rodriguez

**ACHIEVEMENTS:**
- Held Learning Events on:
  - 21st Century Skills Framework
  - Building Credential Pathways
  - Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Work
- Released 21st Century Skills Report

**RELATED GRANTS:**
- Credentials Pathways Project
- Collaborative Opportunity Grant

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**Strand 3. Fostering Student Achievement**

**CHAIR:** Sukhwant Jhaj, Vice Provost for Academic Innovation and Student Achievement, Arizona State University

**STAFF:** Shannon Looney, Christel Perkins

**ACHIEVEMENTS:**
- Held Learning Events on:
  - Completion Grants
  - Advocating for Student Success
  - Resourcing Student Success Efforts
- Released Completion Grants: Lessons from a Pilot Project Infographic

**RELATED GRANTS:**
- Frontier Set
- Completion Grants
- Student Experience Project Collaborative Opportunity Grant

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**Strand 4. Building Smart Resilient Cities**

**LEADERSHIP TEAM:** Crist Khachikian, Professor, Civil Engineering; David McCarty-Caplan, Assistant Professor, Social Work; Sherrie Hixon, Director of Strategic Initiatives—all at California State University, Northridge

**STAFF:** Shari Garmise, Andréa Rodriguez

**ACHIEVEMENTS:**
- Held Learning Events on:
  - A Virtual Conversation with Otis Rolley on Resilient Cities
  - An Equity Framing for Resilient Cities
- Established a working group to develop an annotated bibliography on the university role in creating more resilient cities, which will be released in the fall.

**RELATED GRANTS:**
- Collaborative Opportunity Grant
What: At the USU Summer meeting, we held a three hour USU 2.0 Design Meeting. We brought everyone together to launch a design for USU 2.0. Our goal was to move beyond strands to a more cross-disciplinary, integrative approach to our work, to re-engage members in new dynamic ways, and advance our ability to innovate and have impact in a rapidly changing world.

Why is change needed: A rapidly changing environment marked by (but not reducible to) the following pressures:

• Collaborative student success approaches omnipresent – USU is less distinct
• Technology, AI and knowledge growing exponentially with significant impacts on the future of education and labor
• Strands are siloed when interdisciplinary approaches are needed
• Self Cannibalization (strand vs initiative vs APLU and other collaboratives) – 36/38 USU members active in initiatives which meet separately; 29/38 members are in the strands & about ½ active.

HIGH-LEVEL OUTCOMES:

Goals: There was a general consensus to move from strands to a grand challenge approach to structure initiative development and implementation. We identified four potential themes to frame those grand challenges:

1) Primacy of the urban relationship;
2) inequitable growth;
3) education with impact;
4) new metrics of success.

Next Steps:

• An all Presidents Call
• USU 2.0 Design Challenge Continues at the APLU Annual Meeting
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