

**Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count  
Request for Proposals  
Community Colleges in the State of Texas  
December 2008**

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## Overview

### I. Achieving the Dream Background

*Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count* is a multi-year national initiative to improve student success at the nation's community colleges, particularly for students of color and low-income students. Begun in 2004 with support from Lumina Foundation for Education, Achieving the Dream now comprises 82 participating institutions in 15 states, multiple funders, and seven national partner organizations. Colleges have been selected to join Achieving the Dream in a series of four "rounds" during the demonstration phase of the initiative. Achieving the Dream's student-centered vision is focused on creating a *culture of evidence* on community college campuses in which data and evidence drive broad-based institutional efforts to improve student outcomes. This multi-faceted initiative seeks change at the institutional level as well as in state and national policy. Through the collaborative work of its partner organizations, Achieving the Dream provides extensive supports to colleges in collecting and analyzing student data; in designing, implementing, and evaluating intervention strategies; and in broadening knowledge among stakeholders about policies and programs that contribute to student success. For more information, please visit [www.AchievingtheDream.org](http://www.AchievingtheDream.org).

### II. National Expansion of Achieving the Dream

The long term vision for Achieving the Dream is that all community colleges and states across the country will adopt principles and practices that promote student success. As part of a sustainability plan for the initiative, a national expansion phase will be launched in 2009. The next cohort of colleges and states to join Achieving the Dream will benefit from the many lessons still being harvested from the demonstration sites and from new tools and methodologies under development. The Initiative has a goal of recruiting up to 20 new sites to join Achieving the Dream in 2009. New sites will commit to a minimum participation period of two-years, with costs for participation coming from institutional resources or external funding partners identified by the sites. After two years in Achieving the Dream, sites will be invited to renew their association with Achieving the Dream and to continue the process of institutional transformation.

### III. Achieving the Dream in Texas

Sixteen community colleges and four universities in Texas participate in Achieving the Dream, making Texas the state with the greatest number of Achieving the Dream institutions. The Greater Texas Foundation is making it possible for even more Texas community colleges to join the initiative during national expansion. Foundation resources will support the enrollment of up to five additional Texas community colleges during the 2009-2011 period. All community colleges in Texas, not already part of Achieving the Dream, are eligible. Colleges in districts with separately accredited colleges may apply individually or as a district.

By partially underwriting two years of a college's participation in Achieving the Dream, the Greater Texas Foundation and the Achieving the Dream partnership aim to support each college while it builds internal and external stakeholder commitment to a long-term student success agenda. During the first two years in the initiative, each college will examine their own student data, identify achievement gaps between groups of students,

identify interventions to address the gaps and create and implement a plan to improve student outcomes.

#### **IV. Description of Funding Commitments**

The Greater Texas Foundation will cover a portion of the cost of participating in Achieving the Dream, through direct payments to the Achieving the Dream National Partnership, on behalf of participating colleges. Colleges will be required to use their own funds to cover the remaining costs, including required project travel, and underwriting new programs or strategies they decide to implement to increase student success.

In year one, colleges may expect that \$85,000 of the costs of their participation will be covered by the Foundation. Colleges making satisfactory progress after the first year may expect that \$65,000 of their second year costs will be covered by the Foundation. What constitutes satisfactory progress is detailed in the section titled "Expectations of Colleges Participating in Achieving the Dream."

Colleges will be required to fund the following with their own resources:

- Travel for a five-person team to a June 2009 Kickoff Institute in Austin, TX;
- Travel for a four-person team to the annual Strategy Institute in 2010 and in 2011;
- New interventions developed to increase student success and respond to student achievement gaps; and
- Any additional planning and implementation costs including meeting expenses, faculty stipends, or additional travel.

Colleges may use external funds or reallocate institutional funds to cover the costs described above. Annual reports of expenditures supporting an institution's Achieving the Dream work will be required through the duration of supplemental funding. See Attachment 1 for an estimate of first-year and second-year costs that must be covered by the institution.

#### **V. Proposal Submission Deadline**

- Proposals are due to MDC at [atd@mdcinc.org](mailto:atd@mdcinc.org) by 5 pm EDT February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Please use the subject line "Texas Proposal."

