



Achieving the Dream™

Community Colleges Count

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NEWS RELEASE

4 Community Colleges Selected to Scale Proven Interventions in the New Achieving the Dream Catalyst Fund Program

Grants of \$215,000 will allow Achieving the Dream Leader Colleges to expand successful interventions within their colleges and across the nation

Silver Spring, MD (November 15, 2012) – Achieving the Dream, Inc., a national nonprofit leading the nation’s most comprehensive non-governmental reform network for community college student success and completion, today announced the grant recipients of the new Catalyst Fund grant program. Today and tomorrow, the selected colleges will convene in Silver Spring for the Catalyst Fund Kickoff.

The Catalyst Fund grants, administered by Achieving the Dream with funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, will assist these colleges in the process of scaling effective interventions to reach a significantly large population of students. These four Leader Colleges were selected because of their known commitment to student-centered, evidence-based reforms and outstanding increases in student outcomes.

“Postsecondary completion is one of the Gates Foundation’s major priorities,” said Suzanne Walsh, Senior Program Officer, Postsecondary Success at the Gates Foundation. “We want to see most students who enroll in a community college complete what they started. Achieving the Dream Colleges have a great tradition of working with students in an intense way and effectively using evidence to guide their decision-making process. We are pleased to fund this critical initiative to scale proven interventions.”

The following four Achieving the Dream Leader Colleges will each receive a \$215,000 grant to spur the expansion of proven interventions at the heart of their student success work.

[Brazosport College](#) (Lake Jackson, TX)

[Bunker Hill Community College](#) (Boston, MA)

[Durham Technical Community College](#) (Durham, NC)

[Patrick Henry Community College](#) (Martinsville, VA)

"The four Achieving the Dream Leader Colleges that are recipients of this grant are recognized as leaders in the Achieving the Dream National Reform Network for their proven success and commitment to student achievement," said Rachel Singer, Vice President for Community College Relations and Applied Research, Achieving the Dream, Inc. "The effective practices they have chosen to scale will yield important information and lessons which will be used to inform the field."

The Achieving the Dream National Reform Network is committed to investigating ways to scale effective interventions to ensure that more, and ultimately most, students attain the skills and credentials necessary for success in the global economy. Beginning with these four Leader Colleges, the Catalyst Fund will support the expansion of programs and policies that promote widespread scaling – both within the colleges and to other community colleges across the nation.

"Bunker Hill Community College is honored to be one of the four colleges nationally to be awarded an Achieving the Dream Catalyst Fund grant," said Bunker Hill Community College President Mary Fifield. "Our college's successful Learning Communities initiative, developed in partnership with Achieving the Dream, has already served more than 4,000 students and has a year-to-year retention record 32 percent higher than our general student population. The Catalyst Fund grant will enable us to reach and benefit more diverse and more part-time students on an even larger scale. Additionally, it brings us closer to total college-wide institutionalization of Learning Communities."

As part of the Catalyst Fund, each college will work to scale their proven interventions through the Achieving the Dream Student-Centered Model of Institutional Improvement, which is based upon four critical principles: committed leadership, use of evidence to improve programs and services, broad engagement, and systematic institutional improvement. Additionally, these colleges will work to scale their interventions in a systematic way, so that the interventions may be embedded in the institutions' framework for sustainability.

Lessons learned from these colleges will help inform best practices for scaling interventions to better inform the Achieving the Dream National Reform Network and community colleges across the nation.

Presidents, faculty, and staff from the four selected colleges and Achieving the Dream, will convene for an inaugural Catalyst Fund Kickoff Institute at the Sheraton in Silver Spring, MD on November 15, 2012 at 8 AM to November 16, 2012 at 12 PM.

Achieving the Dream Leader Colleges

Leader Colleges are demonstrating the power of the Achieving the Dream Student-Centered Model of Institutional Improvement. They show that it is possible to raise persistence and graduation rates, close achievement gaps, and improve lives. Leader Colleges represent the ultimate goal of Achieving the Dream, and as such, support other institutions within a community of learners. To be eligible for Leader College distinction, colleges must demonstrate commitment to and progress on the Achieving the Dream principles: committed leadership, use of evidence to improve programs and services, broad engagement, and systemic institutional improvement. They must also show three years of sustained improvement of student success on

at least one of the following measures of performance:

- ✓ Completion of certificates or degrees
- ✓ Term-to-term and year-to-year retention
- ✓ Completion of college-level math and English courses
- ✓ Advancement from developmental to credit-bearing courses
- ✓ Course completion

For more information on the Leader Colleges, click [here](#).

Achieving the Dream, Inc.

Achieving the Dream, Inc. is a national nonprofit that is dedicated to helping more community college students, particularly low-income students and students of color, stay in school and earn a college certificate or degree. Evidence-based, student-centered, and built on the values of equity and excellence, Achieving the Dream is closing achievement gaps and accelerating student success nationwide by: 1) guiding evidence-based institutional improvement, 2) leading policy change, 3) generating knowledge, and 4) engaging the public. Conceived as an initiative in 2004 by Lumina Foundation and seven founding partner organizations, today, Achieving the Dream is leading the most comprehensive non-governmental reform network for student success in higher education history. With nearly 200 colleges, more than 100 coaches and advisors, and 15 state policy teams - working throughout 32 states and the District of Columbia – the Achieving the Dream National Reform Network helps 3.75 million community college students have a better chance of realizing greater economic opportunity and achieving their dreams. To learn more, visit www.AchievingtheDream.org.

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