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features



26

20 ... Game Plan

Colleges share a page from their playbooks that addresses the looming leadership crisis.

BY HEATHER BOERNER

26 ... Guiding Light

How community college presidents can ensure their vision lives on, even after they move on.

BY DENNIS PIERCE

34 ... Made for Leadership

The tools and tips you need to effectively climb the college ladder.

BY ELLEN ULLMAN

34



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departments

4 ... IN THIS ISSUE

Stepping up for the next generation.
BY MATTHEW DEMBICKI

5 ... FROM THE CHAIR

Training our future college leaders.
BY KEN ATWATER

6 ... NEWS & ANALYSIS

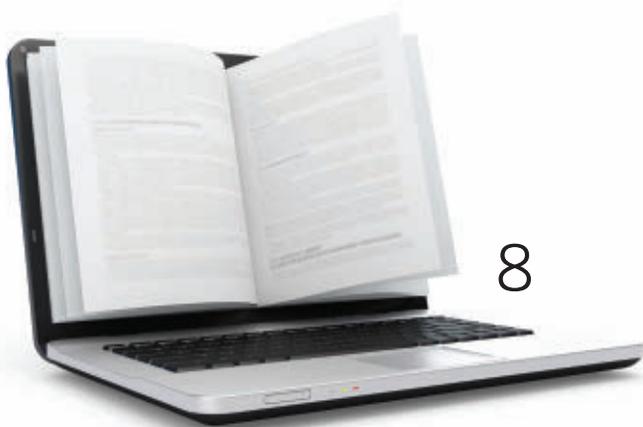
A historic transfer agreement
and a legislative update.

10 ... Q&A

Aspen Prize-winning college
president Jackson Sasser.
BY EMILY ROGAN

12 ... SPOTLIGHT

Report: checking in on the 2020 goal.
BY REBECCA L. WEBER



High Performance Team Training

AACC's High Performance Team Training has been established to assist community college leadership teams with moving into high performance mode or can be used as a way to sustain high performance. The next four-day training will take place September 20–23, 2015, in Houston, Texas. Learn more at <http://bit.ly/1BesCWI>.

14 ... SUCCESS STORIES

Fundraising for student success.
BY ALEX JOHNSON

16 ... VIEWPOINT

State of successions.
BY WILL AUSTIN

18 ... THE NEXT BIG THINGS

Highlights from the 95th annual convention.

40 ... FACTS AT A GLANCE

Associate degree completion higher
in rural communities.

AACC ONLINE THIS MONTH:



Community College Daily/
www.ccdaily.com

- Working together to upskill employees
- Exploring the human need to be creative
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Listening. Learning. Leading.®

Stepping Up for the Next Generation

If you're a community college president, you probably remember the professors, mentors, and colleagues who gave you advice on how to progress in your career to eventually become CEO of an institution. And you probably received some sage words on what to expect when you landed that job. But did you also receive any pearls of wisdom on developing a succession plan for when you leave?

With a growing number of baby boomer presidents retiring, it is critical to develop strategies to ensure the next generation of leaders is prepared for the challenging work of improving colleges. And there is no one better to help craft those efforts than current presidents. More community college CEOs are recognizing this as an essential component of their work, stepping up to offer opportunities to members of their executive teams, as well as staff, to learn the to-do list of contemporary leaders. Many of those duties include tasks and topics that were not part of the job description even a decade ago, such as fundraising, economic development, and immigration.

In this issue, you'll hear from several community college presidents on the importance of taking the helm in preparing future leaders. Those efforts include "grow your own" programs that allot more responsibilities to administrators interested in testing the waters of the CEO, to new team-training programs developed by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC).

Presidential search firm owner Preston Pulliams discusses the importance of such programs to ensure there are good candidates. As he notes, it's gotten a little tougher lately: "Decades of poor succession planning means that the pool of qualified candidates can be thin, making searches long and sometimes difficult."

Also in this issue, veteran college leaders provide tips on offering hands-on experiences for those coming up the ranks. Those include asking more college presidents to serve as mentors to emerging leaders, to encouraging perspective vice presidents and presidents to volunteer with the local Red Cross chapters, PTAs, or places of worship to gain practical knowledge in areas such as fundraising and bond ratings. You'll also find a brief article on the three key steps to develop an exit strategy.

Finally, remember all the resources available to you as an AACC member college. At the AACC website (www.aacc.nche.edu) you will find the AACC 21st-Century Center, AACC's "[Competencies for Community College Leaders](#)," the latest bi-weekly issue of the association's [CEO-to-CEO Newsletter](#), and [DataPoints](#), which provide snapshots of timely and important topics related to community colleges.

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Training Our Future College Leaders

BY KEN ATWATER

One of the most important tasks of a presidential administration is ensuring seamless operations with well-defined processes and creating a culture that values succession planning that can help safeguard the institution—particularly at the executive level. Unfortunately, succession planning is too often episodic and not continuous.

As college leaders, it is important that we view succession planning in terms of ensuring the continued advancement of our colleges and as an opportunity to identify and further develop our institutions' internal human capital to produce the brightest leaders for tomorrow.

At Hillsborough Community College, professional development has taken on a new level of significance over the past few years. Most colleges undoubtedly have their own professional development programs to address a specific skills gap or to target an underrepresented population, but succession planning and professional development are often treated as separate and distinct functions. Upon honest reflection, several impending retirements in critical positions compelled us to re-examine our succession planning through a new lens.

It became apparent to our leadership team that we needed to cast a wider net to identify and develop rising leaders in a thoughtful and deliberate way, even if it meant preparing them to leave and make contributions elsewhere. A newly redesigned tiered leadership institute that combines mentorship, personalized growth plans for each participant, and benchmarking rolls out this fall, and I am confident that it will vastly expand future opportunities for deserving staff.

Executive Leadership Institute (ELI), run by the League for Innovation, is one of the most respected training programs for future college leaders in the United States. ELI is widely recognized for providing the applied and experiential knowledge necessary to lead a college. A fundamental component of the program is a rigorous mock selection process in which the participants vie to be selected as president of the fictitious New World Community College. The practical aspects of the program also help serve as a litmus test of introspection as to whether serving as president is in an employee's professional DNA. Of those that I have sent through ELI, all have agreed that the experience was one of, if not the most, worthwhile executive training programs that they have participated in.

New CEO Academy

Of course, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) is at the forefront of training future and current community college leaders. AACC's Leadership Suite, which includes the John E. Roueche Future Leaders Institute and High



Performance Team Training, offers professional development opportunities for people at every stage of their careers.

AACC also offers an excellent training experience for first-year presidents: the new CEO Academy. As a new leader, presidents have the

opportunity to reshape the direction of the institution by providing leadership in key areas of focus. The ability to shape the direction and culture of an organization through ongoing personnel assessment and strategic hiring is one of the most important ways to help influence the vision that a new president seeks to establish.

As president, there are few greater sources of pride than when a member of my leadership team is selected for a new executive position. I view it as a testament that their experience at our college has prepared them to face the challenges and opportunities at another. Shaping the direction of a college through the deliberate selection of personnel is one of the most critical functions of a college president. Taking the time to map out the future skills and capabilities that are needed for your organization with an ongoing and actionable process will ensure that there is continued advancement, and this is one of the greatest legacies we can leave at our institutions.

KEN ATWATER is president of Hillsborough Community College in Florida and chair of the AACC Board of Directors.

California Colleges, HBCUs Sign Transfer Agreement

BY SONYA STINSON



When the majority of students in a community college system have their sights set on

obtaining a bachelor's degree, it makes sense to encourage them to explore every avenue to reach that goal—even if it means leaving the state.

Leaders at California community colleges saw a prime opportunity to help more students of color transfer to four-year institutions when last month the colleges entered into a unique partnership with nine historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). In what is believed to be the first agreement of its kind, California community college students who complete an associate degree with at least a 2.5 GPA are guaranteed admission as juniors to an out-of-state HBCU.



"I really do have a strong feeling that both public and private institutions of all shapes and sizes ought to be available to California community college students," says Brice Harris, the state's community college chancellor. "When I look especially at our students of color, I want to make certain they know that they have options beyond the traditional ones here in California."

About two years ago, the agreement started to bubble. Vice Chancellor Linda Michalowski, now retired, started the conversation to ensure students had a range of options. The colleges had even been coordinating tours on HBCU campuses. The agreement was one more step to make the process seamless.

About 7 percent of community college students in the state are black, according to California Community Colleges data. California currently counts about 500 or 600 students who have transferred to HBCUs, and Harris expects that number to double now that the agreement is in place.

The agreement also gives California students priority consideration for housing and makes them eligible for transfer scholarships, financial aid if they qualify, and pre-admission advising.

"More than half our students tell us that [preparing to transfer to a four-year college] is why they are here," Harris says. "When we find, as we have in the past few years here in California, that our big public institutions have had to limit the number of transfers, it's important that we do everything we can to make [other] options available to our students."

Opening Doors

The number of participating historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), which have a predominantly black enrollment but are open to all, grew as campuses expressed interest. The nine colleges that are opening their doors to California students are:

- Bennett College** in Greensboro, North Carolina
- Dillard University** in New Orleans
- Fisk University** in Nashville
- Lincoln University of Missouri** in Jefferson City
- Philander Smith College** in Little Rock, Arkansas
- Stillman College** in Tuscaloosa, Alabama
- Talladega College** in Talladega, Alabama
- Tuskegee University** in Tuskegee, Alabama
- Wiley College** in Marshall, Texas



FROM TOP: PHOTOOBJECTS.NET/THINKSTOCK; HONGQI ZHANG/THINKSTOCK

On the Legislative Front

BY AACC STAFF

Ut's been a busy year so far, with both the White House and Congress pushing proposals that would affect community colleges and their students. That means the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) has a crowded legislative agenda, with its top priorities being [funding for community colleges](#), the [reauthorization of the Higher Education Act \(HEA\)](#), [education tax credits](#), and [America's College Promise](#), a proposal by the Obama administration to provide tuition-free community college to qualifying students.

Federal Funding

This year, a budget resolution in Congress lowered the cap for funding for domestic discretionary programs, leading to less investment in student aid, higher education, job training, and other programs.

"Nevertheless, community colleges need to continue advocating for appropriations for a series of critical programs," says David Baime, senior vice president of government relations and policy analysis at AACC.

Those programs include the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, TRIO, GEAR UP, Strengthening Institutions, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Predominantly Black Colleges, Tribally Controlled Colleges, and the National Science Foundation's Advanced Technological Education program.

Reworking HEA

Congress is currently in the process of extending and modifying HEA.

As Congress presents proposals to reauthorize the law, AACC has been vocal in its support of reforming graduation-rate requirements to reflect that it takes many community

college students longer to complete than students in other sectors. Completion rates for community college students should tap students at the two-year mark, the three-year mark and the six-year mark (which would be a new addition). A broader time window would more accurately capture the completion rates of community college students, who often also work, tend to families, and have other obligations. Rates also should include community college students who transfer to other institutions, according to Baime.