## Background and Detailed Initiative Description

### VI. Context of the Initiative

Community colleges in the United States enroll some 11.6 million students each year, accounting for nearly half of all college and university undergraduates.<sup>1</sup> In California, nearly 75% of all students in public higher education are enrolled in community colleges.<sup>2</sup> The nation's 1,200 community colleges are a crucial gateway to postsecondary education for high proportions of students of color and those who are the first in their families to go to college. As of January 2008, community colleges enrolled 46% of all African-American students, 55% of all Hispanic students, and 55% of all Native American students.<sup>3</sup>

Community college students are more likely to be low-income and/or working adults than are students at four-year institutions. Nearly one-third of community college students have yearly household incomes of less than \$20,000. More than 80% have jobs and 40% work full-time. Many community college students also have immediate family responsibilities: more than one-third have children or other dependents and nearly one-fifth are single parents. Largely because of commitments to work and family, nearly 70% of community college students are enrolled part-time.<sup>4</sup>

Research tells us that many of the same attributes that characterize community college students also put them at risk for non-completion of college studies. These everyday facts-of-life include having children, being a single parent, working full-time, and not having earned a traditional high school diploma. These and other factors contribute to the fact that less than one-third of all students who enter community college with the intention of earning a degree actually accomplish that goal at *any* college or university within a six-year period.<sup>5</sup> The problem for far too many community college students isn't just *getting* in to college, but *staying* in to finish a degree and/or transfer to a four-year program.

### VII. Benefits of Participating in Achieving the Dream

Colleges that participate in Achieving the Dream receive assistance from experienced practitioners in building a culture of inquiry and evidence, that is, in using data to identify problems, set priorities, and measure progress toward increasing student success. Achieving the Dream colleges make lasting changes in policies, programs, structures, and services that work in an integrated fashion to support success for all students. Additionally, Achieving the Dream colleges gain expertise in improving success among diverse student populations.

Achieving the Dream provides each college with at-the-elbow support from a highly skilled and experienced coach and data facilitator who have been carefully screened and chosen to fit the needs of each institution. This coach-data facilitator team will dedicate eight days per academic year for consultation on bringing about institutional change that leads to increased levels of student success. They will guide the college through a process that

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<sup>1</sup> American Association of Community Colleges Web site: *Fast Facts*

<sup>2</sup> 2007. Shulock, N. & Moore, C. Rules of the Game: How State Policy Creates Barriers to Degree Completion and Impedes Student Success in the California Community Colleges

<sup>3</sup> American Association of Community Colleges Web site: *Fast Facts*

<sup>4</sup> Achieving the Dream, *Success is What Counts*. (NCES Undergraduate Profile 2003-04)

<sup>5</sup> MDRC, *Early Progress* citing USDOE, 2002.

begins with data collection and analysis for the purpose of identifying performance gaps and barriers to student success. The process also includes support in conducting institutional policy analysis and designing comprehensive, evidence-based institutional improvement and evaluation plans. Other phases of the process incorporate assistance with crafting an institutional culture of inquiry and evidence and establishing an institutional practice of evidence-based decision making and resource allocation. This team will raise questions and facilitate discussions of tough issues to identify areas where the college is succeeding and where it needs to improve.

Participating institutions will be trained to use and have access to a national database that includes student cohort data for all participating Achieving the Dream institutions.

Participating institutions will also become part of a national community of like-minded leaders and learners deeply committed to student success and closing achievement gaps. All colleges in this community are expected to be active learners and those with experience in the initiative are expected to disseminate lessons learned at their institutions. Members of this community of learners interact directly and indirectly. Colleges entering Achieving the Dream participate in a Kickoff Institute which provides an opportunity to meet colleagues from other institutions that will be following similar steps of data analysis, information gathering, planning, and experimenting. All Achieving the Dream colleges participate in an annual Strategy Institute that connects their team members to others from across the country to share lessons from their work and to analyze stubborn challenges. We value learning from each other's mistakes and successes. All participating institutions have access to the members only section of the Achieving the Dream website which contains resource materials from national partner organizations and participating colleges. Colleges are able to submit material that they would like to see posted on the website and can view descriptions and evaluations of the interventions each college has implemented. The Achieving the Dream national database mentioned above is yet another tool accessible to this community of learners.

