



BELIEVING IN OUR YOUTH

OUR MISSION

CREED is a non-profit, independent educational consulting organization committed to empowering our youth and their families. We help them develop skills and knowledge required to navigate the complex decisions associated with enrolling, attending, and participating fully in a college or university of their choice. CREED motivates our youth through their selection process and matriculation, and continues to provide support for them during their undergraduate years.

OUR VISION

A successful CREED participant will enjoy their college years and emerge as a well rounded scholar and graduate. Our youth will be prepared to join the work force, lead their communities and motivate other young people.

MISSOURI, OKLAHOMA, COLGATE, UCLA, HARVARD, NEW PALTZ, CREED, CREED, CREED.



Now, more than ever before, the reason that we began our work with young people and their collegiate aspirations is underscored by the activism on our college campuses. Those named above are but a few important examples of how college preparation is important to our youth. Not only do they have to be academically and financially prepared, but we know that they have to have a solid sense of self and commitment to make it on campuses where there remains work to do for them to feel welcomed and included.

Research shows that today's college students have some of the same obstacles that were present decades ago. They are often the only person in their classrooms that look like them, they bring experiences that may not be common to those attempting to educate them, and they are faced with the doubts of others about their place in higher education.

CREED's stakeholders, like yourself, are more in tune to higher education's challenges. We know that the focus of much of the media is on racial and ethnic difference. However, we realize that those factors are compounded by socio-economic status, first generation background, placement in urban or rural environments, gender, sexuality, religion and the myriad of other intersections present in today's society.

Our work to support our youth is more important than it has ever been. We need to help keep our young people safe and provide them with college preparation tools to navigate the complications present on these campuses. Your support has helped us ready over 500 young people and their families since our conception in 2010.

Continue believing in our youth with us;

**Terrence Mitchell, Executive Director
CREED College Readiness Program**

Leadership Prepared to Support Our Youth

The CREED COLLEGE READINESS PROGRAM, was founded on February 1, 2010 by spouses Terrence Mitchell and Dr. Rhonda Matthews, who together contribute over 25 years of higher education experience to the guidance of the nonprofit. During those years, they have gained knowledge about diversity, sociology, admissions, financial aid, housing, experiential learning, grant management, residence life and student programs. These acquired skills contribute to the modest success of their work with CREED.

Their work is influenced by the higher education jobs they held as new professionals at the Univ. of Okla., and the retention and recruitment teams that trained them. At San Francisco State University, they gained an enhanced appreciation for diverse students and experiences they brought with them to campus.

Mitchell and Matthews spent 12 years that living in Meadville PA and the professional roles they played at Allegheny College and Edinboro University, help them lead CREED.

Through those years, each gained knowledge about college admissions processes which are used to CREED students' advantage.

CREED has worked with hundreds of young people and their families over the years and we are passionate about the success of our youth. Our incredible CREED Board of Directors, our Advisory Board, and the young professionals in our Associates Program join us in this work.

Mitchell currently serves as Exec. Director, Interim Chair, and Treasurer for CREED and is looking forward to the summer retreat when new officers and board members will be selected. Ms. C. Austin Seymore remains our long serving secretary, Ms. K. King has joined us as a full board member, and Dr. Matthews and Mr. F. Mitchell are serving as interim board members. National Advisory Board members Bermudez, Elkins-Baker, Gustin, Hill Wooten, and Ramsey-Ellington remain supportive of our work and new Associate Board (recent grads) will be solicited this summer.

Pilot Mini-Grant Undergraduate Program Emerges as a CREED Priority for 2016

When we started, CREED's work primarily focused on high school students. However, as our students matriculated to their chosen colleges, we piloted an undergraduate support program for first time freshmen. We are pleased to report that the mini-grant program has emerged as one of our most popular initiatives.

Yearly, we have provided the mini-grants to our college students and they have sent us letters of gratitude and appeals that we continue the program for those that follow them. The



Mini-grants range from \$50—\$100 and can be used by the students to cover travel, personal or emergency needs at their discretion.

One student lost their glasses, another purchased a Megabus ticket to cure homesickness, while a third used theirs to update their school supplies. Our work is not about replacing the efforts of their families or colleges. We use the generosity of our small group of donors to help. One student at a time, one need at a time, till they graduate. Thanks for your support!

CREED's 2015-16

FOCUS Statement

We strive to provide services to our young people, their families and community stakeholders that met their projected college planning needs.

Since our inception, we have learned 3 things that ground our work.

- Our young people have the drive, potential, and family support that we anticipated.
- Our services are both necessary and appreciated by the families we support.
- Our programs will be tailored to meet specific needs expressed by our constituency.

This knowledge focused our efforts on the following initiatives.

CREED's **reading** initiative distributes books to elementary, middle school, high school, and College students in Buffalo, Erie, Upstate NY and Meadville PA. We know a love of reading will foster interest in continuing education.

CREED's **readiness** workshops focus on churches and established community organizations. Parents and other stakeholders are guided through strategies to increase the success of their students in the college admissions and financial aid processes.

CREED's **retention** efforts with our undergrads is accomplished through the popular mini-grant program. We hope to reach 100 college students with \$50—\$100 for travel or emergencies in 2016.

CREED's **research**, a new priority, will compile and analyze the data collected about our work, and provide us with compelling information to share with local leaders. We will build reports that we will use to lobby for education initiatives that will contribute to improving access for all students.