



LAUNCH OF THE NISS ACCELERATION GRANTS PROGRAM

The National Institute for Student Success at Georgia State University launches a first-of-its-kind acceleration grant program to address barriers to student success at partner institutions.

The National Institute for Student Success (NISS) has launched an ambitious new program to catalyze improvement in student success outcomes nationally. The NISS Acceleration Grant program will award more than \$12 million in funding to universities that display a commitment to improve graduation rates and reduce equity gaps through the adoption of a suite of innovative, evidence-based programs. These programs, which deploy tools such as predictive analytics, chatbots and big data to deliver personalized supports to students, have been shown to help universities increase their graduation rates by 50% and more and to significantly reduce discrepancies in graduation rates based on the students' race, ethnicity, and income level.

Acceleration Grants will be awarded to a group of up to twelve NISS partner institutions that have completed a rigorous diagnostic analysis and have demonstrated a commitment to addressing structural and institutional barriers to the success of their students. The grants will help these institutions implement specific improvements recommended through the NISS diagnostic, allowing them to invest in student support technologies, data systems, additional staff members, and training. The grants also will fund up to three years of implementation support services and data resources provided by the NISS to facilitate meaningful change at the recipient universities.

“The NISS is thrilled to be able to accelerate the rate of change at a group of our partner universities through this new program” said Timothy Renick, Executive Director of the NISS. “Through our work at Georgia State University, we have shown that this set of innovative evidence-based and data-informed interventions can have transformative impacts on graduation rates, especially for students from minority and low-income backgrounds. With these grants, we can ensure that even less well-resourced institutions can implement these proven interventions.”

The first cohort of institutions receiving grants is a diverse group that includes Albany State University, Fort Valley State University, Kennesaw State University, Morgan State University, and North Carolina Central University. Up to seven more institutions will be selected for grants in the coming year. Support from the executive leadership team at each institution and a commitment to implement recommendations provided through the NISS diagnostic analysis are conditions of the grant award.

Philanthropy funds the Acceleration Grant program and provides critical support of the NISS's broader mission to help colleges and universities identify and resolve institutional barriers to



equity and college completion by increasing their capacity to implement proven student success systems.

Unique to the Accelerator Grant program is up to three years of implementation coaching, webinars, meetings with expert practitioners, and online resources provided by the NISS to support each awardee in implementing the new programs. The NISS coaching model is built on more than a decade of experience at Georgia State University developing and disseminating new approaches to student success that include predictive-analytics-based advising, AI-enhanced chatbots, and data-informed models for distributing financial aid, such as Panther Retention Grants. “These programs have helped Georgia State University increase its graduation rates for its bachelor’s students by 70% and its associate’s students by 300%,” according to Renick. “Black, Hispanic, and low-income students now graduate from Georgia State at or above the rate of the student body overall.”

The NISS Acceleration Grant program will advance the NISS goal of producing 500,000 additional college graduates across its partner institutions over the next decade.