WASHINGTON, DC — The Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) has received a $100,000 grant from the UPS Foundation in support of CIC’s First Opportunity Partners Grant Program, which funds diversity programs at private colleges and universities developed through CIC State Councils. CIC this month selected three State Councils’ proposals for funding through the grant to enhance educational and career opportunities through access and success for underserved and underrepresented students.

Eduardo Martinez, president of the UPS Foundation and chief diversity and inclusion officer at UPS, said “The UPS Foundation is honored to support the Council of Independent College’s efforts to support diversity programs at private colleges and universities. Our goal is to fund powerful programs that make a lasting difference to the global community.”

The three CIC State Councils selected for funding during the 2018–2019 academic year serve 78 private colleges and universities in Illinois, Minnesota, and North Carolina. In Illinois, Associated College of Illinois (ACI) will launch a “Skills for Work, Skills for Life” boot camp that will provide intensive training to underserved students to help with their campus to career transition. The camp will include workshops on resume writing, interviewing, financial literacy, and technology.

Minnesota Private College Fund (MPCF) will expand a program to retain and graduate
African-American men. Following a proven model that includes intensive mentoring, high expectations, same-race peers, civic and campus engagement opportunities, and employment training, the MPCF program’s first cohort resulted in a 100 percent four-year graduation rate. Overall, Minnesota private colleges and universities report a four-year completion rate of African-American male students of 46 percent, a significantly higher rate than that of the University of Minnesota (26 percent) and Minnesota State Universities (9 percent). The CIC grant will allow MPCF to double the size of the program to serve 60–70 students.

**North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities (NCICU)** will increase the number of community college students who transfer and persist to a baccalaureate degree at North Carolina independent colleges and universities through a reverse transfer initiative that will assess past coursework and award associate degrees to students who transferred to four year institutions before completion of their two-year degree. The project goals are based on recent research that reported that reverse transfer is an effective retention tool for four-year institutions, especially for nontraditional students who take part-time courses over time and need encouragement to continue. The project will result in an online portal that will verify data from NCICU, North Carolina community colleges, and National Student Clearinghouse.

“The enduring commitment of the UPS Foundation to state associations that are members of CIC and the opportunities that the Foundation’s support provides to private colleges and universities is most gratifying,” said Richard Ekman, president of CIC. “The Foundation’s investment in the mission and value of a liberal arts education is unprecedented in its scope and impact and in its encouragement of private giving by others. Thanks to the UPS Foundation, CIC’s First Opportunity Partners Program helps students persist and succeed in college and beyond.”

Since its inception in 2005, the CIC First Opportunity Partners Program has distributed $1,424,339 to fund 45 state-based grant projects. Reported matching funds raised by the State Councils during the same period equaled $1,839,594, for total direct financial support of diversity programs of $3,263,933.
The Council of Independent Colleges is an association of 768 nonprofit independent colleges and universities and higher education affiliates and organizations that has worked since 1956 to support college and university leadership, advance institutional excellence, and enhance public understanding of private higher education’s contributions to society. CIC is the major national organization that focuses on providing services to leaders of independent colleges and universities as well as conferences, seminars, and other programs that help institutions improve educational quality, administrative and financial performance, and institutional visibility. CIC conducts the largest annual conference of college and university presidents and of chief academic officers. CIC also provides support to state associations that organize programs and generate contributions for their member colleges and universities. The Council is headquartered at One Dupont Circle in Washington, DC.

About The UPS Foundation
Established in 1951 and based in Atlanta, Georgia, the UPS Foundation identifies areas where its backing clearly impacts social issues. The UPS Foundation has identified the following focus areas for giving: volunteerism, diversity, community safety, and the environment. In 2016, UPS and its employees, active and retired, invested more than $116.6 million in charitable giving around the world. The UPS Foundation can be found on the web at UPS.com/foundation.