## **VIII. Values and Principles of Achieving the Dream**

Achieving the Dream adheres strongly to the core values that permeate our work with community colleges. The polestar guiding every aspect of the initiative is a *student-centered vision* in which partners, funders, colleges and states are committed to the goal of improving student success. That vision is predicated on an equally strong belief in the dual principles of *equity and excellence*, in which the best that higher education has to offer must be made available to all students. The notion of "equity" does not imply treating all students the same; for historical reasons in our society, some students may need extra help in meeting their goals. Building a *culture of evidence* is the phrase we use to describe the environment that colleges will strive to create on their campuses, and that states will actively promote. Administrators, faculty, and policy makers alike examine hard evidence and data to pursue policies and practices that are most likely to improve student outcomes.

The framework that guides our work on the college campuses is based on four principles of the Achieving the Dream model for institutional improvement: committed leadership,

using evidence to improve programs and services, promoting broad engagement, and creating systemic institutional improvement.

- *Committed leadership.* Presidential leadership is essential to bring about institutional change that will improve student outcomes. The president or chancellor must have a vision for student success and equity and must be able to mobilize broad support for that vision throughout the college and community. The college's board and faculty leadership also need to support an agenda for improving student outcomes.
- *Use of evidence to improve programs and services.* Achieving the Dream is data-driven and outcomes-driven. Colleges will cultivate the practice of using data to drive their decision-making, program evaluation and resource allocation. Decisions about how to organize, manage and fund instruction and student support services should be made based on evidence of what works to facilitate student success.
- *Broad engagement.* While strong leadership from the top is necessary to change an organization, it is not sufficient. To tackle an issue as important and complex as improving student success, a college must engage faculty, staff and administrators throughout the institution. Colleges should also seek input from students and the larger community. Achieving the Dream recognizes that to bring about lasting change, the behavior of people across the institution must change. Yet, simply securing input from faculty and staff is not enough. Institutions should encourage faculty and staff to take responsibility for student success and invite them to take the lead in efforts to improve the effectiveness of their programs and services. Working collaboratively to enhance student success can be a powerful form of professional development for faculty and staff.
- *Systemic institutional improvement.* Achieving the Dream seeks to help colleges bring about changes that go beyond specific programmatic interventions and affect the culture and strategic operation of the institution. Participating institutions will make significant and continuing changes in policies, budgetary and organizational structures, programs, and services to improve student outcomes. Institutionalizing a process of continuous, systemic improvement requires a commitment to reallocating resources (financial, human, etc.) in support of policies and practices found to be effective in improving student success.

The four principles of leadership, evidence, engagement, and systemic improvement underlying the framework for institutional improvement also inform the initiative's theory of action, which posits that if a college has the institutional will for change and systematically uses hard data and collaborative strategies to address barriers to student success, improved student outcomes should result. Achieving the Dream therefore asks participating colleges to undertake a five-step process of institutional improvement:

1. *Commit to improving student outcomes:* The college's senior leadership, with support from the board of trustees and faculty leaders, commits to making the changes in

policy and resource allocation necessary to improve student outcomes, and organizes a team to oversee the process.

2. *Identify and prioritize problems:* The college uses longitudinal student cohort data and other evidence to identify gaps in student achievement. A key premise of this approach is that once faculty and staff see that certain groups of students are not doing as well as others, they will be motivated to address barriers to student success. To ensure that they focus their resources to greatest effect, colleges are encouraged to prioritize the student achievement problems they plan to address.
3. *Engage stakeholders in developing strategies for addressing priority problems:* The college engages faculty, staff, and other internal and external stakeholders in developing strategies for remedying high-priority student achievement problems based on a diagnosis of the causes and evaluation of previous attempts by the institution and others to address such problems.
4. *Implement, evaluate and improve strategies:* The college then implements the strategies for addressing priority problems, being sure to evaluate the outcomes and using the results to make further improvements.
5. *Institutionalize effective policies and practices:* The college takes steps to institutionalize 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.