The Pell Grant program, on which many community college students rely, has avoided budget cuts. More than 3 million community college students received Pell Grants in the 2013-14 award year, comprising 33 percent of Pell Grant funds.

Although the program is "fundamentally sound," AACC has

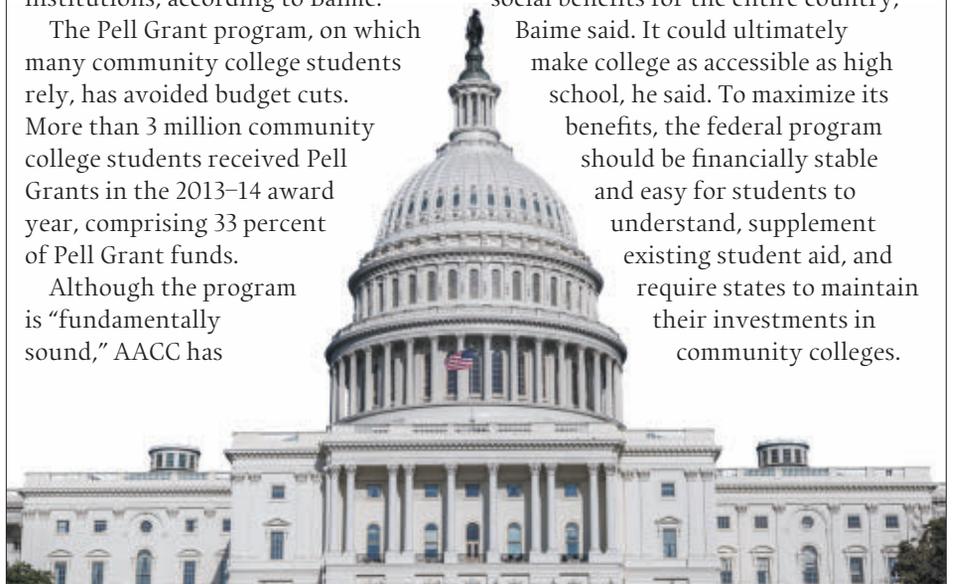
advocated for Pell Grants to offer a year-round option once again, Baime said. In 2008, Congress created a year-round Pell Grant to increase persistence and graduation, particularly for older working students, and to enable students to complete their degrees more quickly. A year later, Congress eliminated it in its budget cuts.

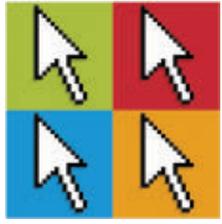
Increasing Access

Another financing vehicle for millions of college students is the American Opportunity Tax Credit. The current eligibility formula makes it difficult for many community college Pell Grant recipients to qualify for the credit.

The good news is that both chambers in Congress have proposed bills to change this.

America's College Promise, proposed by President Barack Obama in January, would have economic and social benefits for the entire country, Baime said. It could ultimately make college as accessible as high school, he said. To maximize its benefits, the federal program should be financially stable and easy for students to understand, supplement existing student aid, and require states to maintain their investments in community colleges.





QUICK HITS

Distance Education Shows Enrollment Increase

Most students live online, and that's good news for enrollment.

Despite the 3.5 percent decline of overall community college enrollment, the number of students signing up for online courses accounts for all recent student growth at two-year institutions. From fall 2013–2014, technology leaders at community colleges reported a 4.7 percent increase in enrollment in digital programs in a survey by the Instructional Technology Council.

It's not as high as the previous academic year, which marked 5.2 percent growth, but given the context of overall decline in that time frame, it's a positive step for colleges.

Despite the good news, online courses suffer from a retention problem and students tend to drop courses early in the semester. Still, there are more analytics that come with online courses that can help faculty get students back on track.

Read more at Inside Higher Ed: <http://bit.ly/1QrhNKI>.



Community College Pays

Why wouldn't students want to go to community college? Two-year degrees are less expensive, and they often hold a higher earning potential than the average bachelor's degree.

According to the College Board, community college tuition, fees, and room and board totals about \$6,000 annually, half the cost of the average four-year public institution's price tag. In Texas, those with technical associate degrees can make more than \$70,000, compared with graduates with bachelor's degrees who make \$40,000.

States, including Texas, are gathering income data to show the advantage of choosing community colleges and the growth sectors.

The four fastest-growing job categories that require an associate degree are dental hygienist, diagnostic medical sonographer, occupational therapy assistant, and physical therapist assistant.

Read more: <http://reut.rs/1cVBMlp>.



College Readiness Assessment Gets Support

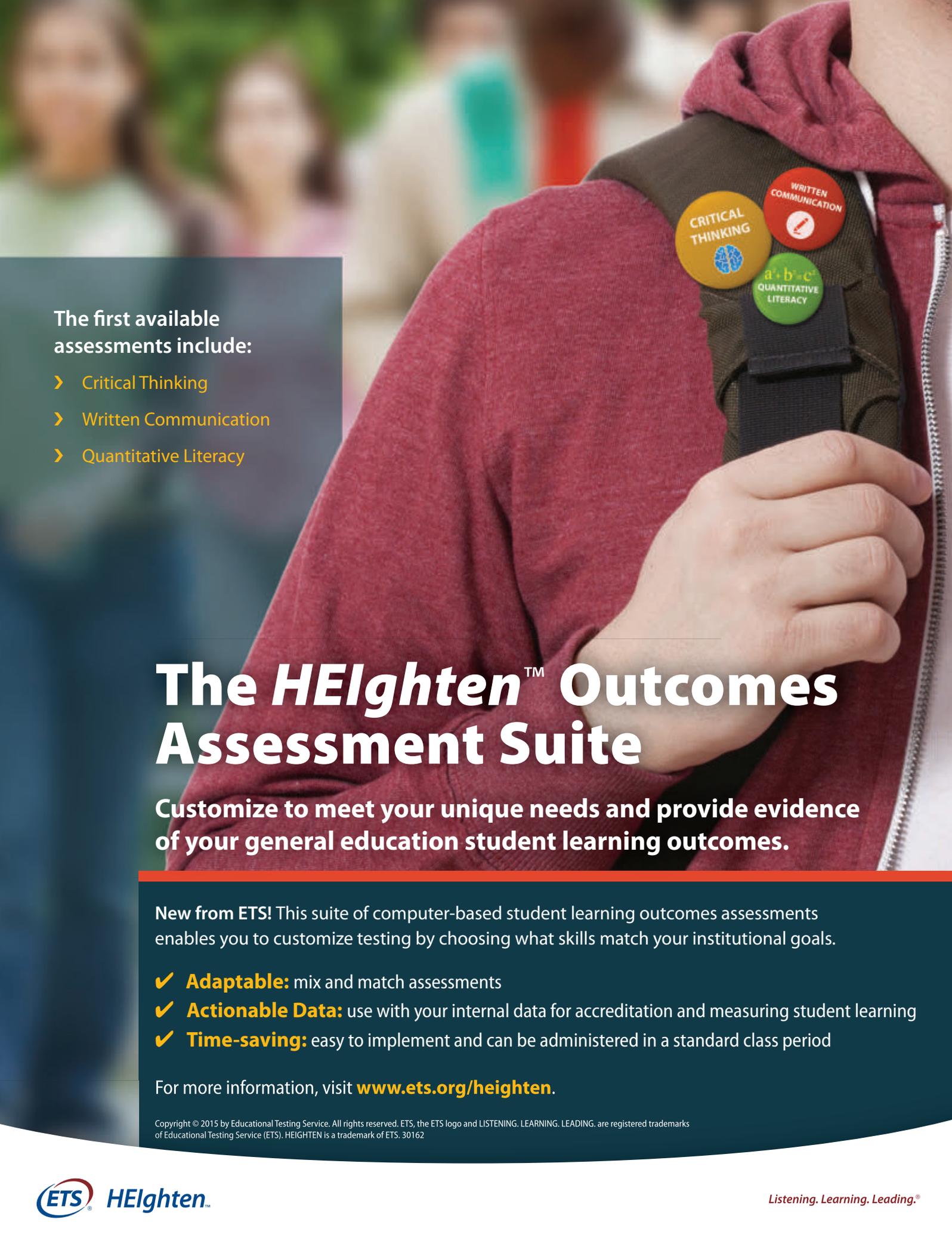
There's a new test in town to determine college readiness.

Some community colleges are now accepting Smarter Balanced test results for remedial course placement. In California, 78 of the 112 community colleges have agreed to use the test, which is based on Common Core standards and also used at four-year institutions.

Community colleges will likely continue to use placement tests such as Accuplacer in addition to the Smarter Balanced scores.

Remedial courses are often a barrier to college completion, as they cost students time and money. The new assessment could have a great impact.

Read more in *Education Week*: <http://bit.ly/1yTVFDt>.



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Building a 'Culture of Excellence'

Aspen Prize–winning college president Jackson Sasser on leading in the 21st century

BY EMILY ROGAN

Santa Fe College in Gainesville, Florida, is the 2015 recipient of the [Aspen Prize](#) for Community College Excellence. Selected from among thousands of colleges, Santa Fe has a completion rate of 62 percent compared with the national average of 40 percent, and 70 percent of Santa Fe's students are accepted at University of Florida in Gainesville. Since 2002, Jackson Sasser has been president of the college. He attributes the college's success to the faculty and students and the "culture of excellence" that exists throughout the campus. In his speech to staff after receiving the award, Sasser said that at Santa Fe, "it's about respect for one person at a time." In this *Community College Journal* interview, he discusses some of the college's successful programs and reflects on factors that contributed to its achievements.



What's your relationship like with your educational partners?

We get the egos and the turf wars out of the way and do what's best for students. Seventy percent of Santa Fe students transfer successfully to the University of Florida and do as well or better than non-community college students. The University of Florida refurbished a building on Santa Fe's campus, the Gator Den, where its staff can talk to and recruit our students; we're working together.

We also work closely with the two K-12 school districts; we're strategically placed in the middle. We're the conveyor and we provide the transition. We like doing that.

What are a few examples of Santa Fe's successful initiatives?

I want every student at this college to have an international experience. The competitors are from all over: Korea, Sweden, India, and China. So how do we do that? We have more international students in the classrooms, so students learn about different values, religion, mores, and customs. That's our obsession here; we know students engage when they're interested.

With black males persisting less than 20 percent, we started *My Brother's Keeper*, a mentoring program to address issues in both their academic and personal lives. Rather than have a vague notion that students don't have specific needs, we recognize that they do and we try to fill that gap.

How important is a college president in terms of a college's success?

I was president at Lee College in Texas for 10 years before coming to Santa Fe in 2002. I think it really matters how long a president stays at a school. Presidents who make commitments to colleges for some period of a time make a difference, rather than those who use it as stepping-stones in their careers. It's got to be the right fit, but if you look at colleges that prosper, that is a factor.

How would you characterize your leadership style?

