



## MESSAGE FROM DR. KAREN A. STOUT TO ATD NETWORK

MARCH 20, 2020

*“Always remember that hindsight is the best insight to foresight.”*

For me, this Irish proverb sets the context for the uncertainty of the times.

Over the past two weeks, Achieving the Dream has been carefully monitoring and responding to the COVID-19 crisis, first by focusing on the health and wellness of our employees and preparing to move into a fully remote working status on March 16, and now moving our focus to supporting the colleges and students in our Achieving the Dream network and even beyond.

The COVID-19 crisis is touching all of us in deeply personal and professional ways and testing our personal and organizational resiliency. Many of us have employees and students who are ill with the virus. Supporting their recovery becomes an urgent priority. I follow many of our network colleges and their presidents on social media and, I’ve talked to many of those leaders over the past few days. I am in awe of what they are doing. Some colleges are now a venue for COVID-19 testing. Many are introducing new policies around grading and academic progression. Most of you are transitioning, without a full infrastructure, into online learning. You are making the heartbreaking decisions to cancel graduation. You are working to identify and fill the basic needs of your most vulnerable students and staff. You are identifying and leveraging the hidden and unique skill sets of employees across your organizations to create the safety net and supports that your students and employees need in this moment. You are shining examples of creativity, resiliency, and leadership.

During these uncertain times, Achieving the Dream is centering our network colleges and your students in the design of our COVID-19 response. Outlined below are actions we are taking immediately.

### **Rapid-Response Options**

ATD will provide virtual consultations free of charge for any college active in the ATD Network that is in need of assistance in addressing the immediate challenges ahead in ensuring your students not only have access to course work online, but also the necessary advising and personal supports to help them succeed.

- For a 45-minute consultation for **student services leaders in need of assistance to address the challenges of providing virtual student services and supports**, schedule using this [link](#).
- For a 45-minute consultation for **faculty, or instructional designers in need of assistance to make a quick transition to an online environment**, schedule using this [link](#).

### **For our Gateway to College Network**

More than 150 people registered for an impromptu webinar on Wednesday for instructors who will be teaching online for the first time as a result of campus closures. Look for additional supports in the coming weeks.

### **For our Network Presidents**

On behalf of Achieving the Dream, I am a member of the Washington Higher Education Secretariat. In a call today, we heard from our colleagues at ACE about work underway in Congress on an omnibus request for higher education recovery. It is important, if you have direct contacts with your legislators, to share examples of how COVID-19 is influencing your colleges including issues around cash flow and student aid needs. I am also always accessible. Please email me directly at [kstout@achievingthedream.org](mailto:kstout@achievingthedream.org). Self-care is more important than ever for our families and organizations. I am also interested in the organizational and leadership challenges you are facing.

### **All Coaching Supports**

We are suspending all in-person coaching visits through the end of May and we will be reaching out to colleges to understand your needs so that we can deploy virtual coaching, if appropriate, and/or work with you to postpone coaching until you believe your college can fully absorb the supports we offer. We are building on the virtual coaching we do now for some of you to develop virtual coaching protocols and to develop professional development offering for our coaches to be at their best in supporting you through technology. Look for more information about coaching shortly.

### **Learning Events**

We have postponed the second annual ATD Teaching & Learning Summit (set for late April in St. Louis) and are transitioning our supports to a series of webinars that will kick-off next week. They are designed to give faculty a place to learn from one another about how to support student success in a fully remote teaching and learning environment. You will receive more information on the webinar options shortly.

We are moving the Pathways Collaborative Coaching training program, set for early April in Indianapolis, to an online program that we will launch in the early fall.

We are considering a different timetable and new methodologies for on-boarding colleges in our new 2020 cohort. This includes the potential postponement of our June Kickoff Institute. We will keep our new cohort colleges informed as we make this decision.

### **Grant and Reporting Deadlines**

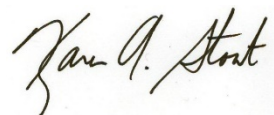
We are moving back important deadlines for your annual reports and work plans. We will be back in touch with you about both deadlines.

We have moved the application deadline for the USC/ATD Racial Equity Leadership Academy to **April 28** and are working with USC on a plan to move forward the academy, in different ways, if we are unable to kick-off in a face-to-face session in July.

### **Closing Thoughts**

Please know that we are continuing to work hard to continue to provide you with the relevant information and supports you need. We do not want to overwhelm you with information. We do want to be here for you as we always have been. I plan to write to the Network on a regular basis and I hope you will share with us as well.

On behalf of the entire Achieving the Dream team, we hope you and your families, your students, and your college communities remain safe and healthy.



**Dr. Karen A. Stout**  
President & CEO