These steps are designed as an iterative process in which institutions continually evaluate the effectiveness of strategies in improving student success.

## **IX. Expectations of Colleges Participating in Achieving the Dream**

Achieving the Dream colleges begin the initiative by forming a *core team* of key administrators, faculty and staff leaders, and other stakeholders who lead the institution's overall change efforts. A *data team* including institutional research staff, faculty, and other staff members conducts an in-depth examination of qualitative and quantitative data on student outcomes — disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, and other characteristics — to diagnose institutional strengths and weaknesses in student achievement. The data team works with the core team in developing institutional strategies.

The coach and data facilitator team will interact with their assigned colleges through a combination of campus visits, e-mail correspondence, telephone conversations, and web-mediated communication. Coaches and data facilitators will also attend the Kickoff Institute and the Annual Strategy Institute with the colleges. Coaches and data facilitators guide colleges as they analyze their student data, set priorities, develop strategies, and implement and evaluate institutional improvements. More specifically, they will — during the planning year -- help the data and core teams craft an implementation proposal that lays out a research-based implementation plan for overcoming identified student success challenges. They will aid the institution in engaging students, faculty, community

members, and other stakeholders in dialogue about the analysis and proposed plans, and they will help the college set performance targets and benchmarks to monitor college progress.

The core team participates in a national *Kickoff Institute* that grounds the team in the values, goals, and expectations of the initiative. Each winter, institutions send representatives to an annual *Strategy Institute* where national experts and Achieving the Dream teams share information about strategies that have proven effective in increasing student success.

Optional learning events include an annual trustees institute, student success institute for faculty and staff, pre-Strategy Institute workshops, and online courses in institutional research.

Colleges are required to 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 the duration of a college's participation in Achieving the Dream.

Colleges are required to submit a budget and work plan for the first year, the "planning year" in Achieving the Dream as soon as feasible after the Kickoff Institute and no later than August 31, 2009. The budget defines projected expenditures toward Achieving the Dream work between the Kickoff Institute and June 30, 2010. The work plan displays the tasks that will be completed during this same time frame, task deadlines, and responsible parties. Colleges are urged to wait until they have participated in the Kickoff Institute to finalize their budgets and work plans.

During the planning year the teams engage students, faculty, and the community in data analysis and conversations that lead to the development of a four-year implementation proposal that includes a work plan, evaluation plan, and budget. The plan includes up to five priority areas for improving student success. Institutions will adapt strategies from other institutions or design new approaches to address their priority areas. They set measurable goals and integrate the Achieving the Dream plans and priorities into their strategic and annual planning as well as budgeting and resource allocation processes. For more information on the implementation proposal, please see Attachment 2.

Second year participation is contingent up receipt of an acceptable implementation proposal.

Please see both Attachment 1 and 2 for further details on expectations of Achieving the Dream colleges.

## **X. Policy and Adding Value to the Field**

In addition to the institutional change component detailed in the section above, Achieving the Dream also has a state policy component and a component for adding value to the community college field.

### *Influencing Public Policy*

The state policy component of Achieving the Dream promotes changes in state-level priorities, rules, regulations, and resource allocation that can make it easier for participating colleges to improve student outcomes. The work is designed to use effective practices developed by colleges to inform policy development in order to help take them to scale and sustain them more broadly. Driven in large part by the absence of a clear public policy commitment in most states, this aspect of Achieving the Dream work seeks to establish data-driven state (and ultimately national) policies that make community college student success — especially for underserved students — a priority public policy goal.

Achieving the Dream's approach holds that institutional change and state policy work each inform the other to their mutual benefit. Having college and state leaders work together builds the capacity of colleges to understand the policy process and participate as effective advocates for meaningful policy change. This process allows policy agendas to be built with far better understanding of the colleges' real needs and promotes buy-in by the colleges. Achieving the Dream has become a powerful convening and learning opportunity for all constituencies, bringing colleges, states and other stakeholders together around such issues as statewide performance indicators, financial aid practices, and accreditation.

