

# Anne Arundel Community College

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October 20, 2011

To the STARS Review Committee:

This letter shall serve as affirmation that the Anne Arundel Community College's **Student Success 2020** program meets the criteria necessary for an Innovation Credit 1 under the AASHE STARS assessment.

In response to President Obama's challenge to our nation's colleges and universities to help more students meet their educational goals by the year 2020, Anne Arundel Community College implemented the **Student Success 2020** program in December 2009. President Obama established the American Graduation Initiative stating "by 2020, this nation will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world." In addition, the program also acts in response to the increasing need for a skilled, knowledge-based workforce in Anne Arundel County, Maryland.

Student Success 2020 aims to help more students at AACC reach their educational goals. By the year 2020, AACC endeavors to double the number of degrees, certificates and workforce credentials earned by our students. The program has committed to aiding all students in identifying meaningful educational goals. To track, monitor and support students' progress in achieving their educational goals, the college as set in motion systems and programs to identify potential vulnerabilities and impediments for students to complete their education. This also involves faculty and staff to examine current practices and make the necessary changes to increase student success.

Since the launch of the program, AACC has been vigorously working to meet the goals of Student Success 2020. AACC hosted the first Maryland Association of Community Colleges Summit for Completion, where the presidents of all 16 Maryland community colleges pledged to sustainably increase the number of college students earning degrees, certificates and workforce credentials from community colleges around the state. The presidents signed the Promise to Act, which commits the community colleges to actively engage in increasing the number of Marylanders with post-secondary education credentials, and to do so in alliance with faculty, staff, business leaders, local and state governments, and K-12 education teachers and administration.

At AACC, the vice presidents have established short-term goals by working directly with their divisions to identify areas of emphasis for student success, and develop action plans targeted at

specific populations, including program majors, transfer students, developmental education students, GED students, and minority and disadvantaged students. The emphasis is to close the achievement gap and provide students with sound, measurable support in sustaining their education track and earning post-secondary degrees.

To include faculty and staff in these endeavors, the college's administration held the Student Success 2020 Summit in January 2011 to engage faculty for ideas and new concepts in supporting student success. Several outstanding ideas were cultivated from the summit that has led to the redesign and development of several programs college-wide.

Our work is beginning to take shape. At the 49<sup>th</sup> Commencement, held on May 26, 2011, there were 1,956 graduates earning a record 2,088 degrees and certificates. With this unprecedented number, 274 above 2010, there is no doubt AACC is moving the needle on student success.

The entire college community is fully engaged in Student Success 2020 as our driving force. We are confident that hundreds, if not thousands, of additional students will achieve their educational goals as a result of these efforts. Thank you so very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Martha A. Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Martha" being the most prominent.

Martha A. Smith, Ph.D.  
President