News Release

Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count
Announces William Trueheart as CEO

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. (Dec. 3) – Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count, which focuses on student success nationwide, announced today that Dr. William Trueheart has been named Chief Executive Officer of the five-year-old initiative.

Trueheart, a former college president, philanthropic executive, and nonprofit leader, will assume his role as Achieving the Dream (ATD) embarks on a national expansion. Prior to joining ATD, he served as president of Bryant College (now Bryant University) in Smithfield, R.I.; president and CEO of Reading is Fundamental, America’s oldest and largest children’s and family literacy organization; and most recently was the president and CEO of the Pittsburgh Foundation, one of the nation’s largest community foundations.

Conceived in 2004 by the Lumina Foundation for Education and seven national partner organizations, Achieving the Dream has expanded to more than 100 institutions in 22 states, reaching nearly one million students. ATD is focused on creating a “culture of evidence” on community college campuses in which data collection and analysis drive efforts to identify problems that prevent students from succeeding—particularly low-income students and students of color—and develop programs to help them stay in school and receive a certificate or diploma.

“Helping students succeed has been my passion throughout my career,” Trueheart said. “I am thrilled to be able to apply that passion to Achieving the Dream, which already has accomplished so much and has the potential to do so much more.

“This is an important moment in the history of Achieving the Dream as it identifies and implements strategies to involve more colleges and students,” he added. “Community colleges are playing a monumental role in helping state and national efforts to close achievement gaps and increase degree attainment. With this focus on community colleges, there is no more important time for Achieving the Dream to be successful, and I look forward to the challenge.”

Carol Lincoln, a senior program director at MDC, will continue as Achieving the Dream’s national director during its transition from the partnership that created the initiative into an independent entity. MDC is currently the managing partner of ATD.

“On behalf of the entire Achieving the Dream community, we welcome Bill,” Lincoln said. “He brings a well-rounded perspective to Achieving the Dream that will serve our colleges and their students extremely well during a critical period in our growth process,” Lincoln said. “Having served as a college
president, a nonprofit trustee and president of leading educational organizations, Bill’s commitment to student success and ability to lead ATD is clear. We’re excited to welcome him to our team of highly accomplished, nationally recognized community college practitioners, researchers, and advocates.”

Achieving the Dream’s support system for participating colleges features current and former community college leaders, experts in data collection and analysis, and top organizations with programs focused on improving community college student success.

“Lumina is pleased to welcome an executive with Bill’s national stature and reputation in higher education and the ability to build and grow organizations to success and sustainability,” said Jamie Merisotis, president and CEO of Lumina Foundation. “We believe Bill is the right person to execute a strategy that will continue the momentum of Achieving the Dream and leverage the groundwork that Lumina and others have helped cement to bring institutional change, in the name of student success, to community college campuses around the country.”

In addition to Lumina Foundation, which has invested more than $60 million, ATD’s success and future promise has brought investment from 18 other funders, bringing the total investment to more than $100 million. It also has attracted a $16.5 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to build on Achieving the Dream’s work to scale up effective practices in developmental education.

Trueheart, who will work with MDC in its Chapel Hill offices, will be responsible for building an organizational structure, representing Achieving the Dream to a national audience, refining and strengthening ATD’s core services and strategies, identifying new funders, and overseeing ATD’s policy work—while leading Achieving the Dream’s groundbreaking efforts to bring student success to the top of the national and community college agenda.

His honors include University of Connecticut Distinguished Alumnus, Harvard University Littauer Fellow, Travelli Fellow and Ford Foundation Fellow.

Trueheart earned his B.A. degree in political science and economics at the University of Connecticut, his MPA at the Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government, and Ed.D. at the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University. His honorary degrees include a Ph.D. in Humane Letters from Bryant University, a Ph.D. in education from Bridgewater State College, and a DBA from Johnson and Wales University.

About Achieving the Dream: Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count helps more community college students succeed, particularly students of color and low-income students. The initiative works on multiple fronts — including efforts on campuses and in research, public engagement and public policy — and emphasizes the use of data to drive change. Achieving the Dream was launched in 2004, with funding provided by Lumina Foundation for Education. Other partner organizations providing technical and other support to the colleges and states include: 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; Jobs for the Future; MDC; MDRC; and Public Agenda. MDC is the initiative’s managing partner.

About MDC: MDC is a nonprofit in Chapel Hill, N.C., with a 42-year record of successfully managing research and demonstration initiatives focused on expanding opportunity, reducing poverty, and building inclusive civic
cultures. It publishes the semiannual “State of the South” report, and current work includes connecting disadvantaged communities with disaster preparedness so they can protect their hard-earned assets, helping cities address the problems of “disconnected youth,” and working with community foundations to focus their work “upstream” so they can become transformative forces in society. MDC’s organizing principle is “Education + Work + Assets = The Pathway to Opportunity.”

**About Lumina Foundation:** Lumina Foundation for Education is the nation's largest private foundation committed to enrolling and graduating more students from college — especially low-income students, students of color, first-generation students, and adult learners. Our goal is to increase the percentage of Americans who hold high-quality degrees and credentials to 60 percent by 2025. Lumina pursues this goal in three ways: by identifying and supporting successful practices, through public policy advocacy, and by using our communications and convening power to build public will for change.

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