### *Achieving the Dream in Action: Adding Value to the Field*

Achieving the Dream has produced several research reports including a literature review of effective practices for increasing student success at community colleges, case studies of colleges to explore institutional characteristics and practices that affect student outcomes, and a report that documents community college research. Other studies of the institutional change process, an analysis of barriers to student achievement, and additional documentation of effective practices are underway.

Several policy briefs on topics such as placement testing for developmental education, access to community colleges by undocumented immigrants, and state data systems and privacy concerns have been widely disseminated. Policy audits in selected states in the initiative are providing baseline information on state policies that affect student access and success.

A Structural Inequity Team is working across the initiative to help colleges identify, understand, and develop meaningful action strategies to address issues of race, class, and power as they relate to student success.

The national Achieving the Dream database, which includes cohort data from all Achieving the Dream colleges and national student data, is developing into a tool for peer benchmarking and analysis of disaggregated student data. A dynamic website provides tools and information that can support institutional change and policy development.

Achieving the Dream is also developing data tools for colleges and supporting training and professional development for institutional researchers at community colleges.

Several Achieving the Dream sites have participated as pilot sites in the ongoing development of community engagement tools, including facilitator training and a workbook and video for community colleges to use in holding “community conversations.”

A multi-year communications component is crafting communications materials to help colleges, state lead organizations, and national partner organizations voice consistent, compelling messages about the initiative and student success issues. The communications work includes media outreach and technical assistance and training to build colleges’ capacity to communicate with a variety of audiences about their Achieving the Dream work and student success issues.

**XI. Expected Outcomes**

Ultimately, the initiative seeks to help more students reach their individual goals – which may include obtaining a better job, earning a community college certificate or degree, or attaining a bachelor’s degree. Each college participating in Achieving the Dream identifies student populations that currently experience low rates of success, develops interventions to improve student outcomes, and measures changes in student success. Institutions participating in Achieving the Dream are required to submit longitudinal student unit record data on cohorts of students that will document over at least four years the rates at which students:

- Complete college remedial or “developmental” courses
- Complete “gatekeeper” courses, particularly first college-level or degree-credit courses in math and English
- Successfully complete the courses they attempt with a grade of C or better
- Persist from term to term and year to year
- Complete credentials

Achieving the Dream expects that by following its model of institutional improvement, participating institutions will be able to increase the rates at which their students succeed on the five indicators and close any substantial gaps in performance on the indicators among different student demographic groups.

Specifically, after four years of implementation, we expect the demonstration colleges to show measurable improvement in success rates among the studied groups, with no reduction in enrollment for these populations. We expect progress in closing achievement gaps between demographic groups and progress toward the expected outcomes each college includes in their implementation proposal.

## Application Process

### 1. Step One: Complete the application package.

- Provide all the information requested on the Application Form, including the requested signatures. When complete, the narrative section of this form should not exceed 12 pages. Narrative text should be double-spaced in 12 point font with one-inch margins.
  - We encourage colleges to convene a group that includes the contact person, financial contact, president or CEO, faculty member, institutional researcher, chief academic officer, chief student services officer, and grant writer to discuss questions three through seven before submitting the application. We encourage colleges to use inclusive processes that incorporate representatives from different parts of the college to complete this application.
- Include a statement of commitment from the institution's board of trustees. (If a resolution by the full board is not feasible by time of application due date, a letter from the chairman of the board will be accepted.)
- Attach a copy of the college's mission statement.
- Provide a 250-word (or less) biography of each of the five required core team members.

### 2. Step Two: Submit the application.

Applications should be submitted electronically on letterhead (as a single PDF file that includes a cover letter on letterhead) to [atd@mdcinc.org](mailto:atd@mdcinc.org) by 5:00 pm EDT, Friday, February 27, 2009. Please use the subject line "Texas Proposal."

### Selection and Notification

- Since Achieving the Dream's mission is to improve student success at the nation's community colleges, particularly for students of color and low-income students, special consideration will be given to those colleges serving high percentages of students of color and/or low-income students. However, this special consideration does not disqualify any eligible college from responding to the request for proposals.
- The contact person for each submitted proposal will be notified by MDC by March 27, 2009 of their proposal's standing.

