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April 19, 2007

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Mr. Michael Rota
Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs
University of Hawai'i Community Colleges
2327 Dole Street
Honolulu, HI 96822

Dear Mr. Rota:

This letter confirms that the University of Hawai'i Community College System (UHCCS) has been invited to participate as a Round Four demonstration site in Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count. The several community colleges that comprise UHCCS will participate as a single institution. Congratulations and welcome!

Achieving the Dream is a multiyear national initiative to help more community college students succeed. The initiative is particularly concerned about student groups that have traditionally faced the most significant barriers to success, including low-income students and students of color. Achieving the Dream emphasizes the use of data to drive change, and is especially interested in closing achievement gaps.

Achieving the Dream's Model of Institutional Improvement

Demonstration colleges follow a model of institutional improvement that includes:

- Cultivation of a culture of inquiry and evidence – colleges use data to drive their decision-making, program evaluation, and resource allocation
- Committed leadership – the president and other institutional leaders share a vision for student success and equity and are able to mobilize broad support for that vision throughout the college and community.
- Broad engagement – faculty and staff are encouraged to take responsibility for student success and to take the lead in efforts to improve the effectiveness of their programs and services; further, student and community input is used to prioritize needs and suggest strategies for improvement.
- Systemic institutional improvement – colleges make significant and continuing changes in policies, budgetary and organizational structure, programs, and services to improve student outcomes;

resources are reallocated in support of policies and practices found to be effective in improving student success.

Phases of Work

Over a five-year period, Achieving the Dream colleges move through four phases of work.

- *Phase 1: Identify and prioritize problems.* Colleges use longitudinal student cohort data and other evidence to identify gaps in student achievement. To ensure that colleges focus their resources to greatest effect, colleges are encouraged to prioritize the problems they plan to address.
- *Phase 2: Develop strategies for addressing priority problems.* Colleges engage faculty and staff in developing strategies for remedying priority problems with student achievement based on a diagnosis of the causes and an evaluation of the effectiveness of previous attempts by the college and others to address such problems.
- *Phase 3: Implement, evaluate and improve strategies.* Colleges then implement the strategies for addressing priority problems, making sure to evaluate the outcomes of the strategies and using the results to make further improvements, guide future decisions and, potentially, reorder priorities.
- *Phase 4: Institutionalize effective policies and practices.* Colleges focus their efforts on institutionalizing effective policies and practices. Particular attention is placed on how resources are allocated to bring to scale and sustain proven strategies, and how program review, planning, and budgeting are driven by evidence of what works best for students.

Measuring Success

The colleges participating in Achieving the Dream are required to submit to a common dataset longitudinal unit record data on cohorts of students that will be used to their measure progress on five indicators over at least four years. The five indicators are the rates at which a college's students:

- 1) Complete remedial or "developmental" courses;
- 2) Complete "gatekeeper" courses, particularly the first college-level or degree-credit courses in math and English;
- 3) Successfully complete the courses they attempt;
- 4) Persist from term to term and year to year; and
- 5) Complete credentials.

Achieving the Dream expects that, through the activities colleges undertake as part of the initiative, they will be able to increase the rates at which their students succeed on the five indicators. The colleges are also expected to make progress on closing any substantial gaps in performance on the indicators among different groups of students, such as racial or ethnic minorities.

Additional Expectations of Round Four Institutions

Each Round Four institution is expected to:

1. Complete an application due on May 11, 2007. (Guidelines for completing the application have been provided to your institution. Note: Colleges in South Carolina have already met this requirement.)
2. Create a core team that includes the president, dean of students, dean of academic affairs, institutional researcher, and at least one faculty member. The core team should expand beyond five members over time and commit to overseeing the work over a five-year period.
3. Send five members of the core team, including the president, to a Kickoff Institute that will be held July 8-11 in Dallas, Texas. (Registration information will be available by June 1.)
4. Create a data team that includes the institutional researcher, faculty, and other administrators. Like the core team, the data team should expand as appropriate to engage a broad cross-section of the institution and commit to working on data analysis, strategy research, and on-going evaluation of the initiative interventions.
5. Submit a work plan and budget for the planning year after the Kickoff Institute.
6. Submit annual student cohort data for inclusion in the national Achieving the Dream database which is used for evaluation and analysis across the initiative. These data submissions will be required through 2012.
7. Send at least three representatives to an annual Strategy Institute which focuses on proven strategies and programs for increasing student success. (The President is encouraged to attend.)
8. Engage faculty, students, and the community in ongoing analyses and discussions of issues affecting student success.
9. Submit a proposal and comprehensive work plan for a four-year period based on an analysis of student outcomes, institutional practices and policies, and promising strategies for increasing student success. (Due in Spring, 2008).
10. Implement the work plan and monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Achieving the Dream interventions.
11. Take to scale those interventions which are found to be effective in increasing student success.

12. Submit annual progress reports that, upon review and approval, lead to continued participation in Achieving the Dream.
13. Share lessons and experiences with the community of learners from Achieving the Dream institutions, states, national partner organizations, and funders.
14. Provide specific materials and stories about their experiences with Achieving the Dream for use in Achieving the Dream electronic and print publications. Also, members of the college community may be asked to represent the initiative at conferences or other events or in interactions with the media.

Participation Fees

Annual participation fees will be assessed each Spring, starting in April 2007 through April 2011. The fee for each Round Four college during the 2007-2008 academic year is \$80,800.

Each participating college will receive:

- 12 days of assistance from an Achieving the Dream coach and 12 days of assistance from an Achieving the Dream data facilitator.
- Technical assistance in developing the cohort submissions for the national database.
- Access to web-based tools that can be used for data mining and analysis purposes and for benchmarking with peer institutions.
- Access to communication and promotional materials suitable for external and internal audiences.
- Access to toolkits and related materials designed to help guide faculty, student, and community engagement.
- Complimentary registrations for the 2007 Kickoff Institute (five) and for the 2008 Strategy Institute (four).

In addition, colleges will become members of an active community of learners. This will include opportunities to meet with peer institutions and national partner organizations, participate on listservs, and contribute to state and national policy development sessions.

The enclosed invoice for payment of the 2007-2008 participation fee is due immediately. Colleges may not participate in Round Four until the fee is paid.

In selected states, additional fees are required to support state policy development activities. These fees, if applicable, are noted on the attached invoice.

Resignation from Achieving the Dream

If a college decides to resign from the Initiative, no refund of participation fees paid to that point in time will be made. Colleges may be asked to withdraw from the initiative if they are found to be out of compliance with the requirements described in this letter of invitation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carol A. Lincoln".

Carol A. Lincoln
National Director, Achieving the Dream
Senior Program Director, MDC, Inc.

Attachment: Invoice for 2007-2008 Participation Fees