Achieving the Dream News

Davidson County Community College was recognized as a leader in the national student completion movement by Achieving the Dream, a national nonprofit leading the nation’s most comprehensive non-governmental reform network for community college student success and completion. DCCC, one of 14 institutions designated as a 2012 Leader College, was recognized for demonstrating sustained improvement and accomplishments on key student achievement indicators, including student persistence and completion.

“Attaining the Leader College designation demonstrates the commitment of our campus community to the success of students,” said Christy Forrest, dean of the School of Foundational Studies and Academic Support, who is leading the Achieving the Dream effort at DCCC. “As a community of educational practitioners, we understand the opportunity and responsibility to create a positive academic experience. Being recognized for this is exciting and provides validation that our work is valuable and moving us in the right direction.”

The 14 new Leader Colleges are:

- **Bay College** (Escanaba, MI)
- **Central Piedmont Community College** (Charlotte, NC)
- **Community College of Baltimore County** (Baltimore, MD)
- **College of the Ouachitas** (Malvern, AR)
- **Davidson County Community College** (Thomasville, NC)
- **Elgin Community College** (Elgin, IL)
- **Greenville Technical College** (Greenville, SC)
- **Lone Star College System** (The Woodlands, TX)
- **National Park Community College** (Hot Springs, AR)
- **Springfield Technical Community College** (Springfield, MA)
- **Temple College** (Temple, TX)
- **Texarkana College** (Texarkana, TX)
- **Trident Technical College** (North Charleston, SC)
- **University of Hawai‘i Community Colleges** (Honolulu, HI)*

“We are committed to the success of our students, and being named a leader in this important national student completion movement truly shows what great academic strides we are making on our campus,” said Dr. Mary Rittling, president of DCCC. “Our faculty has devoted more time and effort with coaching and developmental education courses, and we are already seeing an increase in our student completion rate thanks to these new initiatives.”

Leader Colleges are demonstrating the power of the Achieving the Dream Student-Centered Model of Institutional Improvement by raising persistence and graduation rates.
and closing achievement gaps. Each college approaches the work differently, but with the guidance of the model and Achieving the Dream Coaches, colleges implement data-informed programs and policies that build long-term, institution-wide commitment to student success. Examples include: college readiness programs, mandatory new student orientation, student success courses, developmental course redesign, curriculum redesign, and intensive and individualized advising.

“We are proud of DCCC for earning this respected distinction,” said Rachel Singer, Achieving the Dream Vice President for Community College Relations and Applied Research. “DCCC has raised the bar on promising practices that will impact policies to help more students succeed. They deserve recognition for their dedication to the student success movement.”

In order to be eligible for Leader College distinction, colleges must demonstrate commitment to and progress on the principles and values of Achieving the Dream: committed leadership, use of evidence to improve programs and services, broad engagement, and systemic institutional improvement all guided by a student-centered vision focused on equity and excellence. Additionally, each Leader College has successfully implemented at least one student success intervention that is advancing student outcomes.

These colleges have identified workable solutions to issues such as enhancing the experience of first-year students, improving developmental education, closing achievement gaps, strengthening academic and personal advising for students in need of additional support, strengthening links to high schools and four-year institutions to strengthen student preparation and advancement, and increasing retention, persistence rates, and the number of certificate and degree recipients. To learn more about Leader Colleges, visit www.achievingthedream.org/get_involved/leader_colleges.