



NEWS RELEASE

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NATIONAL INITIATIVE TO HELP MORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS SUCCEED WILL EXPAND TO 24 NEW COLLEGES IN EIGHT STATES

Total investment in Achieving the Dream to approach \$100 million

Chapel Hill, N.C. – Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count, a national initiative to help more community college students succeed, will add 24 new colleges in eight states, bringing the total number to 82 participating institutions in 15 different states.

Several new funding partners will support the expansion, bringing the total investment in the initiative to nearly \$100 million. Achieving the Dream provides participating colleges with 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. Achieving the Dream emphasizes the use of data to identify effective practices, improve student success rates and close achievement gaps.

“I cannot overstate the importance of helping community college students succeed,” said Martha D. Lamkin, president and CEO of Lumina Foundation for Education, which provided the initial funding for Achieving the Dream. “Community colleges enroll almost half of the nation’s undergraduates, and the students they serve often have few other options for a higher education,” Lamkin said. “With today’s jobs requiring more and more postsecondary education, the role of these institutions is more vital than ever.”

Officials at MDC Inc., the organization that serves as the initiative’s managing partner, cited Achieving the Dream’s comprehensive approach as a key to its continued expansion. “Achieving the Dream’s mission of helping colleges focus research and resources in support of student success is one we’ve found resonates widely among foundations, state agencies, business leaders, colleges and students,” said Carol Lincoln, senior program director at MDC and the initiative’s national director.

As part of the expansion, 12 new funding organizations have joined Achieving the Dream, supporting colleges in six new states – Arkansas, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Michigan, Oklahoma and South Carolina. Most participating colleges will receive \$50,000 grants to plan and launch Achieving the Dream on their campuses, and then become eligible for implementation grants worth up to \$400,000 over four years. Seven colleges in Hawaii join the initiative as a single participant.

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Funding will be provided for the new colleges in Arkansas by The Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation; in Hawaii by Kamehameha Schools, Office of Hawaiian Affairs and The University of Hawaii Community Colleges (UHCC); in Massachusetts by The Lloyd G. Balfour Foundation, The Boston Foundation, TERI, and The Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation; in Michigan by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation; in Oklahoma by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education; and in South Carolina by the South Carolina Technical College System and external partners coordinated by the Palmetto Institute to supplement funding provided by individual colleges within that state. Houston Endowment Inc., which already is funding 10 institutions in the Houston area, will provide funding for one additional Houston-area institution, while selected individual colleges in Texas and Virginia will provide their own funding.

The 12 colleges in Arkansas, Massachusetts and Michigan (four from each state) will be determined through a request-for-proposal process and are expected to be announced in June. The other new colleges are as follows:

Hawaii

The University of Hawaii Community Colleges, Honolulu

Oklahoma

Oklahoma City Community College, Oklahoma City

Rose State College, Midwest City

Tulsa Community College, Tulsa

South Carolina

Aiken Technical College, Aiken

Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College, Orangeburg

Technical College of the Lowcountry, Beaufort

Trident Technical College, Charleston

Texas

Paris Junior College, Paris

The Victoria College, Victoria

University of Houston, Houston

Virginia

Northern Virginia Community College, Annandale

Each participating institution 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.

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 five-state launch in 2004 as well as for other elements of the initiative's work. Additional funders College Spark Washington, KnowledgeWorks Foundation, The Heinz Endowments, Houston Endowment Inc. and Nellie Mae Education Foundation joined the initiative in 2005 and 2006, bringing 31 institutions and four more states into Achieving the Dream.

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Eight national partner organizations work with Lumina to guide the initiative and provide technical and other support to the colleges and states. They 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.

About MDC

MDC is a private, nonpartisan nonprofit headquartered in Chapel Hill, NC. Founded in 1967 to identify and help remove barriers to progress for the South, MDC has been publishing research and developing policies and programs focused on expanding opportunity, reducing poverty and building inclusive civic cultures in the American South for the past 37 years. Its core strategies include: creating responsive public policies; demonstrating effective programs; building institutional and community capacity for progress, and informing the public dialogue.

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