

# DIGITAL FELLOWS PROGRAM

## MEDIA ADVISORY

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

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*January 24, 2017 - North Palm Beach, FL.* Dr. Laura Niesen de Abruna, President of the Association of Chief Academic Officers (ACAO) and Provost of York College of Pennsylvania, announced today the launch an 18-month “ACAO Digital Fellows” program. Supported by a \$1.04 million dollar grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the ACAO Digital Fellows Program is designed to provide provosts and other chief academic officers (CAOs) with critical information, effective resources, and tested strategies to help their CAOs and their faculty understand and adopt high quality digital courseware.

The goal of this project is to increase retention and persistence to graduation among undergraduates, especially those who are first generation, low income, or minority students. More specifically, the project will provide a unique professional development opportunity for 30 provosts/CAOs (“ACAO Digital Fellows”) that focuses on the adoption and deployment of digital learning resources intended to improve student learning, degree completion, and institutional outcomes. The ACAO project will also serve the larger CAO community by sharing and promoting resources and assets developed for and by the 30 ACAO fellows. Additionally, ACAO and the Gates Foundation expect the ACAO initiative to scale to other institutions as part of broader efforts to improve undergraduate teaching and the use of effective digital resources at campuses across the country.

“Change is accelerating across all of American higher education as the nation’s two- and four-year colleges and universities adapt to new student populations, new financial realities, and new digital pedagogical resources and strategies which can improve student learning and institutional outcomes,” says Laura Niesen de Abruna, who is the principle investigator of the grant for ACAO. “Much of the responsibility for managing change on campus resides with the provost or chief academic officer, who plays a key role in fostering and supporting the efforts of faculty to leverage

these resources. With support from the Gates Foundation, ACAO will provide a unique professional development opportunity for 30 CAOs, focused on proven digital pedagogical resources and strategies intended to enrich student learning, increase degree completion rates, and improve both student and institutional outcomes.”

ACAO has appointed Dr. Kenneth C. Green, founding director of The Campus Computing Project, to serve as the director of the Digital Fellows Program. The recipient of the first EDUCAUSE Leadership Award for Public Policy and Practice, Dr. Green brings more than 25 years’ experience in educational technology research, planning, and policy to the new ACAO project. Management services will be provided by ACAO’s fiscal partner, AMC Source, under the leadership of Ms. Debbie Nolan and Ms. Theresa Gibbon.

### **ABOUT ACAO**

Chartered in 2013, the vision of the ACAO is to provide professional development and networking opportunities to all individuals who are responsible for the leadership of academic affairs in institutions of higher education. The ACAO provides a network of support for CAOs through its e-lists, professional resources, and annual conference held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the American Council on Education (ACE).

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