

# NEWS RELEASE

June 6, 2007

## ARKANSAS AND MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGES JOIN NATIONAL INITIATIVE TO HELP COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS SUCCEED

***Four colleges in each state join Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count; receive \$450,000 grants to plan, launch and implement student success strategies***

Chapel Hill, N.C. – Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count, a national initiative to help more community college students succeed, today announced the names of eight colleges joining the initiative in Arkansas and Massachusetts. The colleges are part of the initiative’s latest expansion, which has added 24 colleges in eight states, bringing the total number of participating institutions to 82 colleges in 15 states.

Achieving the Dream provides participating colleges with support to implement strategies designed to help more students — particularly students of color and low-income students — earn degrees, complete certificates or transfer to other institutions to continue their studies. Achieving the Dream emphasizes building a culture of evidence, in which colleges use data to identify effective practices, improve student success rates and close achievement gaps.

“Community colleges have such an important and challenging mission,” said Martha D. Lamkin, president and CEO of Lumina Foundation for Education, which provided the initial funding for Achieving the Dream. “With almost half of all American undergraduates enrolled in community colleges, they provide educational opportunity to many students from a broad range of backgrounds with a variety of educational goals, and it is critical that we help more of those students achieve their goals and acquire the 21st-century skills they need.”

“We are so pleased to welcome these new institutions into Achieving the Dream,” said Carol Lincoln, senior program director at MDC, Inc., the organization that serves as the initiative’s managing partner. “Each has demonstrated a real desire to focus on student success and a commitment to using data to drive important decision making and continuous improvement efforts,” continued Lincoln, the initiative’s national director.

The eight colleges, selected through a request-for-proposal process in each state, receive \$50,000 grants from Lumina Foundation to plan and launch Achieving the Dream on their campuses this year, and will then become eligible for implementation grants worth up to \$400,000 over four years. The implementation grants are being provided in Arkansas by The Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, and in Massachusetts by The Lloyd G. Balfour Foundation, The Boston Foundation, TERI, and The Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation.

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The colleges selected are as follows:

### Arkansas

National Park Community College, Hot Springs  
Ouachita Technical College, Malvern  
Phillips Community College, Helena  
Pulaski Technical College, North Little Rock

### Massachusetts

Bunker Hill Community College, Boston  
Northern Essex Community College, Lawrence  
Roxbury Community College, Roxbury  
Springfield Technical Community College, Springfield

Michigan also has conducted a request-for-proposals as part of the recent expansion and will name its participating colleges later this month.

Each college works closely with an Achieving the Dream coach, many of whom are former college presidents, and a data facilitator who provides hands-on help with the use of data. More about Achieving the Dream, including a full list of participants, can be found online at [www.achievingthedream.org](http://www.achievingthedream.org).

In addition to efforts at participating colleges, the initiative supports research into effective practices at community colleges, conducts outreach to communities, businesses and the public, and advocates for public policy supportive of community college students' success. For each of the 15 states where Achieving the Dream is active, one organization serves as the lead organization for policy efforts. In Arkansas, the lead policy organization will be the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. In Massachusetts, it will be the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education. For the four other new states joining the initiative this year, the University of Hawaii Community College System will lead policy efforts in Hawaii, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education will serve that function for Oklahoma, the South Carolina Technical College System will do so in South Carolina, and in Michigan, the Michigan Community College Association will serve as the policy lead.

Achieving the Dream was launched in 2004 with start-up funding from Lumina Foundation for Education, which continues to fund aspects of the initiative. Seventeen additional funders have since joined the initiative, bringing additional institutions and states into Achieving the Dream.

Eight national partner organizations work with Lumina to guide the initiative and provide technical and other support to the colleges and states. They are: the American Association of Community Colleges; the Community College Leadership Program at the University of Texas-Austin; the Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University; Institute for Higher Education at the University of Florida; Jobs for the Future; MDC; MDRC; and Public Agenda.

### **About Achieving the Dream**

Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count is a national initiative to help more community college students — particularly students of color and low-income students — succeed. The initiative works on multiple fronts — including efforts at community colleges and in research, public engagement and public policy — and emphasizes the use of data to drive change.

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**About Lumina Foundation**

Lumina Foundation for Education, an Indianapolis-based, private, independent foundation, strives to help people achieve their potential by expanding access and success in education beyond high school. Through grants for research, innovation, communication, and evaluation, as well as policy education and leadership development, Lumina Foundation addresses issues that affect access and educational attainment among all students, particularly underserved student groups, including adult learners. The Foundation bases its mission on the belief that postsecondary education remains one of the most beneficial investments that individuals can make in themselves and that society can make in its people.

**About MDC**

MDC is a nonprofit headquartered in Chapel Hill, NC. Founded in 1967 to identify and help remove barriers to progress for the South, MDC has been publishing research and developing policies and programs focused on expanding opportunity, reducing poverty, and promoting equity in the American South for the past 40 years. MDC's mission is to help organizations and communities close the gaps that separate people from opportunity. [www.mdcinc.org](http://www.mdcinc.org)

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