Faculty-centric and supportive. My job is to get them the resources and get out of the way. I hire the right people and give them the freedom to make mistakes. I love these employees, and I'm in awe of what they do every single day—from the lowest-paid person to the trustee. This leadership team is the best I have served with since being in higher education. There is incredible talent, joy, and teamwork. We are obsessed with solving problems together. We do not chase trends or publicity; there is a singular focus on student success.

Every semester, I meet with students and get to know them. I have no agenda. I find out from them what we're doing well and what we need to improve. I'm breathing what they're doing.

And once a year, I'm student for a day and I go to class. I put on shorts (I haven't yet worn flip-flops!), and I don't have the professors introduce me until the end of the class. I love learning and love what we do here.

To address the digital divide in our minority communities, we refurbish old computers and put them in churches, homeless shelters, and other areas of public use to give access to those who don't have it.

Pathways to Persistence provides mentors to GED students, for academic fundamental support to respect where they are now and get them to a better place. College experience is college experience; we don't water things down here.

We have integrity in our advising process. With *Navigating the College Experience*, there is a symbolic marriage between student affairs and the academic staff. Each student is assigned an adviser, and we offer intentional advising with hard definitive facts.

From the first moment a student shows interest in Santa Fe, we offer the best advice we have based on the information we have. What is the probability of your persisting based on the data? If

“It's an obsession here that every student can improve and achieve a life-sustaining profession, something that they love.”

the cutoff for a class is 69 and you have a 68, then you're going into developmental education.

Santa Fe was awarded the Aspen Prize of \$800,000. What will it go toward?

Aspen has inspired us to do better, and we plan to stay on the same path. The

money will be endowed in the foundation, and we will use it to draw \$45,000–\$50,000 a year for entrepreneurial and innovative activities, better transfer programs, and to help more minority students succeed at higher levels, and to provide more degree-to-job programs.

Even though we're highest in the country for transfer rate, it's still just 70 percent. What about the other 30 percent? Who's satisfied with just a C?

We will continue with the exalted notion that everybody has a right to the best education available, regardless of race, socioeconomic, or geographical location. Everybody at Santa Fe has an opportunity to be part of that success. It's an obsession here that every student can improve and achieve a life-sustaining profession, something that they love.

EMILY ROGAN is an education writer based in New York.

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Report: Checking In on the 2020 Goal

BY REBECCA L. WEBER

Five years ago, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and a coalition of organizations that serve 1,200 community colleges agreed to a simple, bold, and ambitious commitment to “produce 50 percent more students with high-quality degrees and certificates by 2020, while increasing access and quality.”

At the halfway point of the decade-long plan, the simple question, “How are we doing?” isn’t quickly answered. The short answer is that we’re doing pretty well, especially in the sheer number of credentials that community colleges have awarded. More than 1 million postsecondary credentials were awarded in the 2013–2014 academic year from a community college. If the trajectory continues, it’s likely that we’ll come close to, or meet, the 2020 goal.

A new report from AACC, “[Community College Completion: Progress Toward Goal of 50% Increase](#),” examines progress over the past five years, using several sources including data from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC). National interventions may already be having an impact on the ground, says Kent A. Phillippe, associate vice president of research and student success at AACC. “Early indications are that colleges are doing well. This work is hard. It’s going to take a while to see the impact of these changes.”

Beyond Completion

Rather than focus only on the number of credentials awarded, the NSC data allow an understanding to the number of students whose first credential is the result of community college attendance. “What do we really want to accomplish? We don’t want to minimize that many community colleges are focusing on the number of credentials they produce,” Phillippe says. “Ultimately, that provides value to

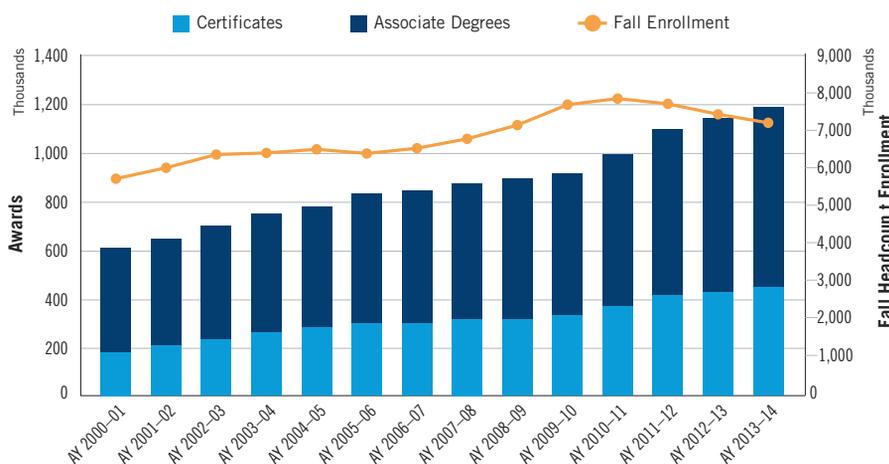
students and value to society. However, we also want to demonstrate how many individuals in the population are newly credentialed as a result of attending a community college.”

This report looks at multiple targets. For example, it breaks down students who earned their first credential by age group. The most common first credential for students ages 24 or younger was an associate degree, followed by a four-year degree with community college preparation, and finally a certificate. Students 41 and older were also most likely to earn an associate degree as their first credential, but for this cohort, new certificates were far more common than a four-year degree. Overall, students 24 or younger earned more new credentials than students ages 25 and older. “Community colleges are clearly having success with this age group,” says Phillippe, noting numerous intervention programs focused on youth.

Rates That Are Relevant

The report also explores completion rates, and not only the number of completers or completions. Existing national data sources are not good measures, and acquiring and analyzing the data is a slow process—the most recent numbers are for the 2013–2014 school year, which necessarily includes people who began their studies two, three, four, or more years ago—meaning that we’ll only have a complete picture after the decade is over. The Voluntary Framework of Accountability offers promise above and beyond the Federal graduation rates for better understanding of community college outcomes in the years to come. As this initiative is only in its second year, participation rates are still too low to make national projections. The bottom line, says Phillippe, is that the report includes “some positives, but in reality, we still have a long way to go.”

Certificates and Associate Degrees Awarded by Community Colleges and Fall Headcount Enrollment in Public Community Colleges: 2000–01 to 2013–14



Source: National Student Clearinghouse



www.nisod.org

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Fundraising for Student Success

\$10 million gift highlights shift in private giving

BY ALEX JOHNSON



In March, Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) received the largest gift in the institution's 50-year history. The \$10 million donation from the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation and the [Mandel Supporting Foundations](#) will increase the college's emphasis on the role of the humanities in promoting student civic engagement and leadership development. The Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Humanities Center, supporting a Scholars Academy and directed by an endowed chair for humanities/dean, aims to provide innovative learning experiences for the next generation of leadership in our region's businesses, industries, governments, and nonprofits.

This gift, like other recent major donations to Tri-C and peer institutions nationwide, highlights the fact that private fundraising for community colleges is in the midst of a significant shift in priorities. No longer do most private donors wish to contribute toward bricks and mortar. Rather, their focus has followed that of community college agendas and of the ongoing course change in government funding: toward student success and completion.

Private fundraising has been a staple of private higher education for many decades, and public four-year universities adopted the practice to support the building boom to modernize outdated campuses in the 1990s. With less-developed alumni networks and traditionally more robust government funding, community colleges on the whole did not pursue private donors on any significant scale until after the turn of the 21st century.

Eroded government funding, however, has increased the need for community colleges to consider other revenue streams in order to maintain affordable, accessible education without compro-

missing quality. Changes to Federal Pell eligibility have lessened the amount of financial aid available to many students. Most colleges have seen state support erode significantly; in Ohio, some forecasters estimate that state support for higher education will be completely gone by the middle of the century.

What state support remains is increasingly being tied to outcomes. Ohio has been one of the first states to shift its share of instruction from fully enrollment-based in 2013 to entirely completion-based—in just two years. Funding is no longer connected to the headcount in our classes, but to the number of those students who successfully complete their courses, pass educational milestones, and earn certificates and degrees.

Funding and Completion

This funding focus follows a renewed emphasis on completion among our institutions. President Barack Obama issued a 10-year challenge in the American Graduation Initiative, calling on our nation's colleges and universities to produce 10 million more credentialed Americans by the year 2020. Community colleges educate 40 percent of our country's college students, and we are rising to meet this challenge. Tri-C is on track to meet our portion of the goal in graduating 13,000 additional students by the target date.

This emphasis is also seen in the report of the 21st Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges, *Reclaiming the American Dream*. That report, which I was honored to participate in creating, recommends that colleges redesign the student experience to increase completion; reinvest institutional roles to meet current and future workforce needs; and reset the system to promote accountability. State policy moves such as Ohio's are attempts to apply these recommendations, and they should be applauded.

But redesigning the student experience requires innovative approaches



Private donors' focus now follows student success and completion.

and increased support services, especially as we seek to maintain our accessibility and eliminate the achievement gap that has negatively affected minority and low-income students. These new approaches nearly always carry a price tag beyond what can be paid by simply reallocating existing resources. For this reason, private investment in public higher education is becoming increasingly important to the success of our students and our nation.

Supporting Students Toward Success

Tri-C has refocused its work with potential donors to emphasize student success and completion, and it has seen remarkable results. Besides the Mandel gift, we have sought to significantly increase scholarship support, particularly for students who commit to completing their degrees. In this pilot year, 112 Completion Scholarships were awarded to incoming students to encourage this commitment—and much of the funding came from new gifts and endowments.

More than one out of six of these students posted a 4.0 GPA in their first term. In total, the Tri-C Foundation this year awarded more than \$1.5 million in scholarships to 1,500 students.

Other major gifts to Tri-C have also focused on student success. A substantial donation in honor of Alfred Lerner, U.S. Marine Corps veteran, industry leader, and philanthropist, has created a center with expanded support services for our student veterans. It is estimated that 10,000 veterans will benefit from the center's services each year.

Creative approaches to redesigning and enhancing the student experience, such as those being adopted at Tri-C, attract the attention of potential donors. By focusing our private fundraising efforts on students, rather than structures, community colleges will build our resources for increasing success and completion, opening a bright future to millions more Americans.

ALEX JOHNSON is president of Cuyahoga Community College in Cleveland, Ohio.

State of Successions

Now is the time to focus on retaining and developing new leaders

BY WILL AUSTIN

As we implement the work of the 21st-Century Initiative, recognize the leadership crisis, and address increasing public accountability, leadership training will become increasingly important as the number of potential next-generation leaders continues to diminish.

When taken in the context of the work of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) to position community colleges at the forefront of the national agenda—not only to address the future potential of higher education, but also to help ensure the economic prosperity of our nation (admittedly, a daunting task)—the role of current leaders to ensure a continuum of effective administrators who can advance our institutions through unprecedented change and success is central to our collective legacy. In simpler terms, this may be the most exciting and important moment to lead community colleges in the history of our movement, and a

key aspect of that leadership is the development and preparation of our successors.

