

Fresno selected for program to boost postsecondary education

Published on 02/26/2015 - 10:00 am

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A national foundation dedicated to increasing the number of Americans with high-quality postsecondary credentials has named Fresno as one of its final partner communities.

The relationship will allow the Lumina Foundation to work closely with Fresno Compact and its cradle-to-career initiative, Fresno Area Strive.

"We are honored and excited for Fresno to become part of this national network," said Dr. Tom Crow, executive director of Fresno Compact. "Lumina's recognition of work already underway in Fresno to improve educational outcomes is a testament to the commitment of cooperation that has been made by all facets of the Fresno metropolitan area."

Fresno Compact is comprised of more than 30 members from the local business community. The organization focuses on community-wide efforts to prepare Fresno students for the increasing demands of society and the workplace.

Other local groups with an interest in the partnership include Central Valley Higher Education Consortium, California State University, Fresno Pacific University, State Center Community College District and regional school districts.

The partnership will focus on connecting the work of local educational institutions and community organizations to improve postsecondary readiness and access, increase retention at higher education institutions and boost certificate and degree completion rates over the next two years.

The Lumina Foundation is an independent, private organization focusing on community-based attainment of educational goals. Nationally, the group has set a goal to increase the percentage of Americans with high-quality degrees by 2025. Progress towards the goal is measured by credentials earned after high school, including certificates, associate's and bachelor's degrees held by local residents.

Fresno is one of 20 cities selected for the final cohort and will work with Lumina through 2016. Other finalists include Atlanta, Ga., Miami, Fla., Springfield, Mo., St. Luis, Mo. and Tyler, Texas.

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