



Dear President Ender:

Thank you for being an Achieving the Dream Institution and for putting what we know is a tremendous amount of effort into improving student success. We reviewed your 2013 Annual Reflection and offer our observations in this letter about the college's progress to date.

Congratulations on completing your third year as an Achieving the Dream college. We hope that your experience has proven, and will continue to prove in the future, that such concentrated data analysis, study, and strengthening of services for all students will result in major gains in student success. We appreciate your work this past year and offer the following comments concerning meaningful strengths in your work and opportunities for further progress.

We are enthusiastic about your achievements regarding the following:

- Increasing involvement in Achieving the Dream strategies across the college
- Garnering leadership support from key areas
- Developing interventions that focus on key student issues such as the progress through the developmental pipeline.

We are encouraged by your progress in implementing the Achieving the Dream model in the following ways:

#### *Committed Leadership*

This past year there has been a noticeable change in the support of college leaders. While you, as the President, have always been supportive, this year seemed to be the turning point for other leaders in the college.

Also, there has been strong college-wide evidence of support for student success and completion. In addition, participation in ATD as a movement is much more broadly based than in previous years. You, your Cabinet, and several key faculty members have taken on leadership roles with enthusiasm and have made this progress possible.

#### *Use of Evidence to Improve Policies, Programs, and Services*

It is good to see that faculty and staff are not only more comfortable with the study and analysis of the data but that they also routinely voice their support of various data-supported success initiatives.

#### *Broad Engagement*

We would like to congratulate your college on the continuing focus on student success across the campus. We have noted considerable engagement of the Board and engagement within certain academic areas, where faculty leaders and administrators have helped to launch multiple initiatives, have repositioned certain emphases, and have dropped others. The naming of a team to support and guide multiple student success initiatives is also a good sign as is the publication of the college's first student success report.

### *Systemic Institutional Improvement*

It appears the college is seeing improvements in a few areas and has interventions in place that have sparked a growing enthusiasm and a belief that student success work can actually accomplish its aims.

### *Equity*

Also promising is the new mentoring program underway, which is meant to improve African American male students' success. It is a complex task, and we are happy to see that your college has taken steps to address the inequities of achievement.

We recognize that improving student outcomes can be both rewarding and challenging. As you plan for the coming year, we encourage you to take a closer look at the following:

### *Committed Leadership*

While we recognize that several deans have stepped forward to support various initiatives, we hope you will strongly consider ways to engage the missing deans in the dialogue and in the student success work. It is also crucial to keep building internal leadership among staff participating in one or more strategy teams to ensure alignment and productive communication pathways.

### *Use of Evidence to Improve Policies, Programs, and Services*

We suggest that you consider ways to promote and efficiently implement the new data warehouse and analytics so that all can benefit from the data in a timely way and so that no one on the staff will delay responses to legitimate requests for information.

### *Systemic Institutional Improvement*

It would be an admirable goal to find a more inclusive way to engage the college- at -large in a discussion about why certain initiatives target specific cohorts of students. In order for the work to take hold and promote student success to its fullest potential, it is crucial that faculty and staff clearly understand the reasoning behind targeting particular risk groups.

### *Broad Engagement*

We suggest that you look into ways to increase representation of faculty from a range of departments as well as ways to engage adjunct faculty, especially because a majority of at- risk students are enrolled in courses taught by adjuncts.

### *Equity*

As your college moves forward, it will be important to keep in mind that continued success of the initiatives related to equity will depend in part upon the appointment of well-respected, self-starting leaders on campus.

As you know, this is a critical time for all of us who are committed to the mission of community colleges. We need to be focused and strategic in our work if we are to create clear and meaningful pathways for our students as they strive toward success. It is our belief that by working together, as a community of learners, practitioners and citizens, we can set high standards and can help our students achieve their goals.

We appreciate the time, resources, and hard work that you and your faculty and staff have devoted to your Achieving the Dream efforts. We look forward to working with you in the coming year and to seeing you at DREAM 2014.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carol A. Lincoln". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".