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Prince George’s Community College Student Wins DREAM Big for College Video Contest

DREAM Big for College Video Contest is one of several components to Achieving the Dream’s new student-centered “DREAM Big for College” campaign that is fast-tracking community college students’ voices right to the ear of policy-makers and influencers.

Dallas, TX (March 6, 2012) – On Friday, Achieving the Dream – a national nonprofit leading the nation’s most comprehensive non-governmental reform effort for community college student success in higher education history - announced the grand prize winner of the inaugural DREAM Big for College Video Contest: Jessica Curtis, a student at Prince George’s Community College, who will receive a $1,500 scholarship prize for her winning inspirational video.

Grand Prize Winner: Jessica Curtis
Student, Prince George’s Community College
$1,500 Scholarship Prize

“My counselors and advisers are available to let me speak with them about my courses and graduation plan. I can sit with personal or group math tutors to talk about any questions or concerns with my assignments,” said Jessica Curtis. View Jessica’s winning video here.
The **DREAM Big for College Video Contest** is one component of a much larger Achieving the Dream student-centered campaign called **DREAM Big for College**. The campaign is designed to use multiple platforms to engage community college students in the national discussion about what it takes for them to stay in school and earn their college credential. Launched January 2012 with a T-shirt design contest, the campaign is fast-tracking students’ voices right to the ear of policy-makers and influencers. The campaign will continue throughout 2012 with other student-oriented calls for action.

“Almost half of all undergraduate students in our country go to community college; the nation needs to hear what they have to say about what is working on their campuses to keep them on track for graduation,” explains Lauren Lewis, Assistant Director of Communications at Achieving the Dream. “This competition is answering that need, and the Achieving the Dream Network will make sure their voices are heard.”

The **DREAM Big for College Video Contest** challenged students to convey, in 3-minutes or less, what’s working at their college to help them stay on track and finish what they started. Forty-four students from 17 Achieving the Dream Institutions submitted videos to the **DREAM Big for College Video Contest** through Facebook. Winners were announced at D.R.E.A.M. – Achieving the Dream’s 2012 Annual Meeting on Student Success in Dallas, Texas on Friday, March 2nd.

Jessica Curtis, a student at Prince George's Community College in Maryland, was named Grand Prize Winner and will receive a $1,500 scholarship for her video focusing on advising, counseling, and tutoring services at her college. Julian Butler, a student at Tarrant County College in Texas, was named Second Place Winner, earned the commendation of “Best Production,” and will receive an iPad2. Ricardo Ramirez of East Los Angeles Community College and Angeline McGee of Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas both earned Honorable Mention and will receive $250 gift cards for books and school supplies. Ricardo’s video was named “Most Inspirational” and Angeline’s was named “Achieving the Dream Staff Pick.” Additionally, Alicia Baldwin of Ivy Tech Community College in Indiana earned an iPad2 for securing the most “Likes” on the DREAM Big for College Video Competition’s Facebook page.

The video competition was produced through the combined efforts of two organizations dedicated to helping students complete their post high-school education – Achieving the Dream and the Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (ISKME), and through ISKME’s CompletionMatters.org initiative. Achieving and the Dream and ISKME share a commitment to innovation in education and find that new technologies like online video and social media are important vehicles for awareness and change. Organizers raised awareness for the video contest through social media channels, including Twitter (#dream4college and #dream2012), student and campus networks, and websites (including CompletionMatters.org, AchievingtheDream.org, and StudentMentor.org).

“Hearing directly from students about what’s working at their colleges, given the challenges they face in their lives, is so inspiring,” says Amee Evans Godwin, Director of Strategic Initiatives at...
ISKME. “It’s important for other students to hear, and to get involved in telling their own stories.”

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<th>Julian Butler</th>
<th>2nd Place and “Best Production” – iPad2</th>
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<td>Tarrant County College</td>
<td>“To make my dream a reality, I plan to graduate from a university where I can learn the material and gain the resources I need to become a motivational speaker and counselor, helping teens everywhere fulfill their highest potential in life.” (Julian Butler)</td>
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<th>Ricardo Ramirez</th>
<th>Honorable Mention and “Most Inspirational” - $250 Prize</th>
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<td>East Los Angeles Community College</td>
<td>“This video is to express my gratitude towards ELAC and the great faculty members that have encouraged me to keep working hard to reach my goals. I was drawn to this national competition to let others in the nation know that students from community college are also high achievers.” (Ricardo Ramirez)</td>
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<th>Angeline McGee</th>
<th>Honorable Mention and “Achieving the Dream Staff Pick” - $250 Prize</th>
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<td>Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas</td>
<td>“It can be a struggle to ... work a job that makes you feel low, have a baby standing at your knees screaming at you every time you open your laptop to write a paper, but ... I couldn't be happier with who I am, who I'm becoming, and the life I'm leading with my girls.” (Angeline McGee)</td>
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Achieving the Dream (www.achievingthedream.org) 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) influencing public policy, 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 the most comprehensive non-governmental reform movement for student success in higher education history. With over 150 community colleges and institutions, more than 100 coaches and advisors, and 15 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.

CompletionMatters.org (www.completionmatters.org), a project of the Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (ISKME.org), is a comprehensive, publicly accessible commons that provides information, tools, and other resources on how to best enable students, educators and policymakers to increase the number of students who earn postsecondary certificates and degrees. ISKME, an independent non-profit research institute established in 2002, is a pioneer in knowledge sharing and educational innovation. Dedicated to the study, spread, and strategic use of knowledge management in education, ISKME helps schools, colleges, universities, and the organizations that support them expand their capacity to collect and share information and create open knowledge-driven environments focused on learning and success. In assisting the K-20 education sector, ISKME also helps philanthropic organizations and government agencies examine and improve processes for continuous improvement, evaluation, and learning.

StudentMentor.org’s mission is to increase college completion and enhance student career readiness thereby enabling a robust 21st century workforce and community. College students can conveniently find and collaborate with mentors from diverse industries and professions to achieve their academic and career goals (www.studentmentor.org).

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