Granted, few of us considered this as we assumed our first presidency. The furthest thing from our minds on that first day was, “Who will succeed me?” But thinking about the institution’s health in the long term demands this consideration. We must think vertically (how can I grow this institution?) as well as horizontally (how can I position this institution for the future?).

For me, over the past decade, the questions of who will lead my institution next, how we can ensure leadership to reach the goals of the 21st-Century Initiative, and where we will find

our next generation of leaders are regular, ongoing, and vital conversations among administrators and trustees at our annual meetings.

Help Is on the Way

Organizations that support community colleges—everyone from AACC, the Association of Community College Trustees, the League for Innovation in the Community College, the Aspen Institute, Achieving the Dream, and others—offer advice, cooperation, and counsel on finding new leaders, making lists of competencies, and doing some hand-wringing about the narrowing pipeline of leadership. The truth is hundreds of presidencies change hands each year, and the number of transitions occurring annually appears to be increasing as the length of tenure for the average college presidency is simultaneously decreasing. So, it is not only finding new leaders that becomes important; rather, it’s retaining and developing them that needs further refinement.

The number of people assuming presidencies with the barest levels of experience (in academia or elsewhere) has grown significantly and quickly in the past five years, and with the



“Our leadership legacy likely will be measured not only in our success in increasing graduates, but also in our internal work at preparing our successors.”

large number of future retirements anticipated, this cohort will only grow exponentially. As someone who entered the presidential ranks with tons of energy, exuberance, and the dangerous hubris that comes with such an assumption of leadership in youth and relative inexperience, I also entered with great need—often unrealized—for mentorship, counsel, and advice from some more seasoned and much wiser leaders.

Programs for community college presidents, such as AACC's Presidents Academy Summer Institute (PASI), are full of advice, but a lack of experience in leadership often makes it difficult to discern which advice is best accepted and adhered to. Sometimes we are fortunate to experience excellent mentor presidents who take interest in our careers, but many talented future leaders are not quite

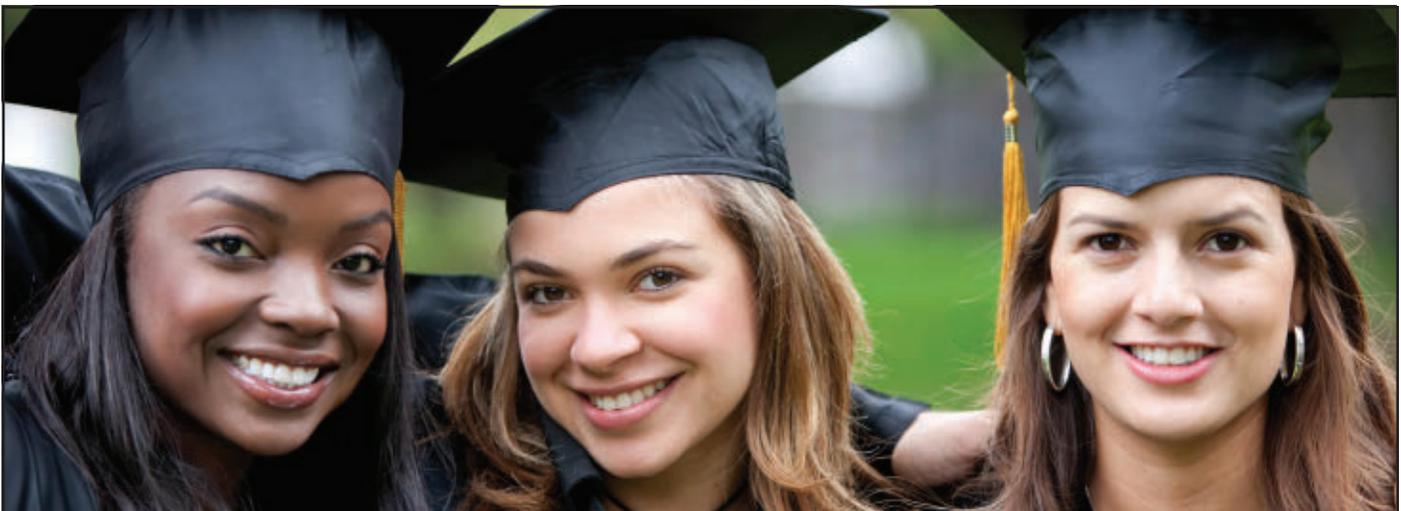
as fortunate, a circumstance exacerbated in the era of shortened tenure of the modern community college presidency. The challenge for current leaders is to create a systemic approach for successors—future potential leaders—to get sound and ongoing advice, training, and professional development.

At Warren County Community College, we have many internal professional development programs, but our greatest impact has come from realizing that as a small college with limited finances, we are often training future leaders for other colleges, as I suspect is true of most smaller schools. Our greatest return on investment in preparing people for advancement has come from their participation in programs like AACC's [John E. Roueche Future Leaders Institute](#), the [League's Executive](#)

[Leadership Institute](#), and [PASI](#), where one can depend on advice and counsel from many leading experts.

We continue to find value in in-house development for those who choose to participate; however, the success of an ad-hoc approach is often expensive and randomized. The key imperative for all community colleges, not just for a small one like Warren, will be to find a more systemic approach and dedicated funding to support these programs. Our leadership legacy likely will be measured not only in our success in increasing graduates, but also in our internal work at preparing our successors. Both are crucial to the continued and future success of community colleges.

WILL AUSTIN is the president of Warren County Community College in Washington, N.J.



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THE NEXT BIG THINGS

Delivering what community college leaders need to approach 21st-century reform

HIGHLIGHTS FROM AACC'S 95TH ANNUAL CONVENTION



4

What's on all community college leaders' minds right now? Student success. In April, at the 95th annual American Association of Community Colleges' convention, college leaders descended on San Antonio—during the city's Fiesta celebration—to rally around the next big things that will lead to more graduates, increased funding and accountability, and other promising practices that can be replicated and scaled across the country. More than 2,000 leaders shared successful strategies, learned about the latest tools that institutions are using, and made lasting connections. Here's a look back at the event that sent everyone home with a long list of ideas and takeaways.

8





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APRIL 18-21, 2015
SAN ANTONIO, TX

THE NEXT BIG THINGS

1. Laura Meeks, president of Eastern Gateway Community College, accepting Exemplary CEO/Board Award of Excellence
2. Montgomery College President DeRionne Pollard and staff celebrate the Emerging Leadership win
3. More than 190 exhibitors
4. AACC Board of Directors
5. Vincent Tinto, accepting Harry S. Truman Award, with AACC Board Chair Ken Atwater and President-CEO Walter Bumphus
6. Keynote speaker and best-selling author Malcolm Gladwell
7. The Alamo Colleges District. (From left) Bruce Leslie, chancellor; Adena Williams Loston, president, St. Philip's College; Ruben Michael "Mike" Flores, president, Palo Alto College; Craig T. Follins, president, Northeast Lakeview College; Robert Vela, president, San Antonio College; Ric Neal Baser, president, Northwest Vista College
8. Outstanding Alumni Award recipient Wellington Webb, with Northeastern Junior College President Jay Lee
9. Keynote speaker Robert Reich



GAME PLAN

COLLEGES SHARE A PAGE FROM THEIR PLAYBOOKS THAT ADDRESSES THE LOOMING LEADERSHIP CRISIS.

BY HEATHER BOERNER



Once a year, Kathleen Hetherington and her team of vice presidents at Howard Community College (HCC) in Maryland spend a day with 20 employees who aspire to reach the next level in their careers. And each time, Hetherington, who has been the college's president since 2007, tells them: "We see you—the president's team sees you—not only as leaders at what you're doing now, but also in your potential to grow beyond what you're doing now."

This is not a pep talk. This is critical for the college's future. Forty-seven percent of the college's workforce is over age 50, according to Hetherington. Imagine it in 15 years, she says. Creating a robust channel of talent helps put her and others at ease about future transitions, because they know the institution will be in good hands.

"Building a pipeline makes sure that people don't get focused on what's going to happen if so-and-so leaves," she says. "People do leave, and we're going to see this going forward. You can't work forever. There's going to be a major exodus."

The graying of community college leadership is an issue across the country. More than half of all presidents expect to retire in five years, according to data from the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). Succession planning is yet another opportunity for colleges already navigating a variety of reforms to innovate. We can and should "grow our own," says Janice Gilliam, president of Northeast State Community College in

Tennessee. But how each college does that depends on its culture, history, resources, and needs.

The Right Search

Preston Pulliams is owner of [Gold Hill Associates](#), a presidential search firm, and he's also been president of three community colleges. He knows first-hand about the leadership search process at today's community colleges.

His take: Decades of poor succession planning means that the pool of qualified candidates can be thin, making searches long and sometimes difficult. Finding the right leader, who is prepared to lead a college through reforms and who reflects the diversity of the college's student population, is a tough task.

"It seems like everyone is challenged by small pools [of qualified candidates]," Pulliams says. "And it's not just presidents. It's vice presidents and associate vice presidents, deans, officers in student affairs. There are not enough people to fill not just the CEO position, but also staff positions as well."

This is a major concern. In 2001, AACC issued a report stating that three-quarters of community college presidents expected to retire by 2016. A 2012 AACC survey reported the number at 75 percent in 10 years.

The good news is more than half of presidents surveyed in 2007 said they were grooming someone for their role. And while that's the traditional way to select a successor, it's not always in the best interest of the college—or the future president.

"I could have gotten away with grooming someone and bringing him to the board and having him approved," Pulliams says of his planned retirement as president of Portland Community College (PCC) in Oregon. "But that president would have started his term in a negative situation in terms of gaining support from the campus."

That's because stakeholders such as faculty have come to expect a role in

selecting the new president. A history of public searches in academia means that internal processes aren't enough. So when Pulliams works with colleges on succession plans, he suggests this approach: Make sure you have a vital internal leadership program that can produce competitive candidates, and then open the search to external candidates as well.

"As an internal candidate, you have an advantage because everyone knows you. But you're also at a disadvantage—because everyone knows you," he says. "Some boards come to the conclusion that it's time to have an infusion of new ideas and approaches, so they go in a different direction. Some are quite comfortable with where they are, so they go with an internal person."

