Community Colleges Get Serious about Engaging Adjunct Faculty

Deeper engagement of adjunct faculty is a key to accelerating student success nationwide; Achieving the Dream helps colleges sharpen focus through new guide and national workshop

Chapel Hill, NC (March 31, 2011) – Engaging adjunct faculty in student success reform is a significant challenge for community colleges, and Achieving the Dream – a national nonprofit dedicated to helping community college students succeed – is addressing this challenge head-on. Yesterday, Achieving the Dream released a new publication and hosted a national workshop offering community colleges timely, tangible tips for sharpening their focus on faculty engagement.

“If we are going to meet the President’s goal of five million more community college graduates in the next decade, then we must get serious about engaging faculty – particularly adjunct faculty - as part of the solution,” said Achieving the Dream Senior Vice President Carol Lincoln.

“Closing achievement gaps and improving student outcomes is extremely difficult work. We know that faculty engagement is an important piece to the overall student success equation, and this new publication and national workshop initiates a doubling-down effort by Achieving the Dream to address this common community college reform challenge.”

The new publication titled, “Engaging Adjunct and Full-Time Faculty in Student Success Innovation,” is the first in Achieving the Dream’s new series of practical guides, developed in partnership with Public Agenda. The publication provides the framework, principles, and practices that will help community colleges sharpen faculty engagement, one of several common, vexing challenges identified in the recent interim report (“Turning the Tide: Five Years of Achieving the Dream in Community Colleges”). The series will continue throughout the next several months and cover aspects of Achieving the Dream work that need deeper thinking and greater focus, such as devoting more attention to scaling up promising initiatives to reach more students and considering more proactive ways of supporting colleges that enter with very weak data capacity.

This particular publication is intended to be used as a tool that helps colleges design and implement effective faculty engagement strategies on behalf of institutional change for student success. Working within Achieving the Dream’s 5-Step Process for Increasing Student Success, this report attaches a set of core principles for effective adjunct and full-time faculty engagement to each stage in the process. These principles are then considered more closely, and a set of
concrete recommendations and practices is offered for implementing each principle. Read the guide here.

The national workshop convened, via conference call, representatives from Achieving the Dream’s network of 160 institutions throughout 30 states and the District of Columbia. Lincoln and Public Agenda’s Senior Vice President Alison Kadlec led an overview and discussion of the publication findings and helped colleges uncover strategies for incorporating the practical tips throughout their institution’s policies and practices. A recording of the national workshop will be available on Achieving the Dream’s website soon.

Achieving the Dream is helping transform community colleges into learning organizations dedicated to student success. With 4 Principles, 5 Steps, and 1 Goal, Achieving the Dream’s signature Student-Centered Model of Institutional Improvement is focused on creating a culture of evidence in which data and inquiry drive broad-based institutional efforts to close achievement gaps and improve student outcomes overall. Throughout the process, Achieving the Dream’s Coaches (experienced practitioners) work with each institution’s Achieving the Dream Core Team (comprising key administrators, faculty and staff leaders, and others across the campus and community) to build a long-term, institution-wide commitment to student success. Learn more about Achieving the Dream’s institutional change work and results by clicking here.

About Public Agenda (www.PublicAgenda.org)
Public Agenda, a Founding Partner of Achieving the Dream, was established in 1975 by social scientist and author Daniel Yankelovich and former U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance. It works to help leaders, stakeholders and the general public collaborates on sustainable solutions to complex issues. Our in-depth research on how citizens think about policy has won praise for its credibility and fairness from elected officials from both political parties and from experts and decision makers across the political spectrum. Our public engagement team provides technical assistance to leaders in communities and states across the nation. Our award-winning Website, publicagenda.org, offers information about the challenges the country faces and nonpartisan guides to solutions.

About Achieving the Dream (www.AchievingtheDream.org)
Achieving the Dream is a national nonprofit dedicated to helping more community college students stay in school and earn a college certificate or degree with genuine marketplace value. Data-driven, student-centered, and built on the values of equity and excellence, Achieving the Dream is closing achievement gaps and accelerating student success nationwide through work on four fronts: 1) transforming community colleges, 2) driving policy change, 3) generating new knowledge, and 4) engaging the public. Launched as an initiative in 2004 with funding provided by Lumina Foundation for Education, today, Achieving the Dream is the largest non-governmental reform movement for student success in community college history. With more than 160 Achieving the Dream Community Colleges and Institutions, more than 100 Achieving the Dream Coaches and Advisors, and 16 Achieving the Dream State Policy Teams – working throughout 30 states and the District of Columbia, Achieving the Dream helps 3.5 million community college students have a better chance of realizing greater economic opportunity and achieving their dreams.

###