

NEWS RELEASE

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INITIATIVE TO HELP COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS SUCCEED EXPANDS TO PENNSYLVANIA AND WASHINGTON STATE, ADDS MORE SCHOOLS IN TEXAS

*Twenty-three institutions join Achieving the Dream, receive \$50,000 grants,
become eligible for additional funding up to \$400,000*

Indianapolis – Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count, a national initiative to help more community college students succeed, will expand to 23 new campuses in Pennsylvania, Texas and Washington state. The initiative provides participating colleges with grant money and 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.

The 23 new institutions join 35 colleges in seven states already participating, bringing the total number to 58 in nine states. This move also marks the expansion of the initiative for the first time to colleges in Pennsylvania and Washington state.

The new institutions have been awarded \$50,000 grants to plan and launch Achieving the Dream on their campuses, and may apply next year for implementation grants worth up to \$400,000 over four years.

Funding for this latest group of schools in Pennsylvania, Texas and Washington is being provided by The Heinz Endowments, Houston Endowment Inc. and College Spark Washington, respectively. Start-up funding for Achieving the Dream was provided by Lumina Foundation for Education, which continues to provide funding for the 27 community colleges included in the initiative's initial launch in 2004 as well as for other elements of the initiative's work. A second round of colleges joined in 2005 with funding from KnowledgeWorks Foundation and Nellie Mae Education Foundation.

“We're very pleased to welcome these new colleges, new states and new funding partners to Achieving the Dream,” said Martha D. Lamkin, president and CEO of Lumina Foundation. “All along, our goal has been to help create a national movement to help community college students. This expansion is an important step toward that goal.”

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Increasingly, employers are demanding highly skilled, highly prepared employees. Sixty-three percent of the 18.9 million new jobs that will be created by 2014 will require some postsecondary education according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Community colleges, which enroll almost half of all U.S. undergraduate students, play a critical role in providing educational opportunities to a diverse variety of students so they may get an education and learn the skills that employers are looking for. In doing so, they not only help individuals improve their own lives, they also help educate an American workforce capable of competing in today's global economy. The goal of Achieving the Dream is to help more students make the most of their opportunities.

Participating institutions identify strategies to help more students continue their studies and earn certificates and degrees. Strategies include increasing focus on developmental education to better prepare students who may not be ready for college-level work; increasing student engagement through instructional techniques such as collaborative learning, paired classes and learning communities; and implementing student success courses to teach skills such as time management and effective study skills.

Achieving the Dream is a multiyear initiative that focuses on measurable outcomes and emphasizes the use of data to inform decision-making. In addition to funding, participating colleges receive a range of support from the initiative's partner organizations. 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. Following is a list of the 23 institutions now joining the initiative:

Pennsylvania

Community College of Allegheny County, Pittsburgh
Community College of Beaver County, Monaca
Delaware County Community College, Media
Montgomery County Community College, Blue Bell
Northampton Community College, Bethlehem
Community College of Philadelphia, Philadelphia
Westmoreland County Community College, Youngwood

Texas

Alvin Community College, Alvin
Brazosport College, Lake Jackson
College of the Mainland, Texas City
Lee College, Baytown
North Harris Montgomery Community College District, The Woodlands
San Jacinto College, Pasadena
Wharton County Junior College, Wharton
Prairie View A&M University, Prairie View
Texas Southern University, Houston
University of Houston-Downtown, Houston

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Washington

Big Bend Community College, Moses Lake
Yakima Valley Community College, Yakima
Highline Community College, Des Moines
Tacoma Community College, Tacoma
Renton Technical College, Renton
Seattle Central Community College, Seattle

For the first time, three four-year institutions will join Achieving the Dream. The three Houston-area institutions educate a diverse mix of students including those most likely to face academic, personal and financial challenges, and confront many of the same issues and concerns as community colleges.

Other partner organizations providing support to the initiative 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.

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.

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