Hybrid Mentorship Models

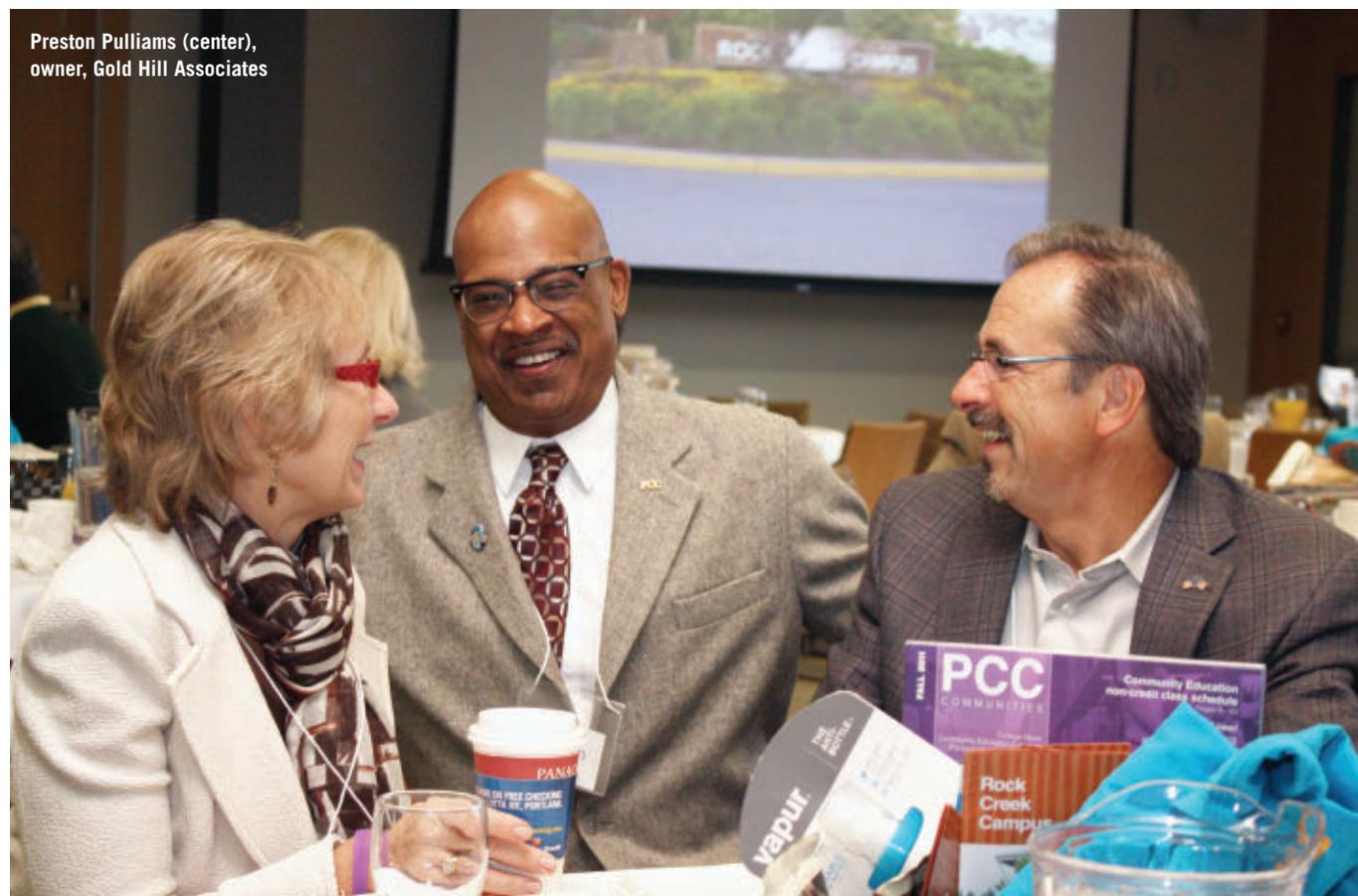
William Seymour, president of Cleveland State Community College in

Tennessee, comes from the old school of leadership development. Sure, a decade ago he attended the Institute for Educational Management program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, but nothing guided his trajectory like working under Gerald Gibson, the president of Maryville College in Tennessee.

"He taught me how to approach a college administration, how to look at the big picture, and how to lead people in an institution," Seymour says. "To me, even though there are more formalized programs and institutes, probably the most important learning experience was working as a vice president for many years."

So it makes sense that at Cleveland State the professional-development program is an amalgam of districtwide professional-development trainings and informal mentorship.

But there are points in which the two overlap, like at AACC's [High Perform-](#)



Preston Pulliams (center), owner, Gold Hill Associates

mance Team Training, which Seymour and his Cabinet attended in January.

The program matches college leadership teams with coaches to review their needs and move the colleges “from good to great,” Seymour says. For Cleveland State, that meant a lot of work on communication among the Cabinet members, including trust-building and problem-solving discussions.

This doesn’t sound like mentorship, but Seymour says this is on-the-job leadership training for his Cabinet. For example, the team walked away with its first strategic plan in years. Seymour presented his vice presidents with the process and directed them in how to talk to community members and stakeholders about the plan.

“[My vice presidents] may not have the overall responsibility for engaging in senior-level activity, but it gives them all kinds of experience,” he says. “What they’ll find when they do seek higher-level positions is that they’ve had a breadth of experience that will make a big difference for them.”

A New Kind of Training

When Pulliams tapped Linda Blanchette to design PCC’s leadership development program in 2007, it was a first. Before that, PCC’s professional development had mainly consisted of half-time release time, in which faculty were paid for a full course load but worked part time in the classroom and also were given time for their own learning. Administrative leadership training didn’t exist.

So Blanchette got to work. She did three months of research. She went to the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development’s community college leadership and development conference. She researched other community college leadership programs, which largely consisted of lectures. In the end, Blanchette concluded that sitting in a room for

“There’s an acknowledgment that people can be good managers—even great managers—and still need leadership training to get to the next level.”

—Janice Gilliam, president, Northeast State Community College

several hours and listening to someone else talk is not how adults learn best.

So PCC’s leadership development program, the Leadership Excellence and Development (LEAD) Academy, takes a different tack. Every year, a dozen of PCC’s 185 department managers, faculty department chairs, and

program coordinators are charged with creating a project initiative that will better the campus. The participants must design, delegate, and manage time. Regular on-campus meetings teach them management skills that can be applied at work the next week, and the aspiring leaders meet on their own time to coach one another and manage the project.

At the end of the eight months, LEAD cohort members present their initiative proposal to all PCC managers. If they want the program to continue after the cohort ends, they must find a staff member or department to own the project. From the seven cohorts that have graduated the program so far, groups have created programs to keep college alumni engaged, to financially assist students who want to return to school and pay down debt, and to help foster youth navigate the financial-aid application process.

And while the college doesn’t keep statistics on how many graduates have gone on to take higher-level positions

Search for a President
San Pablo, California



Contra Costa College

Contra Costa Community College District (CCCCD) has announced the search for the next President of Contra Costa College (CCC), the oldest and most diverse college in the District. The District is one of the largest multi-college community college districts in California serving a population of 1,019,640 people. With an enrollment of about 10,000 students, the College is located in the Northern California Bay Area about 30 miles north of San Francisco.

Contra Costa College is a comprehensive community college that primarily serves the residents of West Contra Costa County. The College is designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution, is a leader in community college education and has a history of program excellence with strong ties to the community it serves. The College has two major construction projects slated for completion next year including a new classroom building and a new campus center which will include all student services functions, dining, the bookstore, and new college administrative offices.

The new President will report to the CCCCCD Chancellor and will serve as the Chief Executive Officer of the College. The President is responsible for the delivery of educational and other services provided by the College. The District seeks an innovative leader who will provide vision and direction for the college’s future.

For the position profile and information about the search, please visit: <http://apptrkr.com/583903>

The target date for applications is: April 20, 2015

For additional information, nominations, and confidential inquiries contact:

Pam Fisher, Ed.D., at pamfisher@bresnan.net or (406) 570-0516

Narcisca Polonio, Ed.D., at npolonio@acct.org or (202) 276-1983.

A premier Community College



“With each leader trained, the whole college rises another level. To me, this is the biggest legacy I can leave.”

—Janice Gilliam, president, Northeast State Community College

at the college, Blanchette says she regularly sees reference to employees’ LEAD Academy work in promotion announcements.

“There’s an acknowledgment that people can be good managers—even great managers—and still need leadership training to get to the next level,” she says. “People know it’s valued, so they feel willing to throw their hats in the ring for positions when they become available.”

A Focus on Appalachia

While Seymour’s Cleveland State doesn’t have its own internal leadership program, it is part of a regional effort. The Community Colleges of Appalachia, of which Cleveland State is a member, will hold its first regional leadership-training program in June to help colleges develop future presidents without the resources to create

a months- or years-long leadership-training program in-house.

The program is based on the Targeted Leadership Development Program (TLDP), now in its fifth year at Northeast State Community College. The two-year program brings together 20–25 aspiring leaders for monthly meetings. The first year is traditional training on law, media, personality typing, conflict resolution, and decision-making; the second year requires participants to pursue a president-approved campuswide initiative to benefit the campus, putting everything they’ve learned in the previous year to work.

The conference, which will be held June 22–26 and is sponsored by the Community Colleges of Appalachia, is meant to give two aspiring leaders from each of the region’s community colleges a chance to experience something like TLDP in an abbreviated form, said Don Cameron, former president of Guilford Technical Community College in North Carolina and the architect of Northeast State Community College’s TLDP and of the June conference.

His hope is that it will inspire college leaders in the region to find the funding to create ongoing programs at their institutions.

“A week is great but it’s not ongoing,” he says. “We’re hoping that it will catch on.”

So far, the TLDP program at Northeast State is showing results, says Gilliam. She estimates up to half of the first cohort’s graduates have already moved up at the college. For Gilliam, who started at a community college before earning a doctorate, retirement seems far off. But leaving the college in good hands is the most important thing she can do.

“With each leader trained, the whole college rises another level,” she says. “To me, this is the biggest legacy I can leave—to train people forward, to give back to the community that helped me so much.”

HEATHER BOERNER is an education writer based in San Francisco.

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AACC’s High Performance Team Training can help your leadership team. Find out how to apply at aacc.nche.edu.



