



# **Lumina Foundation Awards Grant to MHEC for Regional “Tuning” Project**

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Minneapolis – The Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) has received a \$415,000, two-year grant from Lumina Foundation to work with college and university faculty in Illinois, Indiana, and Missouri to “tune” the academic disciplines of psychology and marketing. Through the “Tuning” process, faculty members create shared understandings of the knowledge and transferable skills students in specific academic disciplines and professional fields must demonstrate upon completing their degrees. The process helps to clarify to students, parents, and policymakers what degree holders know, understand, and are able to do.

“As a regional interstate compact organization working collaboratively to advance higher education through cooperation and resource sharing, MHEC is uniquely positioned to lead a project that tunes academic disciplines across state lines,” said Larry Isaak, MHEC president.

The three project states will build upon lessons learned from Lumina Foundation’s earlier state-level pilot work in Indiana, Minnesota, and Utah. The three states were selected based on geographic proximity and to capture the multi-state metropolitan areas of Chicago and St. Louis. Residents of bi-state or tri-state metropolitan areas often seek educational, residential, and work opportunities without regard to political or state boundaries, which heightens the need for both transparency and common understanding of learning outcomes across state lines.

“This initiative builds on previous work done by MHEC to facilitate dialogue among higher education stakeholders to improve higher education policy and practice,” added Isaak. “We are pleased that Lumina Foundation recognizes the role that MHEC can play in engaging faculty in the critical process of creating clear, transparent pathways to

degree completion and preparing our Midwestern graduates for citizenship and the workforce.”

The disciplines of psychology and marketing were chosen based on the number of degrees produced in these fields and the diversity of career paths pursued by graduates. Students also pursue credentials in these fields at the 2-year, 4-year, and graduate levels of education. Neither psychology nor marketing have been the focus of any previous or current Tuning efforts supported by Lumina Foundation.

Faculty teams representative of 2-year public and 4-year public and private non-profit institutions will be formed for the initiative—one in each academic discipline. Another Lumina Foundation grantee—the Institute for Evidence-Based Change (IEBC)—will provide technical and evaluation assistance to MHEC throughout the project.

The MHEC regional Tuning project will launch in early November with a convening of all project participants. Disciplinary teams will meet regularly through April 2013. During the summer of 2012 project staff and consultants will assist faculty teams by conducting stakeholder assessments to map subject areas to employment, graduate study, and other post-baccalaureate paths. A conference style meeting will be held in the spring of 2013 that will conclude the formal work of the teams and allow for presentations of both process and outcomes to a broader audience of interested parties.

*About the Midwestern Higher Education Compact:* The Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) is one of four statutorily-created regional higher education interstate compacts. Since its founding in 1991, MHEC has contributed to the vitality of the Midwest by enhancing member states’ ability to maximize higher education opportunity and outcomes through collaboration and resource sharing. MHEC serves the states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin ([www.mhec.org](http://www.mhec.org)).

*About Lumina Foundation:* Lumina Foundation is an Indianapolis-based private foundation dedicated to expanding access to and success in education beyond high school ([www.luminafoundation.org](http://www.luminafoundation.org)).

*About the Institute for Evidence-Based Change:* The Institute for Evidence-Based Change (IEBC) is a California-based nonprofit focused on improving educational practice ([www.iebcnow.org](http://www.iebcnow.org)).