**Dates and Deadlines**

- February 27, 2009 - Application due
- March 27, 2009 - MDC notifies applicants of acceptance
- June 15-18, 2009 - Kickoff Institute
- August 31, 2009 - Planning year work plan and budget due
- Early 2010 - Annual Strategy Institute
- Spring 2010 - Optional Trustees Institute
- March 31, 2010 - Draft implementation proposal due
- May 15, 2010 - Final implementation proposal due

**Questions?** Send an e-mail to [atd@mdcinc.org](mailto:atd@mdcinc.org) with the subject line "Texas Proposal Question."

## Application Form

Public two-year community colleges and technical institutes in Texas seeking to apply for participation in Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count during the FY 09-11 period should submit this completed application by February 27, 2009, 5 PM EST to [atd@mdcinc.org](mailto:atd@mdcinc.org).

Enter proposal information and narrative directly on this form. When complete, the narrative section of this form should not exceed 12 pages. Narrative text should be double-spaced in 12 point font with one-inch margins. Signatures of core team members are requested to confirm willingness to play a leadership role in this work

### 1. CONTACTS

#### PERSON COMPLETING THIS APPLICATION

Name	
Title	
Institution	
Address	
City/State/Zip Code	
Telephone	
Fax	
E-mail	
Web address	

#### CONTACT PERSON, IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE

Name	
Title	
Institution	
Address	
City/State/Zip Code	
Telephone	
Fax	
E-mail	

#### FINANCIAL CONTACT

Name	
Title	
Institution	
Address	
City/State/Zip Code	
Telephone	
Fax	
E-mail	

2. CORE TEAM. Please provide the names of the five required members of your core team. Attach a 250-word (or less) biography for each of these five members. Also identify additional core and data team members, if available at this time. Describe how additional members from the institution and community will be involved in the Achieving the Dream activities and decision-making.

a. PRESIDENT OR CEO

Name	
Title	
Institution	
Address	
City/State/Zip Code	
Telephone	
Fax	
E-mail	

b. INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCHER (person responsible for institutional research or institutional effectiveness)

Name	
Title	
Institution	
Address	
City/State/Zip Code	
Telephone	
Fax	
E-mail	
Signature	

c. CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER

Name	
Title	
Institution	
Address	
City/State/Zip Code	
Telephone	
Fax	
E-mail	
Signature	

d. CHIEF STUDENT SERVICES OFFICER

Name	
Title	
Institution	
Address	
City/State/Zip Code	
Telephone	
Fax	
E-mail	
Signature	

e. FACULTY (e.g., person responsible for programs and curricula in key areas such as remedial or developmental education, mathematics and English)

Name	
Title	
Institution	
Address	
City/State/Zip Code	
Telephone	
Fax	
E-mail	
Signature	

f. OTHER TEAM MEMBERS **Optional:** Enter names and titles of other team members who have agreed to serve on either the core team or the data team.

Name	
Title	
Institution	
Address	
City/State/Zip Code	
Telephone	
Fax	
E-mail	
Signature	
Describe how additional members from the institution and community will be involved in the Achieving the Dream activities and decision-making.	

### ***Begin narrative section***

Narrative text should be double-spaced in 12 point font with one-inch margins not exceeding 12 pages. The questions below do not need to be included in the proposal submission, just your responses.

#### 3. Committed leadership (Please answer all the questions below.)

- What is the college's vision for student success?
- What is the college's vision for equity?
- How is the President or Chancellor mobilizing support for this vision in the college and community?
- How is the vision reflected in the college's strategic plan (or equivalent document)?
- How does the college's planning process currently use data in planning and decision making?

#### 4. Use of evidence to improve programs and services (Please answer all the questions below.)

- How is the college currently using student unit data and program and policy evaluations to improve programs and services?
- What obstacles is the college experiencing in using evidence to improve programs and services (if any)? How would involvement in Achieving the Dream help the college overcome these obstacles?

#### 5. Broad engagement (Please answer all the questions below.)

- How is the college currently engaging stakeholders in problem solving and/or leadership activities?
- What obstacles to engaging stakeholders is the college currently experiencing (if any)? How would participating in Achieving the Dream help the college overcome these obstacles?