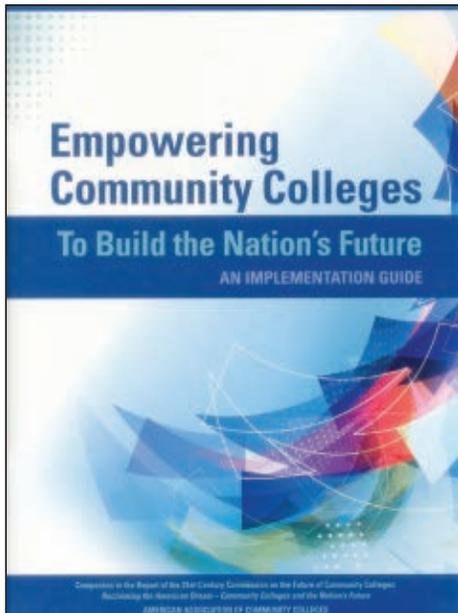


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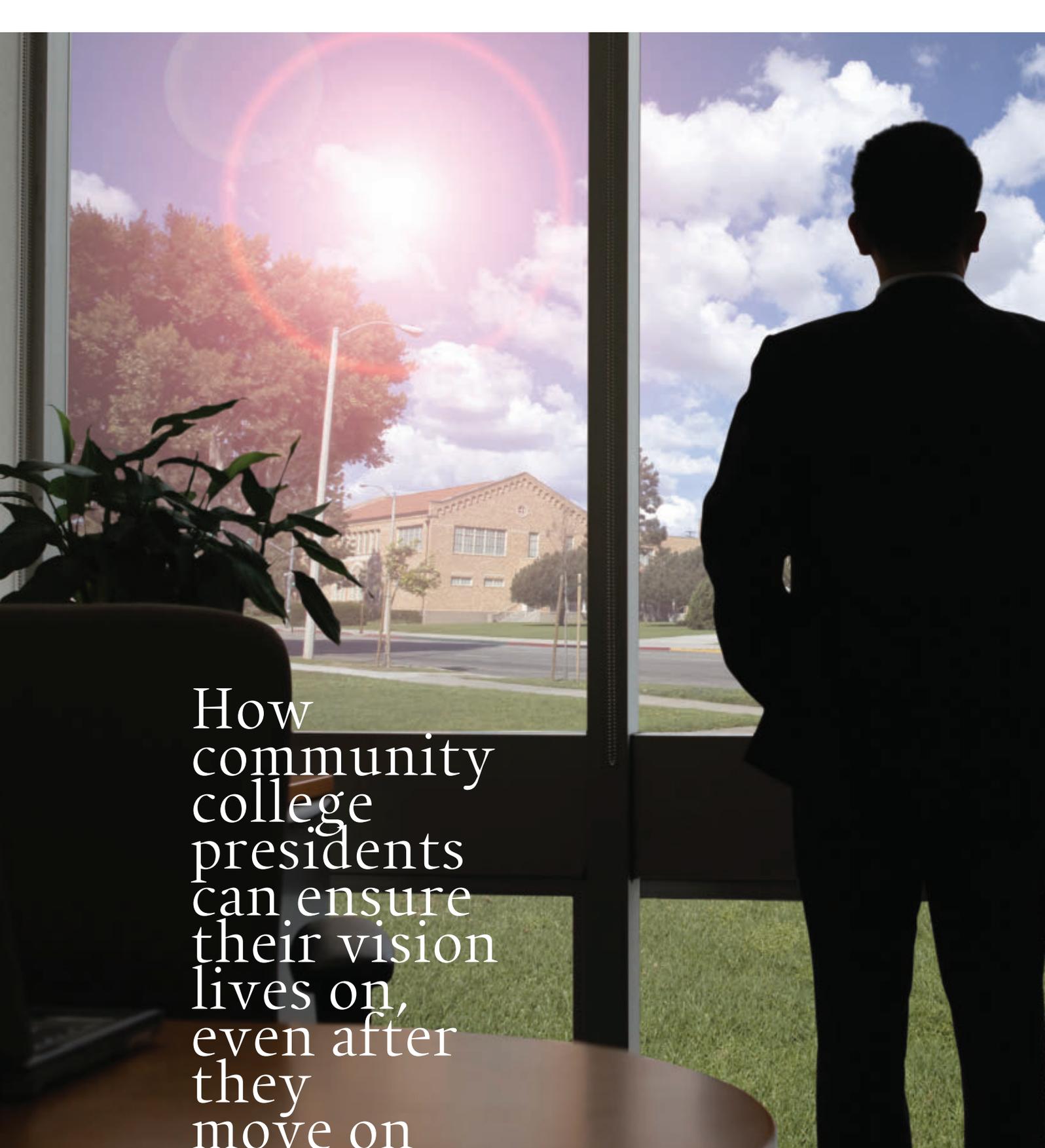
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From AACC and co-publisher Rowman & Littlefield



How
community
college
presidents
can ensure
their vision
lives on,
even after
they
move on

GUIDING LIGHT

BY DENNIS PIERCE



When Linda Thor stepped down as president of Rio Salado College in Tempe, Arizona, nearly six years ago, she left the college well positioned for success.

Thor became its president in 1990 when Rio Salado was the sixth-largest of the 10 schools in the Maricopa County Community College District. Today, it is the largest, with about 60,000 students—the vast majority of whom are learning online.

Thor knows something about leaving a legacy, and those lessons are serving her well as she prepares to retire from her position as chancellor of California's Foothill-De Anza Community College District this summer.

"It's not about making sure one's own legacy continues," she says. "Rather, what we want is for our institutions to be able to continue to thrive and evolve when we are gone."

Community college presidents often get advice about how to land a job or, once hired, how to be more effective leaders. But they don't hear as much about their role in preparing their institutions for life after their service.

"It's all about how to get *in*, but not necessarily how to get *out*," Thor says.

She and other college presidents agree: Effectively passing the torch to your successor involves leaving an

institution in better shape than when you arrived while laying the groundwork for this success to carry on.

Establishing a Culture

When Margaret B. Lee became academic vice president of Oakton Community College in Illinois in 1985, she had no idea she would be there for 30 years or serve as the college's president for two decades.

Now, Lee is retiring at the end of June after a tenure during which the college has become more ethnically diverse, students have produced award-winning scientific research, and *The New York Times* has recognized it among the top 10 community colleges in America.

"Our classes are known for their direct connection with teachers," Lee says. "We have no classes bigger than 35 students, and we've built our buildings that way. We're kind of like the bar in *Cheers*: Everybody knows your name."

Oakton has a reputation of excellence in both science and the arts. "We've had a long commitment to STEM programming, before STEM became sexy," Lee says. "We were one of the first community colleges to receive National Science Foundation grants for undergraduate research projects."

Oakton students can research topics such as invasive species, prairie restoration, or cells and disease in a brand-new facility named after Lee. The

93,000-square-foot Margaret Burke Lee Science and Health Careers Center was dedicated in March, and it contains a state-of-the-art research lab that will help “propel students to wonderful transfer institutions and careers,” she says.

But Lee believes her greatest contribution to Oakton is not this new science building, or opening a second campus, or adding a performing arts center.

“The legacy that I’m most proud of is being here for 30 years, and creating a community of employees and students who care very much about each other and about student success,” she says.

Leaving a legacy is about establishing a culture that serves the institution well and enables it to thrive, she adds.

In choosing her successor, Oakton’s board of trustees met with the college

community in a number of forums to determine what they should look for in the next president. The standard they adopted “was not a declaration of change, but a commitment to carry on the kinds of culture and values that have formed and shaped the institution for the last several years,” Lee says.

In March, the board unanimously chose current Vice President of Student



“It’s not about making sure one’s own legacy continues. Rather, what we want is for our institutions to be able to continue to thrive and evolve when we are gone.”

—Linda Thor, outgoing chancellor of California’s
Foothill-De Anza Community College District

High Performance Team Training



About the Training

The AACC High Performance Team (HPT) training has been established to assist community college leadership teams with moving into high performance mode or can be used as a way to sustain high performance. The training is a four-day focused training that progresses from individual team assessments to managing the team's performance to implementing change management and assessing institutional health. Each team receives a coach to assist it through the four-day program.



To Apply

Submit a letter of interest including the names of all participating team members on the college's letterhead. It is essential that the college president participate as a member of the team.

Letters may be sent to aaccleadershpsuite@aacc.nche.edu.

Upcoming HPT Dates

The next high performance team training will take place September 20 - 23, 2015, in Houston, Texas.

Registration

AACC does not currently charge a registration fee for participation in High Performance Team training.

Exit Strategy

To ensure that your institution will continue to thrive once you are gone, you must establish a culture of success and develop the talent around you who will carry on the college's mission when you leave. The other keys to stepping down successfully:

1. Stay long enough to make a difference.

Nationally, the average tenure of a community college president is about four years. Yet, "the literature would say that the recommended tenure is seven years," says Linda Thor, chancellor of the Foothill-De Anza Community College District. "We also know that to bring about any sustained change in an organization, it needs to have stable leadership for 10 years or more."

So if you want to leave a legacy, the first thing you should do is "commit to being there for a considerable length of time," she says. Otherwise, when institutions change presidents every few years, a new leader might come in with a great vision—but the staff are inclined to say, "I can wait this one out, because there will be another president coming soon."

2. But don't overstay your welcome.

It's important to know not only *how* to get out, but also *when* to get out, Thor says. "Colleges need different types of presidents at different points in their history," she explains. "Sometimes they need a growth president, sometimes they need a maintenance president, and sometimes they need a president to help them redirect. Those are all different skill sets."

In the nearly 20 years that Thor was president at Rio Salado College, every few years she would stop and ask herself: Am I still the best president for this institution? "I'm very much a growth president, and any time I would think about leaving, I would get incredibly sad," she says. "As long as the college was still growing, I felt like I was still the best president for the institution."

3. Don't be a lame duck.

Make sure you continue your efforts to improve the college right up until the last day, says Harford Community College President Dennis Golladay. "That's what my predecessors did here, that's the attitude I had at Cayuga Community College, and that's the same ethos that I will carry through here at Harford."

One goal that Golladay hopes to complete before he retires from Harford in 2016 is the opening of a Regional Workforce Center. "We want to get all of those programs into a new building so they can cross-pollinate, keep up with what others are doing, and adapt quickly to changing workforce needs and circumstances."

Affairs Joianne Smith as Oakton's next president, "a woman with whom I've been working for 12 years," Lee says. "That, to me, is a wonderful affirmation that things will continue—and I can walk out the door with less than a heavy heart. It's an affirmation of something we have created together."

Relying on Your Staff

At Harford Community College in Maryland, President Dennis Golladay plans to retire after the 2015–16 academic year, and he is already preparing for the transition.

Like Thor, Golladay also has experience in leaving a legacy: Upon his departure in 2006 as president of Cayuga Community College in Auburn, New York, where he helped establish a thriving entrepreneurial studies program, Golladay was honored with the title of president emeritus for his leadership there.

After a four-year stint as vice chancellor for community colleges at the State University of New York, Golladay arrived at Harford with a goal of making the college a center for the community—academically, culturally, and economically.

"My mantra has been that I would like the county to see us as an institution they cannot thrive without," he says.

Whether the culture you have established is sustained once you leave "depends upon the vision and outlook and performance of the next leader of the college," he says. "But if you have a very dynamic and capable senior staff, that helps to carry the momentum forward."

At Harford, the senior staff consists of vice presidents for academic affairs, student affairs, finance and operations, and marketing and communications. Not only must these individuals have tremendous knowledge and ability in their own respective fields, he says, but also they have to be able to work well together as a team. College presidents can foster this sense of teamwork by

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“If you have a very dynamic and capable senior staff, that helps to carry the momentum forward.”

—Dennis Golladay, president, Harford Community College

setting the right tone and insisting that all major decisions will be discussed and solved as the result of a team effort.

“I consider this group to be extremely capable,” Golladay says, “and I would hope that my successor would be able to depend upon those individuals as well.”

Level 5 Leadership

Like Lee, Thor agrees that a college president’s legacy “shouldn’t be about a specific program or building, but about the ability of the organization to be great.” And like Golladay, she agrees that the people you leave around you are critical to sustaining the success you have built.

