The Leadership Imperative

Overview

The looming leadership void threatens the long-term sustainability of important institutional change work for student success underway at the nation’s community colleges. Achieving the Dream, along with The Aspen Institute, is addressing this challenge by instituting a new task force of Achieving the Dream Leader College Presidents who are committed to ensuring that their evidence-based, student-centered reforms continue with the next generation of leaders.

The Challenge

Reductions in public funding support, increases in enrollment, changes in student demographics, greater completion expectations, ever-changing technologies, and new types of competitors are all evolving challenges facing community college leaders. These phenomena are occurring while a majority of community college presidents are approaching retirement and many community college doctoral leadership programs are experiencing significant declines in enrollment.

Our Solution

A new partnership with the The Aspen Institute is researching how to best help Achieving the Dream Leader College Presidents sustain their important student-centered reforms through the next generation of leaders. Achieving the Dream will create an idea-sharing space in community college leadership development. Open source information will be made available to Achieving the Dream stakeholders and other organizations involved in educational leadership. Curricular modules will be developed with Leader College Presidents for use throughout the Achieving the Dream National Reform Network. A report with findings and recommendations on leadership development will be released in late 2012.

“The nation’s community colleges face a new set of realities that require a new set of dynamic skills from future leaders: achieving significantly better outcomes for an increasingly diverse and growing student body at a lower cost per student. Achieving the Dream Leader College Presidents have formed a new task force that will provide the 21st century community college president with the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in this new environment.”

— Robert G. Templin, Chairman of Achieving the Dream Board of Directors and President of Northern Virginia Community College