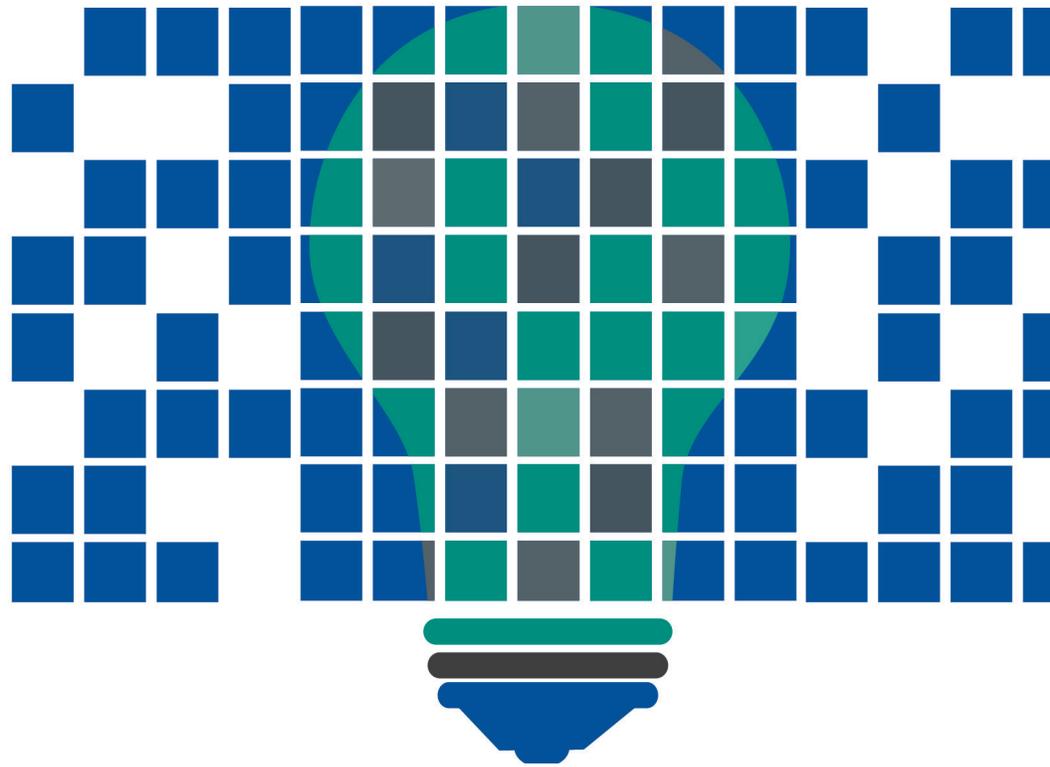




## ACHIEVING THE DREAM HONORS

# Patrick Henry Community College



## LEAH MEYER AUSTIN AWARD 2015

This year, Achieving the Dream recognizes two first-place winners of the Leah Meyer Austin Award: Patrick Henry Community College and The Community College of Baltimore County. Lumina Foundation for Education established the Leah Meyer Austin Award in 2008 to recognize community colleges' outstanding achievement in supporting and promoting student success through the principles of Achieving the Dream: committed leadership, use of evidence to improve programs and services, broad engagement,

systemic institutional improvement, and equity. The award is given in honor of Leah Meyer Austin, an Achieving the Dream board member and former senior vice president at Lumina Foundation, whose visionary leadership shaped Achieving the Dream. Award recipients have systemically and sustainably transformed their institutions by shaping programs, practices, and services to promote success for all students, especially low-income students and students of color. Active Achieving the Dream colleges are eligible to apply for this award.

# Patrick Henry Community College

Martinsville, VA • Angeline Godwin, President • [www.ph.vccs.edu](http://www.ph.vccs.edu)

To say that rural southcentral Virginia has experienced tough economic challenges and high unemployment rates is a grave understatement. Once dubbed the “furniture capital of the world,” this region faced a new title in the wake of the 2007 recession: the unemployment capital of Virginia. Much of its citizenry lives below the poverty line and lacks a high school education, limiting the availability of jobs that offer family-sustaining wages.

The local community college, Patrick Henry Community College (PHCC) in Martinsville, Virginia, faced its share of challenges. Like many institutions across the country, PHCC experienced significant budget cuts. In 10 years, state support for the college declined from 62 percent to 38 percent, a nearly 40 percent reduction in state support—resulting in a reduction in force. Coupled with high administrative turnover, the college was faced with difficult choices.