#### 6. Systemic institutional improvement (Please answer all the questions below.)

- How has the college improved student success within the last seven years? What changes in programs, services, policies, or practices produced the improved success rate?
  - How were these changes evaluated?
  - How has the college scaled-up or improved upon these programs, services, policies or practices?
  - What obstacles, if any, are hindering full implementation of proven programs and services? How would participating in Achieving the Dream help the college overcome these obstacles? NOTE: Colleges will be expected to use student outcome data to drive decision making about interventions that may need to be abandoned and others that hold promise for greater success. Colleges are cautioned against jumping to selection of intervention strategies prior to conducting a thorough analysis of ongoing activities and challenges during the planning period of this initiative.

7a. Data Analysis Capacity (Please answer all the questions below.)

- How large is your institutional research staff?
- What types of data analyses are routinely produced for use by faculty, staff, or administrators?
- How does the college incorporate these data into decision making processes (if at all)?
- What difficulties do you anticipate (if any) in meeting Achieving the Dream's expectations of colleges regarding the submission of annual student cohort data, the evaluation of student success interventions, and the collection, analysis, and presentation of student outcome data?

**End Narrative Section**

7b. Provide the following data on your institution's enrollment based on your Fall 2007 data submission for IPEDS. Complete the boxes below, following the examples provided.

EXAMPLE: ENROLLMENT DATA

Sector	2007 College Enrollment (#)*	2007 College Enrollment (%)*
Black	11,540	21.01%
American Indian	27	.05%
Asian	622	1.13%
Hispanic	35,056	63.82%
White	5,549	10.10%
Unknown	2,132	3.88%
Total	54,926	100%

\* Enrollment figures are taken from Fall 2007 IPEDS as submitted by institutions

ENROLLMENT DATA

Sector	2007 College Enrollment (#)*	2007 College Enrollment (%)*
Black		
American Indian		
Asian		
Hispanic		
White		
Unknown		
Total		

7c. Provide the following data on your institution's Fall 2004 cohort graduation rate. Complete the boxes below, following the examples provided.

**EXAMPLE 2: GRADUATION RATE DATA**

Sector	Graduation rate (%) Based on 2004 First Time, Full-Time Cohort**
Black	20.9
American Indian	0.0
Asian	34.5
Hispanic	19.4
White	27.0
Unknown	53.8
Institution Graduation Rate ***	21.0

\*\* Graduation rates are based on Student Right to Know definitions, as reported on 2007 IPEDS files. This includes the percent of the fall 2004 first-time, full-time student cohort who completed a degree, certificate, or transfer preparatory program within 150% of normal program time.

\*\*\* Institution graduation rates include all full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students entering the institution either during the fall term or during the academic year 2004-2005.

**GRADUATION RATE DATA**

Sector	Graduation rate (%) Based on 2004 First Time, Full-Time Cohort**
Black	
American Indian	
Asian	
Hispanic	
White	
Unknown	
Institution Graduation Rate ***	

**8. AGREEMENT**

We agree to abide by the commitments described in this application.

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CEO name/title Signature Date

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Financial contact name/title Signature Date

## **Attachments**

Attachment 1- Estimate of costs in Year One and Year Two

Attachment 2- Implementation Proposal Information

## **Attachment 1- Estimate of Year One and Year Two Costs**

A grant to MDC from The Greater Texas Foundation will make it possible to bring up to five institutions in Texas into Achieving the Dream for the two-year period from July 2009 through June 2011. These funds will underwrite the costs of the following services to participating sites:

Year One (Estimated value of services: \$85,000)

- A Kickoff Institute for five core team members. The institute will be held at the University of Texas Conference Center in Austin, TX on June 15-18, 2009.
- 8 days of site-based coaching plus opportunities to work with an assigned coach during the Kickoff Institute and the annual Strategy Institute; the coach will visit the college twice during the academic year.
- 8 days of site-based data facilitation plus opportunities to work with an assigned data facilitator during the Kickoff Institute and the annual Strategy Institute; the data facilitator will visit the campus twice during the academic year.
- Complimentary registration for four team members at the annual Strategy Institute to be held in Winter 2010. The exact date and venue are to be determined.
- Access to the national database and eSTATS data mining and analysis tools.
- Access to all Achieving the Dream publications, tools, communication materials via a members-only section of the Achieving the Dream Web site.

