



Press Release

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LARGEST MINORITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM WELCOMES TENTH ANNIVERSARY CLASS Gates-Funded Scholarship Program Has High Graduation Rates

UNCF – the United Negro College Fund – today announced that the nation’s largest and most successful minority scholarship program – the Gates Millennium Scholars Program (GMS) – has awarded good-through-graduation college scholarships to 1,000 students from low-income families. The scholarships can be used at the colleges or universities of their recipients’ choice. The 5,000 current Gates Scholars attend over 900 schools, including Ivy League colleges, flagship state universities and UNCF member historically black colleges (HBCUs).

Gates Millennium Scholars recipients have an average graduation rate of almost 80 percent, higher than the graduation rate for all college students, and higher than the rate for high-income students.

“President Obama has committed the nation to having the highest college education rate in the world by 2020,” said UNCF president and CEO Michael L. Lomax, Ph.D. “The success of UNCF’s Gates Millennium Scholars Program makes it a blueprint for meeting that challenge, by ensuring that minority students, who will soon make up a majority of our college-age population and workforce, get the college education they are obviously capable of earning. UNCF is grateful to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the program’s funder, for its investment in minority students and the country’s future.”

“The Gates Millennium Scholars Program is educating the nation’s next generation of leaders,” said Margot Tyler, senior program officer at the Gates Foundation. “It is a national imperative to double the number of students graduating from American colleges. The GMS model, providing students with both financial assistance and academic and leadership mentoring and support, has proven to be an effective way to meet that challenge.”

The 1,000 students, who were notified April 15 that they had been selected Gates Millennium Scholars, are from 48 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam and are enrolling for the fall semester in 346 colleges and universities.

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UNCF—the United Negro College Fund—administers the Gates Millennium Scholars Program. UNCF has partnered with the American Indian Graduate Center Scholars (AIGCS), the Hispanic Scholarship Fund (HSF) and the Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund (APIASF) to serve Gates Millennium Scholars in all fifty states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.