“In the face of these challenges, PHCC adopted a motto – keep student success first – that set the tone and direction for the years to come,” said Greg Hodges, dean of academic success and college transfer. “With strong leadership, support from Achieving the Dream, and a little stick-to-itiveness, PHCC has tackled issues without sacrificing its commitment to students. As a result, we have become a national leader in student engagement.”

Through strong academic and workforce programs, PHCC and its community and business partners have now earned the “Advanced Film Manufacturing Capital of the World” designation for their community. Today, Achieving the Dream proudly adds another title to PHCC’s repertoire: 2015 Leah Meyer Austin Award Winner.

## Background

PHCC is one of 23 community colleges in Virginia. The college was founded in 1962 as a two-year branch of the University of Virginia’s School of General Studies, and became an autonomous two-year college two years later. Serving Martinsville, Henry County, Patrick County, and the southern portion of Franklin County, PHCC is a comprehensive open-door institution, accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award associate degrees.

The college offers 15 associate degree programs with an additional 20 specializations available within those degree

options, 12 certificate programs, and more than 40 career studies certificate programs. PHCC also delivers a variety of nontraditional programs, such as customized workforce development training, industry-recognized certifications, developmental and transitional programs, and courses for personal enrichment.

Through PHCC’s extensive curriculum of credit and non-credit technology, business, and professional development programs, it strives to offer in-demand programs within the service region, and regularly meets with local employers to identify their workforce skill needs to integrate and customize these resources to best fit their needs.

## Fast Facts (2013-14)

Annual Unduplicated Headcount, Credit Students	4,490
Part-time	74%
Developmental education	45%
First generation	28%
Pell recipients	40%
Employed 20+ hours per week	18%
Annual Unduplicated Headcount, Continuing Education Students	1,416
Total Annual Unduplicated Headcount	6,206

## Transformation

When Patrick Henry Community College first joined Achieving the Dream in 2004, the institution’s leadership team confronted the reality of its Community College Survey on Student Engagement data, which indicated that student engagement was a major problem. In response, the college shifted from lecture-based classes to cooperative learning in order to enhance low-income and underprepared students’ engagement, persistence, critical thinking, and academic success.

At the heart of cooperative learning is pedagogy, the study and practice of how best to teach. The cooperative learning program PHCC adopted focused on two main elements: positive interdependence (in which each student is dependent on other students) and individual accountability (in which each student pulls his/her own weight within a group).

With campus-wide energy, support, and enthusiasm, cooperative learning has become the way of life at PHCC, even changing the structure of faculty and administrator

meetings and college-wide summits.

In fact, faculty members made the decision to change their job descriptions to include a mandate for both training and implementation of cooperative learning strategies within one year of hire. College administration followed suit by insisting on training as a condition of continued adjunct employment, thereby immediately maximizing the potential impact of this work.

“Patrick Henry Community College is committed to the transformative power of cooperative learning in both the face-to-face classroom and the online environment,” said PHCC President Angeline Godwin. “This pedagogy makes our students better learners and also better employees. Thus, we use this dynamic strategy to change our classrooms, empower our citizenry, and enhance our community’s economic development.”

While cooperative learning has been a major thrust of the PHCC student success agenda, there have been other efforts to maximize student success, including:

- Shortening the developmental education pipeline.
- Combining developmental education with on-level gateway courses.
- Eliminating late registration.
- Requiring a Student Success Course within the first semester of full-time enrollment.
- Administering the Virginia Placement Test to high school sophomores.
- Offering cooperative learning pedagogy training for all dual enrollment high school teachers.

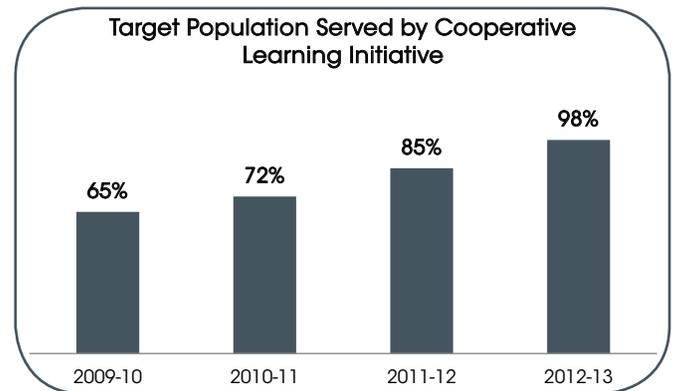
Furthermore, PHCC created the Southern Center for Active Learning Excellence (SCALE), which has assisted in the transformation of an additional 120 other community colleges across the country in the last four years. Using PHCC’s faculty, SCALE provides professional development opportunities for college administrators, faculty, and instructional support staff via in-person training and materials.