In his book *Good to Great*, best-selling author Jim Collins discusses the characteristics of “Level 5 Leaders,” one of which is preparing the organization to continue to thrive after they’re gone. “As a leader, you want to make sure that you’re developing people to be able to step in when you leave,” Thor explains.

To leave a legacy, you also have to “build a very intentional culture at the college,” she noted. In other words, you must help the institution define its values, based on the shared vision of the college community.

When Thor arrived at Rio Salado in 1990, the college considered itself a school of “second choice,” she says—

meaning that it tended to enroll students who’d been closed out of classes at traditional colleges. “They even started classes two weeks after the other nine colleges in the Maricopa system started,” she says, “to pick up the students who were closed out.”

Working with the entire college community, Thor set about redefining the school’s culture. In meetings with stakeholders, she and her leadership team realized there were a few things they could do to make the college more attractive to students, such as offering distance learning.

“The college was uniquely positioned in the mid-’90s with the emergence of the World Wide Web,” Thor says. “Because we had this spirit of innovation and entrepreneurialism, we jumped into online learning in a big way.”

Under Thor’s leadership, Rio Salado developed what she called a culture of “relentless improvement,” based on enhancing the student experience. “As a result, the college has 24/7 services available,” she says. “Online classes start every Monday; students don’t have to wait for September or January to be able to start a class.”

Thor was there for nearly 20 years. “I had a strong cadre in place,” she says. “And I had a choice of either staying there and sliding into retirement, or moving on to one more institution while I felt that I still had enough time to make a difference.”

At Foothill-De Anza, she has helped advance the college’s technology agenda. She also was instrumental in two key statewide initiatives: leading a \$57 million grant project to transform online learning for all 112 California community colleges, and getting the authority for the state’s community colleges to offer baccalaureate degrees.

A bill passed unanimously by the state legislature last fall created a pilot program in which 15 California community colleges each will begin offering one baccalaureate degree in an area of high workforce demand, starting in fall 2016. One of the 15 is Foothill-De Anza, which will begin offering a baccalaureate degree in dental hygiene.

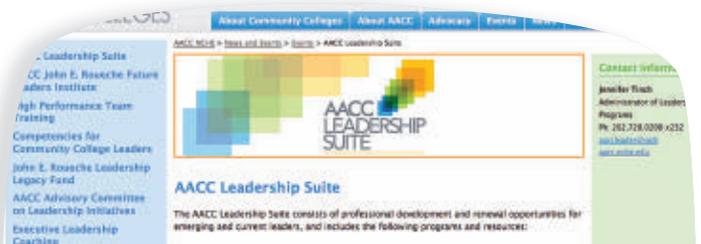
“That was a 20-year goal of mine, and now that it is in place, it’s OK for me to retire,” Thor says.

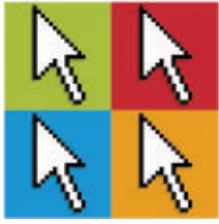
She concluded: “If you’ve got the culture in place, with the right values and a shared vision, and you’ve developed the people, then your legacy would be that you have left an institution that not only will survive, but will continue to transform itself as the times and circumstances dictate.”

DENNIS PIERCE is an education writer based in Boston.

TAKE THE LEAD

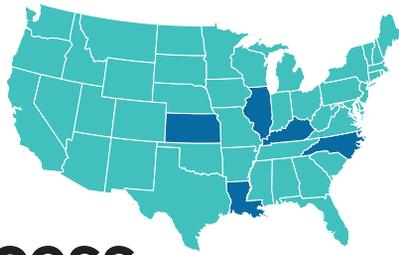
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QUICK HITS

Accelerating Opportunity Program Reports Success



A Jobs for the Future (JFF) initiative to put low-skilled adult learners on the fast track to obtaining college credentials and career training is making great strides, according to a report, released this spring, that assesses the project's second year. Five states—Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, and North Carolina—are taking part in the program, which is modeled after the Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training program in Washington state.

In its second year, the JFF initiative to reform adult basic education, called Accelerating Opportunity (AO), served 2,874 students across the five states, up from 2,370 in the first year. Each participating college chose a specific set of career pathways in which to incorporate the AO approach. In the first two years, the total number of career pathways offered rose from 89 to 120. Learn more at: <http://bit.ly/1yXxzHB>.

Report: Part-Timers More Engaged

According to a report by the Center for Community College Student Engagement at the University of Texas at Austin, more part-timers—a demographic that makes up 62 percent of students at two-year institutions—are participating more in class, talking more with advisers, and collaborating more with their peers.

The increases are attributed to better student supports and advising, including programs such as Palo Alto College's Alamo Advise model that improves the adviser-to-student ratio and ultimately connects with more students.

There's still room for improvement, particularly in channeling these students through the transfer process. Read more at Inside Higher Ed: <http://bit.ly/1AuXAsW>.

Rural Colleges See Potential In Tech Grants

Everyone is talking tech in Kentucky—and the conversation has even spread to the White House. As the need for IT workers is growing in eastern Kentucky, a White House initiative called TechHire seeks to give tech grants to programs that can train people quickly.

In eastern Kentucky, where the waning coal industry has left so many people out of work, government, education, and business leaders are collaborating on a joint initiative to provide IT training for the citizens of that region, while simultaneously redefining the area's future economy.

In another part of the state, Louisville has experienced success with Code Louisville, recognized by the White House as a model program to train and prepare software programmers and coders at an accelerated pace, preparing them to be hire-ready in as few as 12 weeks. This illustrates how colleges can step up to provide skilled employees to meet the needs of a growing industry.

Read more at the 21st Century Center: <http://bit.ly/1bp8dr8>.



The tools and tips you need to effectively climb the college ladder

MADE
FOR



Like a lot of community college presidents, Joe Schaffer feels responsible for helping to develop new leaders. “Part of a president’s job is to grow and groom the next generation,” says Schaffer, president of Laramie County Community College (LCCC) in Wyoming. “If we have strong leaders across the nation, we’ll be better off, and our students will be better off.”

That’s why LCCC runs an internal leadership development program and offers mentoring opportunities. Employees also are encouraged to attend trainings offered by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), and to make presentations at conferences run by AACC, the League for Innovation in the Community College and the National Institute of Staff and Organizational Development.

Even though money is tight, Schaffer stresses the importance of sharing his team’s work and does

whatever he can to provide these opportunities. “When you take a team to these events, you develop an investment in your own institution that pays dividends when you go back to campus.”

Leadership isn’t for everyone, but for those seeking a higher-level position, there are plenty of ways to gain the experience needed to move up the ladder. Future leaders need to enroll in national training programs, invest in their own professional development, and—perhaps most important—build and maintain strong networks.

Are You a Competent Leader?

Good leaders need to develop and improve their skills. That’s why AACC created a set of competencies for community college leaders that has served as the foundation for informal and doctoral-level training programs. When the original competencies were revised in 2012, AACC sought input from a number of national groups to better define the qualities of a 21st-century leader. The competencies cover five essential areas: organizational strategy; institutional finance,



BY ELLEN ULLMAN

research, fundraising, and resource management; communication; collaboration; and advocacy.

Barbara Viniar, president of Chesapeake College in Maryland, previously ran the Institute for Community College Development at Cornell and organized programs around AACC competencies. Because today's leaders need to understand everything from economic development to immigration, the Cornell Institute used to run sessions that at first glance might not have seemed relevant, but are indeed part of a college leader's role.

Viniar says leadership programs must be intentional about helping attendees develop these competencies so they can

assess their strengths and weaknesses and map out their individual pathways. For instance, many up-and-coming leaders lack fundraising skills. To gain that experience, Viniar suggests volunteering for the Red Cross, the PTA, or at your place of worship. "Not every experience will happen on campus or in a structured leadership program. Think of how it feeds back into those competencies and your leadership goals," she says.

Attend Leadership Conferences

AACC's [John E. Roueche Future Leaders Institute \(FLI\)](#) is designed to help people gain valuable skills while interacting with other aspiring and cur-

rent leaders. This year's FLI takes place June 21–25 in Las Vegas. In addition to classes on topics such as fundraising and presentation skills, attendees can sign up for one-on-one career coaching in which leaders review resumes and give guidance.

"Career coaches are very expensive, so getting to spend time with a former community college president who is eager to help you is invaluable," says Jennifer Tinch, AACC's administrator of leadership programs. "Even if you aren't looking to change your position, you can get pointers on being better at the job you already have."

Throughout the event, attendees work in groups and assume various

Barbara Viniar, president,
Chesapeake College



roles as they discuss issues and try to solve problems. The goal, says Tinch, is to provide practical experience for various levels. And a very special part of FLI is “Learn from the Legends,” a panel session in which nationally known leaders Walter Bumphus, John E. Roueche, and Jerry Sue Thornton share their histories.

“AACC brings in an exceptional fleet of faculty, resources, and facilitators to the FLI sessions that allow people to connect with other up-and-coming leaders, and those connections help,” Schaffer says.

Viniar agrees that FLI exposes people to what they need to know to rise up through the ranks in ways that their day-to-day job won’t. “When I see ‘FLI graduate’ on a resume, I know they have had exposure to the broader aspects of leadership,” she says.

Calling All Doctorates

Future leaders may question the importance of a doctoral program, but most high-level positions these days require it. “A doctorate gives you prestige and recognition, but it’s about more than that,” says Roberta Teahen, associate provost of Ferris State University and director of the college’s [Doctorate in Community College Leadership \(DCCL\)](#) program. “A good program should also develop skill sets you don’t already have.”

DCCL is a blended learning program that includes online courses, one-week summer intensives, and one weekend face-to-face per course during fall and spring semesters to prepare students for what Teahen says is an extremely demanding job.

“I started teaching in 1968, became a community college administrator in 1975, and I’ve never seen the environment be as complex and politically challenging as it is today. Almost every part of the job has a new set of rules,” Teahen says.

A doctorate helps people fill in the gaps in their education. They may be looking to develop their theoretical experience, their leadership skills, or

both. Teahen says many of her students come from humanities fields in which they don’t get to develop leadership skills. DCCL defines the job’s challenges and expectations as well as the importance of the various departments throughout the college.

Seventy-five percent of DCCL’s 57 graduates have already moved into higher-level positions or expanded their responsibilities, and one graduate recently became a college president.

The [Morgan State University Community College Leadership Doctoral Program \(CCLDP\)](#) began about 12 years ago when the college decided to reach out to minority students to help them on their academic journey. It is the only historically black college or university that offers a PhD program. Courses are offered year-round with classes meeting on Friday evenings and all day Saturday, and students work collaboratively in teams to research issues and try to solve problems.

“Five years ago, I developed an online doctorate program,” says Rosemary Gillet-Karam, associate professor and director of CCLDP. “We get students from Alabama, Tennessee, Mexico, Jordan, and even Saudi Arabia, and more than half of our students are members of ethnic and racial minorities.”