Year Two (Estimated value of services: \$65,000)

- 8 days of site-based coaching plus opportunities to work with an assigned coach during the annual Strategy Institute; the coach will visit the college twice during the academic year.
- 8 days of site-based data facilitation plus opportunities to work with an assigned data facilitator during the annual Strategy Institute; the data facilitator will visit the campus twice during the academic year.
- Complimentary registration for four team members at the annual Strategy Institute to be held in Winter 2011. The exact date and venue are to be determined.
- Access to the national database and eSTATS data mining and analysis tools.
- Access to all Achieving the Dream publications, tools, communication materials via a members-only section of the Achieving the Dream Web site.

Another grant from the Greater Texas Foundation to the Community College Leadership Program at the University of Texas-Austin will make it possible for participating Texas institutions to send a team of trustees and the president of the institution to a Trustees Institute in spring 2010 and again in 2011.

In exchange for these services, selected institutions must pay for the following:

Year One:

- Travel and lodging for five core team members to participate in the June 2009 Kickoff Institute. (Estimate lodging at \$196 per night for three nights for five team members; airfare and ground transportation costs must also be covered with institutional resources.)

- Travel and lodging for four team members to participate in the Winter 2010 Strategy Institute. (Estimate lodging at \$285 per night for three nights for four team members; registration fees will approximate \$500 per participant; airfare and ground transportation costs must also be covered with institutional resources.)
- Planning costs – these could include meetings and retreats, faculty release time or stipends; community, faculty, and student engagement activities; site visits to other colleges for professional development or other learning opportunities. Institutions will determine what costs and activities best serve their needs.

#### Year Two

- Travel and lodging for four team members to participate in the Winter 2011 Strategy Institute. (Estimate lodging at \$285 per night for three nights for four team members; registration fees will approximate \$550 per participant; airfare and ground transportation costs must also be covered with institutional resources.)
- Implementation costs – these could include new programs and services, evaluation costs, professional development and other expenses associated with implementing the four-year student success plan.

## Attachment 2- Implementation Proposal Information

By the end of the first year, colleges will be expected to develop a four-year implementation proposal due in Spring 2010. A proposal narrative, work plan, timeline, and budget are required. **Institutions applying to join Achieving the Dream should NOT submit an implementation proposal during the application process.**

Implementation proposals from successful colleges will provide evidence of the following:

- The institution has conducted a rigorous analysis of student outcomes (using data disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and other characteristics as appropriate); identified any gaps in student success among demographic groups; assessed current policies and practices influencing student success; and authentically engaged students, faculty, and the community to identify needs and opportunities.
- The institution has identified a manageable set of priorities for 2010-14 based on its data analysis. This includes addressing any gaps in student success among demographic groups.
- The institution will build on demonstrated successes; the institution will discard what has been shown not to be working; and will adopt, adapt, or test strategies that fit the institution's analyses of student outcomes and current policies and practices.
- The institution will seek to improve systems, not simply initiate projects. When pilot activities are proposed, the institution will have a resource allocation plan for taking successful practices and processes to scale across the institution.
- The institution will leverage internal and external sources of funding to support its institutional transformation efforts.
- The institution will have plans for evaluating each intervention and applying new understandings to drive lasting change in core policies and practices.
- The institution will have plausible plans for maintaining momentum, institutionalizing a culture of evidence and inquiry, and engaging stakeholders in problem-solving activities.
- The institution will have strong presidential/chancellor and board commitment to keeping an institution-wide focus on student success.

Draft proposals and related materials are due March 31, 2010. Coaches, data facilitators, and MDC will provide critical feedback that may help strengthen final proposals. Final proposals and documentation materials are due May 15, 2010. All applicants will be notified of their second-year standing by MDC on or around July 1, 2010.