



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jessica Collis Telephone: 202.547.2222

## HCM STRATEGISTS ANNOUNCES FINAL ROUND OF FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID ADVOCACY (FFAA) FUND GRANT RECIPIENTS, MARKING \$1 MILLION IN GRANTS

Achieving the Dream, Virginia Foundation for Community College Education and Minerva Consulting will receive \$70,000 in grants for their advocacy work

Washington, D.C. – Feb. 7, 2017 – HCM Strategists, one of the nation's leading advocacy and public policy firms, has announced the final recipients of the Federal Financial Aid Advocacy (FFAA) Fund, a portfolio supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Achieving the Dream, Virginia Foundation for Community College Education and Minerva Consulting together will receive \$70,000 in grants for advocacy capacity-building work, which brings the total amount of funding to support advocacy efforts surrounding federal financial aid through the FFAA Fund to \$1 million.

"We are thrilled by the diversity of projects represented by the FFAA Fund grant recipients, and these final three further enhance the realm of advocacy—and advocates—taking place around federal financial aid," said Terrell Halaska, managing partner at HCM Strategists. "It is exciting to see all these organizations engage in a larger movement to improve postsecondary education access and achievement for students."

The three final FFAA Fund grant recipients, approved projects and individual grant amounts are:

- Achieving the Dream (\$30,000): Achieving the Dream (ATD) is a national reform
  network dedicated to community college student success and completion, with a
  primary focus helping low-income students and students of color complete their
  education and obtain market-valued credentials. ATD will use the grant to identify best
  strategies and tactics to amplify its voice and impact on behalf of four million
  community college students.
- Virginia Foundation for Community College Education (\$20,000): The Virginia
   Foundation for Community College Education grant will support the work of the
   organization's Great Expectations Education Program for Foster Youth. Great
   Expectations will connect with Virginia students who have experienced foster care and
   increase their awareness of state and federal financial aid available for postsecondary

education. Activities include focus groups on financial aid in both urban and rural areas, panel discussions, the development of financial aid materials, and training student leaders and peer advocates.

 Minerva Consulting (\$20,000): For its FFAA Fund project, Minerva will design and conduct a half-day social media seminar to aid other FFAA Fund grantees in maximizing their use of social media in their advocacy work, as well as the development of a best practices toolkit to be shared with FFAA Fund applicants and other interested advocates.

These recipients join eight other FFAA Fund recipients selected in 2016: Campaign for College Opportunity, National College Access Network, Thurgood Marshall College Fund, Generation Progress, The Institute for College Access & Success, Institute for Higher Education Policy, National Skills Coalition and Young Invincibles.

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## **About HCM Strategists**

HCM Strategists is a public policy and advocacy consulting firm focused on advancing effective solutions in health and education. HCM utilizes a network of relationships at the state and federal level to work collaboratively with nonprofits, foundations and corporations.

- We ALIGN by connecting a problem to a policy and to practice.
- We ADVOCATE by capturing attention and strengthening public will to action.
- We ADVANCE by pursuing change through finding common ground, proposing specific solutions and forging strong alliances.

Terrell Halaska, Kristin Conklin and Michael Manganiello joined forces because they share a vision of and passion for change. Achieving policy change takes a combination of high-level government experience, an understanding of people's struggles, a network of strong relationships, a keen analytical ability, and the skills to find fresh, creative approaches to addressing issues. When you can enlighten all participants by capturing their attention, finding common ground, and building strong alliances, success is within reach. The result is change that improves our communities and enhances quality of life.