



MAY 11 2007

JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

May 10, 2007

Michael Rota
Associate VP for Academic Affairs
The University of Hawaii Community College System
Doyle Street Offices
2327 Dole Street
Honolulu, HI 96822

Dear Mr. Rota:

Congratulations. The University of Hawaii Community College System has been chosen as the lead organization for the policy effort of the Achieving the Dream Initiative in Hawaii. We look forward to your joining this initiative and we applaud and appreciate the commitment to improving community college student success that this engagement represents.

This purpose of this letter is to explain the responsibilities and opportunities that being the state policy lead for Achieving the Dream entails and affords. You and your state's policy team will learn more about the initiative and the role of state lead organization at the summer Kick Off/Orientation Conference for Round 4 Achieving the Dream states, to be held July 8-10 in Dallas, Texas.

The primary role of state lead is to promote policy innovations (both administrative and legislative) that improve the climate for and provide incentives that help community colleges adopt practices and policies to improve student outcomes and success. To assist your efforts, the initiative provides a range of supports and services. The key services and supports available to the University of Hawaii Community College System and its allies in Hawaii include:

Peer Learning

State lead organizations participate in two state policy convenings per year, which serve as both strategy sessions and peer-learning venues for leaders from each Achieving the Dream state to learn from national experts and from one another's policy innovation strategies and to collectively address common challenges. In addition, topic-related working groups convene to do more focused work in policy areas that cut across all of the Achieving the Dream states, such as improving state-level data and accountability systems, K-12 and postsecondary alignment, and developmental education.

Research Publications

State lead organizations have access to research and publications (such as issue briefs, quarterly newsletter, research memos, and cross-state comparative policy charts) that can assist states develop the fact base needed to secure buy-in for policy innovation, benchmark best practices in other states, and advance knowledge development in policy areas such as developmental education, placement cut scores, accountability, financial aid, undocumented students, and other student success-related topics. In addition, state lead organizations can request some customized research from the initiative.

Communications

Through JFF and other organizations in the initiative, state leads have access to communications and media relations expertise and services, including a suite of Achieving the Dream fact sheets, templates, and tools for communicating with external audiences about the initiative.

Strategy Consulting

JFF assists state lead organizations with the development of an overarching policy strategy, which includes support in identifying a few high-leverage policy priorities related to student success that the state wants to pursue and a workplan to reach the goals of each policy priority. Support includes an in-state strategy session, monthly conference calls, and a mid-year check in, which can be a state visit or a conference call. JFF provides knowledge of other states' policy experiences and strategies and can also facilitate access to national experts where appropriate. JFF provides additional phone and informal consultation and advice as needed.

By joining the initiative, each state lead organization commits to signing on to Achieving the Dream goals, with particular emphasis on using data to help support community college efforts to improve student outcomes. Lead organizations also commit to working closely with JFF and Achieving the Dream partners to define a state-level policy agenda, set priorities, plan strategy, and promote specific changes that can help community colleges improve outcomes for underrepresented students. Other core responsibilities of state lead organizations include:

Organize a state team

The state lead organization is responsible for building a state policy team comprised of individuals well-positioned to move the student success agenda at the state level. The composition of state teams varies by state structure and context, but typically they have included: community college system leaders, state-level data experts, leaders from individual colleges, representatives of the executive and legislative branches, representatives of higher education coordinating boards, key leaders from business, foundations and community-based organizations, and other stakeholders interested in improved outcomes for community college students.

Design and participate in inter-state and in-state convenings

State lead organizations help design and participate in the two inter-state policy meetings and participate in a monthly conference call with JFF and other state lead organizations. A member of each lead organization's core team is invited to participate in cross-state working groups and conference calls.

The lead organization is also responsible for convening participating colleges at least once a year for sharing their experiences in the initiative and advice on state policy priorities. State leads are also responsible for convening and coordinating in-state forums and briefings for key policymakers, organizations, and interested parties.

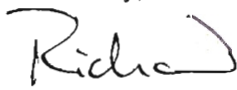
Communicate and report regularly on state issues, activities, accomplishments

State lead organizations contribute to the quarterly policy newsletter and update JFF on relevant changes in the state political and policy environment. The state lead also helps JFF document progress, challenges, activities and outcomes of state policy activities. Lead organizations report annually on their progress and their use of grant funds.

We are excited to have you join this initiative. We look forward to meeting you at the Kick Off conference in July. We will contact you soon to discuss and identify your state team. If we can be of assistance, or if you have questions before the policy orientation at the Kick Off meeting, feel free to contact Richard Kazis at rkazis@jff.org or Mike Collins at mcollins@jff.org or by phone at 617-728-4446.

Again, congratulations and welcome to Achieving the Dream!

Sincerely,



Richard Kazis
Senior Vice President