## Leading Change

PHCC’s relationship with Achieving the Dream has transformed the college and dramatically altered the way it educates students. While many schools and state systems are confronting the curriculum challenge, PHCC is helping colleges and faculty members across the country tackle pedagogy—a trend that continues to gain national attention. Eleven years after joining Achieving the Dream,

PHCC’s transformation has yielded impressive results.

- Cooperative learning training reached almost 100 percent of the target population (defined as entire student enrollment minus dual enrollment).



- Instructors trained in cooperative learning have higher student pass rates after the training.
- Completion and transfer rates within three years have more than doubled across all student groups, including low-income and African-American students.
- Gateway English completion rates have increased across all student groups, and nearly doubled for Pell recipients.
- The gap between African-American students and white students has closed by 10 percentage points.
- Developmental mathematics and English completion rates have increased across all student groups.

But PHCC’s efforts are far from over. To help Virginia triple the number of credentials by 2021, PHCC has reaffirmed its commitment to access and affordability – particularly for adult learners, incumbent workers, and displaced workers – by engaging directly with the public school system to provide educational opportunities. The college also sees providing more entry- and exit-points for students and developing the local community and economy as key priorities in the coming years.

And still, at its core, PHCC is committed to keeping student success first. In President Godwin’s words, “community colleges have many entry and exit points. Our goal now is to add as many re-entry points as possible so there is no wrong door for our students to enter.”

*Written by: Carrie E. Henderson & Julia Lawton, Achieving the Dream*

# The Community College of Baltimore County

Baltimore, MD • Sandra Kurtinitis, President • [www.ccbcmd.edu](http://www.ccbcmd.edu)

The Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) also receives the 2015 Leah Meyer Austin Award.

Located in Baltimore, Maryland, CCBC was created from three predecessor colleges – Catonsville, Dundalk, and Essex Community College – and officially became a single college, multi-campus institution in 1998. The newly formed institution brought with it the rich history and culture of the formerly independent community colleges that has spanned nearly 60 years.

Today, CCBC is ranked among the top providers of undergraduate education, workforce development, technology training, and life enrichment in the Baltimore metropolitan area. Nationally recognized as a leader in innovative learning strategies, CCBC educates nearly 70,000 people each year, including more than half of all Baltimore County residents attending undergraduate college.

CCBC offers degrees as well as credit certificates and career training certification and licensure in more than 200 programs. Its Division of Continuing Education is the preferred training partner for Maryland businesses, serving more than 100 employers annually with customized employee development training.

CCBC has been on the journey to student-centered learning since becoming a single college in 1998, and has seen remarkable improvement on many indicators of student success since joining Achieving the Dream.

- More than 90 percent of students rate their experiences with advisors very high.
- Course success and retention rates were higher on average for African-American students in Transitioning to College (ACDV 101) cohorts than all African-American students.
- Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) students accumulated credits at higher rates than students in traditional developmental writing courses.
- ALP students completed the gateway course English 101 at higher rates than students in traditional developmental education courses.
- Students completing ACDV 101 have higher fall-to-fall retention rates than students who fail to complete or are exempt from the course. The same is true for fall-to-spring retention.
- Since the financial empowerment program began in 2010, students have collectively saved \$80,000 through CCBC piggy banks.
- From 2010 to 2014, CCBC has increased certificate and degree completion by 55 percent.

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Representatives from Achieving the Dream, American Association of Colleges and Universities, Aspen Institute's College Excellence Program, Jobs for the Future, MDC, MDRC, and the University of Wisconsin System served on the selection committee that reviewed 2015 Leah Meyer Austin Award applications.

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**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 over 200 institutions, more than 100 coaches and advisors, and 15 state policy teams – working throughout 34 states and the District of Columbia – the Achieving the Dream National Reform Network helps nearly 4 million community college students have a better chance of realizing greater economic opportunity and achieving their dreams.