Gillet-Karam says the program stays relevant by trying to understand the needs of modern students and offering a curriculum that is interactive and imaginative. She keeps track of her graduates and works very hard to be sure that they have equivalency in terms of higher administrative positions. CCLDP has had 105 graduates, and more than 200 students are currently enrolled. Four graduates have become presidents and 15 have become vice presidents.



Joe Schaffer, president,
Laramie Community College

Take Charge of Your Learning

In addition to formal and informal schooling, aspiring leaders need to build a network and participate in ongoing professional development. Statewide and national programs are crucial to gaining access to people who probably wouldn’t be on your campus.

“I had great mentors where I worked, but I lacked diversity of opinion and thought,” says William Austin, president of Warren County Community College in New Jersey. “For me, that meant learning from a woman since I worked for men.”

At FLI and other programs, Austin met people from different-sized colleges that helped him discover that his style works best at small or midsize institutions. “The programs gave me access to the best and brightest presenters that I would not have met at my home campus. I stayed in touch and got continual career advice.”

Austin also met people at his level who were looking to move up the ladder. They kept in touch after the conferences ended and shared experiences and resources that helped him become a community college president within seven years. “I can name each person who helped me and what I learned from them.”



Betty Young, president,
Hocking College

One of the best ways to form a network is attending statewide conferences, says Jamillah Moore, chancellor of Ventura Community College District in California. “Try to connect with people who have your job as well as the job you want. Look for patterns in teaching experience, research, and former positions and then see if you fit that mold.”

Tomorrow’s leaders can also gain experience by volunteering in areas that are not their domain. When Betty Young, president at Hocking College in Ohio, became a president for a large district system, she had no experience

with bond rating. The deputy chancellor invited her to sit in on phone meetings with bond raters to learn how it works, and although it was not her job to do so, she jumped at the change. “Ask for those kinds of opportunities. Do not wait for someone to invite you.”

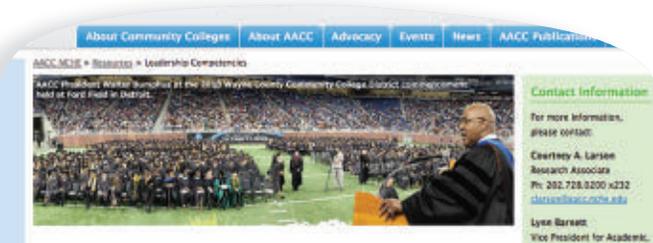
Last but not least, get active in an organization. “Become a member of one of AACC’s commissions; it’s a great way to learn about national topics

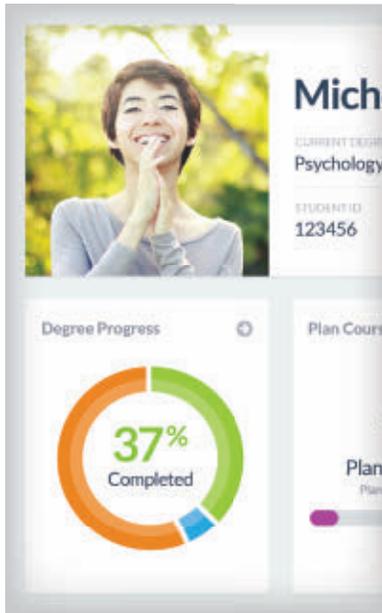
and issues as you begin to build your network,” Young says, emphasizing the importance of attending its national convention. “If your college doesn’t pay, support yourself. If you’re not that committed to your own professional development, then you’re not committed enough to become a president.”

ELLEN ULLMAN is an education writer based in Miami.

MAKE A MOVE

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Associate Degree Completion Higher in Rural Communities

Location, location, location. It has a lot to do with the relationship between post-high school education and wages. Many rural areas see young people leave for education and employment opportunities. But education institutions in rural communities have a positive effect on the area, illustrated by reduced poverty and more economic growth. And lately, students in these nonmetropolitan areas are earning more associate degrees than their urban peers.

The number of associate degrees earned in rural areas increased more than the number earned in urban areas during a 12-year period, according to data from the U.S. Census. In 2000, both rural and urban areas reported a 7 percent attainment of associate degrees. In 2008–12, that share increased to 9 percent in rural areas, compared with 8 percent in metropolitan areas.

Rural people are finding increased access to education, as well as increased wage potential with college degrees. Still, this population tends to be older than their urban peers, who are more likely to complete their degrees. In the most recent survey, just more than half of the working rural population has attended some

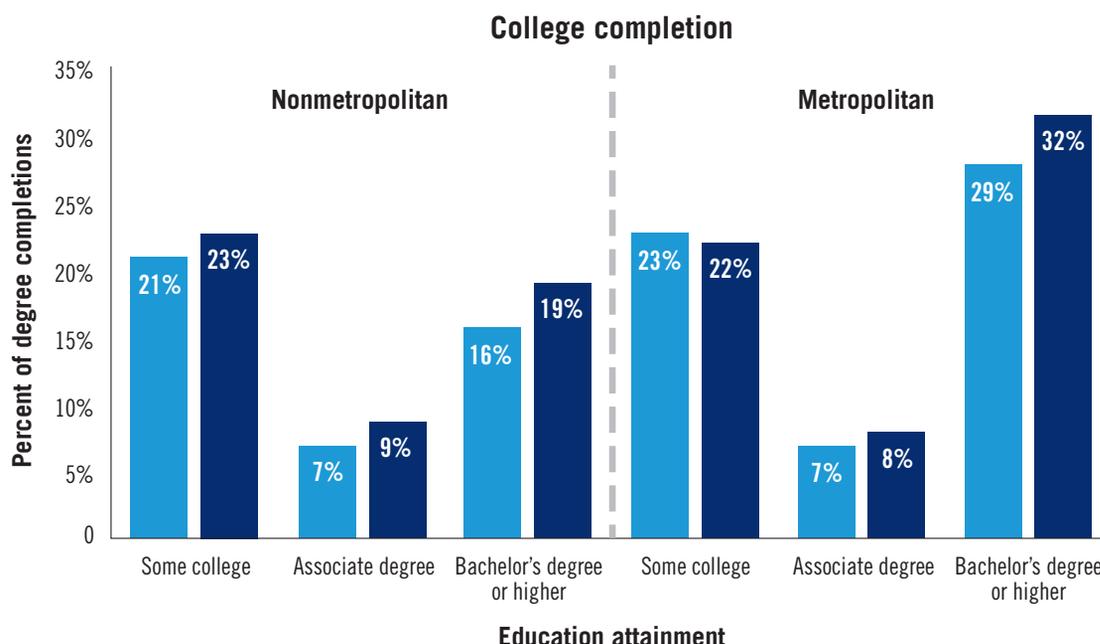
college, compared with 63 percent of the working urban population.

The industries in rural areas that employed college-educated people during this time period, specifically education and health, are set up for more growth. Key to capitalizing on this growth will be to improve the skills of the existing workforce and to entice more college-educated workers.

The number of bachelor's degrees earned in urban areas surpassed the count in rural areas in 2000 and in 2008–2012. Rural areas increased from 16 percent to 19 percent over that time period, and urban areas increased from 28 percent to 32 percent.

Rural vs. urban degree completion

Rural areas have higher attainment associate degrees, but lag behind on bachelor's degree completion.



Sources: U.S. Census; Choices magazine; AACC's DataPoints, January 2015

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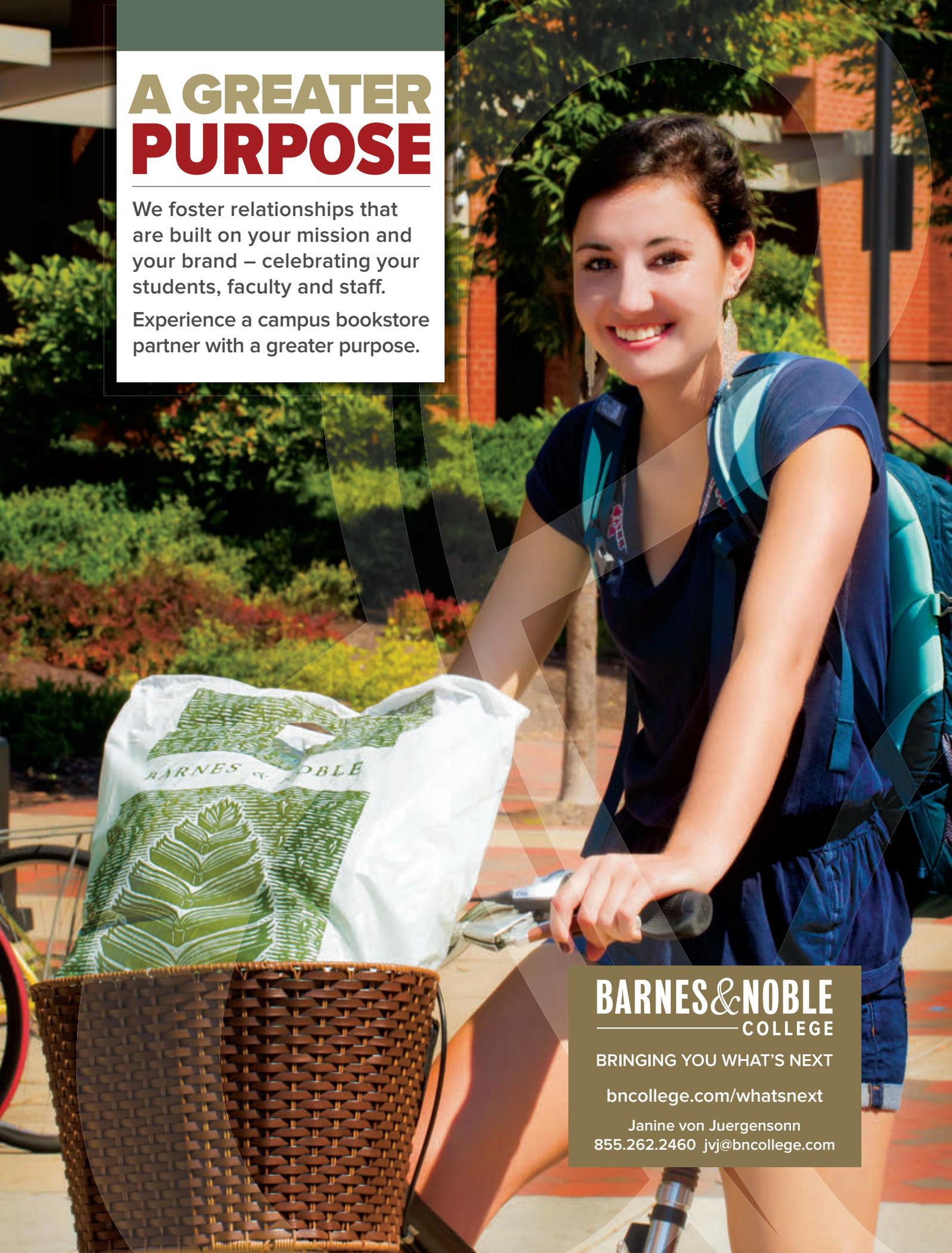
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