



# FRONTIER SET

## WHAT IS IT?

The Frontier Set is a select group of colleges and universities, state systems, and supporting organizations committed to significantly increasing student access and success, and eliminating racial/ethnic and socioeconomic disparities in college attainment. They will work toward these ends over the next several years by:

1. **Implementing and integrating policies and practices associated with significantly increasing student success.** These include improved [planning and student advising](#), increased use of [digital learning approaches and tools](#) to address student needs, and redesigned [remedial education](#) that represents a way up rather than a way out for students.
2. **Strengthening institutions' ability to implement and sustain change.** Experience shows that several environmental factors make a real difference in whether and how change happens. These include leadership, strategic finance, technology infrastructure, data analysis, and state/federal policy.
3. **Sharing progress, insights, and lessons learned inside and outside the Frontier Set to build additional demand.** Progress within the Frontier Set will draw interest from outside the Frontier Set, which will benefit even more students. The emphasis will be on sharing practical and actionable knowledge focusing not only on the “what” of change but also the “how.”

The name “Frontier Set” was chosen to reflect participating institutions' desire to maximize productivity to benefit students and their

willingness to explore new and untested approaches toward that end. Additionally, the name acknowledges that these institutions are leaders and work within important larger networks. The Frontier Set is designed to work within and strengthen connection of these networks, rather than displace them.

## WHO IS INVOLVED?

The Frontier Set is made up of [29 colleges and universities and two state systems](#) from across the nation that represent a broad cross-section of higher education. They are supported by a group of organizations that provide mentoring and coaching, evaluation, and packaging and sharing of insights and lessons learned. (See page 3 for a full site/partner listing.)

The work of the Frontier Set is supported through grants from the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#).

## WHY DOES IT EXIST?

The nation faces an urgent need for more individuals to have some form of education after high school. Virtually all of the new post-recession jobs have required at least some post-high school education, and a leading labor economist estimates that unless current trends change, the economy could face a shortfall of up to 11 million credentialed workers by 2025. As such, there is growing pressure for colleges and universities to increase access and success and eliminate disparities in attainment amid a backdrop of resource constraints.

Through the Frontier Set, we will support our partners in accelerating their progress, documenting and demonstrating how institutions can change, focusing the attention of the field, and showing what is possible. The campuses and systems participating in the Frontier Set

were selected for their demonstrated ability to improve student outcomes through innovation, as well as for their commitment to continued improvement, transparency about their efforts, and shared learning with other institutions.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

Frontier Set campuses and systems are working simultaneously on two fronts:

**Internal:** Continue implementation and integration of student success strategies, as well as efforts to strengthen capacity for change, all toward the goals of further improvement in student outcomes and progress toward eliminating racial/ethnic and socioeconomic gaps in attainment.

**External:** Synthesize, share, and exchange progress and insights with institutions inside and outside the Frontier Set, making course corrections based on that information as necessary and appropriate.

Supporting organizations fill a number of key roles in the effort, including:

**Network Administrator** (VentureWell) – Responsible for the overall functioning and coordination of the Frontier Set members. This includes work of a connector to identify areas of mutual interest/concern, and to facilitate learning opportunities especially across institutional types and contexts that would not normally interact.

**Intermediaries** (American Association of State Colleges and Universities, Aspen Institute, Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities - Coalition of Urban Serving Universities, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) site manager, University Innovation Alliance) – Facilitate learning and

progress among constituent institutional members.

**Data Partner** (Coffey Consulting and National Student Clearinghouse) – Gathers and aggregates progress data on key performance indicators to advance both intra-institutional and cross-institutional learning.

**Policy Partners** (Florida College Access Network, Hunt Institute for Educational Leadership, Research for Action, Southern Education Foundation, and Tennessee College Access Network, supported by HCM Strategists) – Coordinates local/national groups to advocate for policies that advance members' efforts.

**Evaluator** (American Institutes for Research) – Synthesizes learning from member institutions and feeds learning back to members.

## WHAT ARE THE GOALS?

The Frontier Set is working toward three interconnected goals:

- Create new institutional delivery models focused on student success by implementing and integrating proven policies and practices and strengthening capacity for implementation.
- Improve student outcomes and continue progress toward closing attainment gaps at member campuses and systems.
- Share insights and resources with additional campuses and systems to spur demand for new models.

## WHO CAN I CONTACT?

For more information about the Frontier Set, contact:

[InstitutionalPartners@GatesFoundation.org](mailto:InstitutionalPartners@GatesFoundation.org)

## FRONTIER SET MEMBERS

Arizona State University	New Jersey City University
Clafin University (SC)	Northeast Wisconsin Technical College
CUNY-College of Staten Island (NY)	Northern Arizona University
Columbia Basin College (WA)	Portland State University (OR)
Davidson County Community College (NC)	Sam Houston State University (TX)
Delaware State University	San Jacinto College (TX)
Fayetteville State University (NC)	Santa Fe College (FL)
Florida International University	Sinclair Community College (OH)
Georgia State University	Tennessee Board of Regents
Guilford Technical Community College (NC)	University of Central Florida
Indian River State College (FL)	University of North Carolina-Greensboro
Jackson State University (MS)	University System of Georgia
Johnson C. Smith University (NC)	University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
Lorain County Community College (OH)	Wake Technical Community College (NC)
Miami-Dade College (FL)	William Rainey Harper College (IL)
Morehouse College (GA)	

## SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU)	HCM Strategists
American Institutes for Research (AIR)	Hunt Institute for Educational Leadership
Aspen Institute	National Student Clearinghouse
Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) - Coalition of Urban Serving Universities	Research for Action
Coffey Consulting	Southern Educational Foundation
Context Partners	Tennessee College Access Network
Florida College Access Network	University Innovation Alliance (UIA)
	VentureWell