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UNCF CONGRATULATES THE CLASS OF 2016 GATES MILLENNIUM SCHOLARS

\$1.6 Billion Flagship Program Announces Final Class of 1,000 Scholarship Recipients

WASHINGTON (May 2, 2016)—UNCF’s high-impact scholarship initiative, the Gates Millennium Scholars (GMS) Program, today announced its final class of high school recipients. Each of the 1,000 students, who must demonstrate financial need, will be awarded a scholarship that can be used to pursue a degree in any undergraduate major and selected graduate programs at accredited colleges or universities of his or her choosing.

The GMS program is known for its recipients’ high graduation rates across the nation’s top institutions: a six-year graduation rate in excess of 90 percent, more than 50 percent higher than the national graduation rate for students of color and comparable to the success rate of students from much more prosperous families. GMS provides recipients with leadership development opportunities, mentoring, academic and social support as well as financial support. In addition, continuing Gates Millennium Scholars can request a fellowship for a graduate degree program in one of the following academic disciplines: computer science, education, engineering, library science, mathematics, public health or science.

The class of 2016, selected from a pool of 53,000 applicants, will be the final cohort of Gates Millennium Scholars, as the program funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation meets its goal of selecting 20,000 students from low-income backgrounds. UNCF will administer the GMS Program through its conclusion in 2028-29.

“The dividends from the foundation’s investment in the Gates Millennium Scholars Program have reached far beyond the students who have participated directly,” said UNCF President and CEO Michael L. Lomax, Ph.D. “It has strengthened UNCF’s capacity to create the next generation of leaders and allowed us to leverage other substantial gifts that will also positively impact deserving students of color from low-income backgrounds. Further, by changing deeply rooted perceptions about the educational potential of these young women and men—not just Gates Millennium Scholars, but all high-achieving students of color—the GMS program has greatly enhanced the value society places on them, not only as students, but as professionals, citizens and leaders. We heartily welcome the class of 2016 into the GMS family.”

Established in 1999 with the goal of developing *Leaders for America's Future*™, the GMS program is funded by a \$1.6 billion grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, making it the largest single gift to a scholarship provider. Each year, the program enables more than 5,000 students who must be African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian American/Pacific Islander or Hispanic American to attend and graduate from more than 1,100 of the most selective private and public schools in the country. These include Ivy League colleges, flagship state universities, UNCF-member historically black colleges and universities and other minority-serving institutions.

This year's cohort represents 45 states, the District of Columbia and five U.S. territories. Gates Millennium Scholars have been chosen for the Marshall Scholars, Rhodes Scholars, Fulbright Scholars, Gates Cambridge Scholars and White House Fellows programs.

"We are excited to welcome the class of 2016 Gates Millennium Scholars," said Larry Griffith, senior vice president of programs and student services for UNCF. "Their GMS program peers have already demonstrated that students from these backgrounds are rich in talent and that they excel at the highest levels in any of the nation's colleges and universities they choose to attend. I am confident that this cohort of extraordinary students will add to the depth and breadth of the GMS program and continue to carry out a long-standing legacy of academic excellence. By every measure, GMS has been a resounding success, changing the lives of the students whose education it has made possible. We look forward to the positive impact the program will have on the lives of these new Gates Millennium Scholars and, in turn, how they will enhance the communities of their choice."

UNCF annually awards more than \$100 million via 10,000 scholarships each year. Through GMS, UNCF has partnered with the American Indian Graduate Center Scholars, the Hispanic Scholarship Fund and the Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund to select and provide service to Gates Millennium Scholars.

[Click here](#) to view the Class of 2016 Gates Millennium Scholars listed by last name.

[Click here](#) to view the Class of 2016 Gates Millennium Scholars listed by home state/U.S. territory.

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About GMS

The Gates Millennium Scholars (GMS) Program, funded by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, was established in 1999 to provide outstanding low-income African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian Pacific Islander American, and Hispanic American students with an opportunity to complete an undergraduate college education in any discipline they choose. Continuing Gates Scholars may request funding for a graduate degree program in one of the following discipline areas: computer science, education, engineering, library science, mathematics, public health or science. The goal of GMS is to promote academic excellence by providing thousands of outstanding students, who have significant financial need, the opportunity to reach their full potential. Learn more at www.gmsp.org.

About UNCF

UNCF (United Negro College Fund) is the nation's largest and most effective minority education organization. To serve youth, the community and the nation, UNCF supports students' education and development through scholarships and other programs, strengthens its 37 member colleges and universities, and advocates for the importance of minority education and college readiness. UNCF institutions and other historically black colleges and universities are highly effective, awarding nearly 20 percent of African American baccalaureate degrees. UNCF awards more than \$100 million in scholarships annually and administers more than 400 programs, including scholarship, internship and fellowship, mentoring, summer enrichment, and curriculum and faculty development programs. Today, UNCF supports more than 60,000 students at over 1,100 colleges and universities. Its logo features the UNCF torch of leadership in education and its widely recognized trademark, A mind is a terrible thing to waste®. Learn more at [UNCF.org](https://www.unce.org). For continuous news and updates, follow UNCF on Twitter, at [@UNCF](https://twitter.com/UNCF).