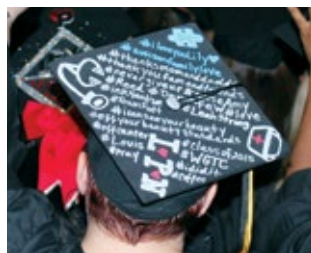


# IMPROVING STUDENT SUCCESS IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

**ACHIEVING THE DREAM 2015 ANNUAL REPORT**



Achieving the Dream™

Community Colleges Count

FOR MORE THAN A DECADE, ACHIEVING THE DREAM HAS SERVED AS A CATALYST HELPING COMMUNITY COLLEGES BOLSTER STUDENT SUCCESS. ACHIEVING THE DREAM GUIDES COLLEGES THROUGH AN INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE PROCESS THAT STRENGTHENS CRUCIAL CAPACITIES WHICH NETWORK EXPERIENCE AND RESEARCH SUGGEST MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN ENABLING ALL STUDENTS TO EARN CERTIFICATES AND DEGREES.

Our longstanding emphasis on building data capacity and encouraging leadership and innovation has shaped the national conversation on improving student outcomes. Our focus from the start on access and completion for low-income students and students of color is now a central focus of community colleges nationwide.

ATD's National Reform Network includes more than 200 institutions, 100 coaches, and 15 state policy teams in 35 states and the District of Columbia and serves more than 4 million community college students. Students at many ATD campuses are finding more success, moving through developmental education and gateway courses, and earning degrees or transferring to four-year institutions. Our Leader Colleges are beginning to close longstanding achievement gaps for low-income students and students of color. The tools and solutions ATD network colleges have honed over a decade to better structure the journey of a broadly diverse student body are a model for minority-serving institutions and all of higher education.



## REAL-WORLD RESULTS

ATD-led improvements in everything from student services, data analysis and remedial education, to the development of guided pathways have led to double-digit increases in improvement at many of our colleges. For example:

**Bakersfield College (CA)** increased successful completion of developmental English from 21.3 percent in 2010 to 24.9 percent in 2012 and successful completion of developmental math from 19.1 percent to 23.3 percent.

**William H. Rainey Harper College (IL)** increased the percentage of degree- and certificate-seeking students who reached their goal within three

years of initial enrollment from 14 percent in 2010 to 24 percent in 2014. The percentage of recent high school graduates who enrolled in college-level math within one year of high school graduation also increased from 47 percent to 72 percent.

**Trident Technical College (SC)** increased its fall term successful course completion rate from 62 percent in 2011 to 76 percent in 2014.

**University of Hawai'i Community Colleges (HI)** increased the number of degrees awarded by 70 percent between 2010 and 2014, during a stable enrollment period.

# CHANGES IN LEADERSHIP AND THE ATD INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY FRAMEWORK

With the retirement of founding president Dr. William E. Trueheart, ATD hired Dr. Karen A. Stout as president and CEO to guide ATD on its new course. Dr. Stout is president emerita of Montgomery County Community College in Pennsylvania and a national leader in institutional reform for student success. Dr. Stout moved immediately to guide the development of the new capacity framework, championing a strengthened commitment to teaching and learning and non-academic supports, reinvigorating member recruitment, and launching a new strategic plan.

Achieving the Dream's most far-reaching effort in 2015 has been developing an institutional capacity framework and a self-assessment instrument called the Institutional Capacity Assessment Tool (ICAT) that helps make the framework operational. They reflect our evolving thinking about what colleges need to increase student persistence and completion significantly. Based on research and experience with hundreds of colleges, Achieving the Dream has identified seven key capacities that together create a student-focused culture that sustains student success. Colleges need to be strong in all capacity areas to implement holistic reforms such as guided pathways and integrated planning and advising systems.

To develop the framework and make ICAT useful, we sought input from the network and tested it in 10 ATD institutions. Once it is finalized, ATD will tighten the focus on coaching and technical assistance geared toward helping network colleges strengthen the areas of need that are revealed through the tool's diagnostics. ATD coaching will continue to play a central role in helping colleges set goals and measure progress; connect institutions to expertise, technical assistance, and resources; foster a culture of

## GOALS OF THE ATD STRATEGIC PLAN

1. Build ATD's capacity to support colleges through the whole college transformation necessary for accelerated results in student completion.
2. Strengthen ATD's strategic partnerships to bolster network college capacity, results, and innovation.
3. Position ATD as a "voice from the field" thought leader in the higher education reform movement around effective policy and practice to amplify its influence and impact.
4. Build ATD's organizational sustainability, capacity, and effectiveness.

accountability, inquiry, evidence, and collaboration; develop priorities and action plans; and leverage and analyze data for use across the institution.

## NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR ATD NETWORK COLLEGES

ATD recognized progress at two institutions—The Community College of Baltimore County (MD) and Patrick Henry Community College (VA)—with its annual **Leah Meyer Austin Award**. The Community College of Baltimore raised degree and certificate completion rates by 55 percent. Patrick Henry Community College more than doubled its three-year completion and transfer rates from 15 to 33 percent.

Five of the nine finalists for the 2015 **Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence** were ATD colleges: Brazosport College (TX), El Paso Community College (TX), Indian River State College (FL), Renton Technical College (WA), and West Kentucky Community and Technical College. The Aspen Prize recognizes colleges that achieve outstanding outcomes in student learning, degree completion, employment and earnings, and successfully serve high levels of minority and low-income students.

# LEADING AND LEARNING

ATD’s value to the field results, in no small way, from its efforts to launch and study innovative approaches to improvement. Achieving the Dream works with funders and institutions to pioneer new approaches for increasing success and spread them across the network. Achieving the Dream institutions are uniquely prepared to test large-scale interventions that require holistic change, thanks to the foundation they built through their early institutional change efforts in ATD. And ATD itself has expanded its role as a source of skilled technical assistance.

## WHAT WE’RE LEADING

We manage numerous major funded learning initiatives to seed innovative ideas in higher education and on our campuses.

In 2015, Achieving the Dream led the scale-up of a broad effort to introduce a fresh, holistic approach to student success by taking into account family and work responsibilities, financial needs beyond tuition, and the financial knowledge students need to sustain the other aspects of their lives. The **Working Students Success Network (WSSN)** brings together 23 colleges in four states to help students to gain financial skills and career experience to both successfully earn credentials and find jobs that pay family-sustaining wages. Funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Bank of America Charitable Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, Lumina Foundation, and MetLife Foundation, WSSN seeks to provide individuals with a complementary set of services in three key areas:

- **Education and employment advancement.** Colleges are focusing more intensively on helping students develop and implement an achievable career plan by bolstering career counseling, developing training on specific skills for

targeted industries or occupations, and strengthening other career services.

- **Income and work supports.** Participating colleges are helping low-income students with tasks ranging from doing their taxes and filling out FAFSA forms to ensuring that they can tap into resources that will keep them and their families afloat. Staff can help students with heavy financial responsibilities track down financial aid, emergency aid, food bank, childcare, housing, and transportation assistance—the small pieces that together make a big difference.
- **Financial services and asset building.** Colleges are working with financial service companies and banks to provide training, information, and tools for students to make educated choices about budgeting and use of financial products. Community partners will help by providing intensive financial coaching and help building assets through special savings accounts, often supported with matching funds.

ATD will introduce key strategies and lessons from the initiative and integrate what it learns into its approach to campus transformation across the network.

### 23 COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN 4 STATES: OUR PARTNERS IN THE WORKING STUDENT SUCCESS NETWORK

Arkansas Consortium	California Consortium	Virginia Consortium	Washington Consortium
Arkansas Community Colleges	California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office	Virginia Community College System	The Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
College of the Ouachitas (Malvern, AR)	Cabrillo College (Aptos, CA)	Danville Community College (Danville, VA)	Big Bend Community College (Moses Lake, WA)
East Arkansas Community College (Forrest City, AR)	Cañada College (Redwood City, CA)	Eastern Shore Community College (Melfa, VA)	Clark College (Vancouver, WA)
North Arkansas College (Harrison, AR)	East Los Angeles College (Monterey Park, CA)	Northern Virginia Community College (Annandale, VA)	Highline College (Des Moines, WA)
Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas (Helena-West Helena, AR)	Los Angeles Harbor College (Wilmington, CA)	Patrick Henry Community College (Martinsville, VA)	Walla Walla Community College (Walla Walla, WA)
	Los Angeles Southwest College (Los Angeles, CA)		
	Porterville College (Porterville, CA)		
	Skyline College (San Bruno, CA)		



Another initiative in this area, funded by **OneMain Financial**, provides scholarships to students who are close to graduation but face difficult financial circumstances and need one-time assistance to earn a credential.

High-performing Achieving the Dream colleges have been connecting and aligning interventions to bring educational coherence and structure to their student success efforts. This approach, which lays the groundwork for structured or guided pathways, is paying off for students and colleges.

In October 2015, 30 colleges were selected to design and implement structured academic and career pathways at scale for all of their students through the **Pathways Project**, led by the American Association of Community Colleges in partnership with ATD, seven other organizations and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Of these 30 institutions, 21 are current ATD institutions and two are former ATD institutions, well prepared to move confidently into such comprehensive change.

## TWO-THIRDS OF PATHWAYS PROJECT INSTITUTIONS ARE MEMBERS OF ATD NETWORK

Alamo Colleges (TX)*	Irvine Valley College (CA)	San Jacinto College (TX)
Bakersfield College (CA)*	Jackson College (MI)*	Skagit Valley College (WA)
Broward College (FL)*	Lansing Community College (MI)**	Stanly Community College (NC)*
Cleveland State Community College (TN)	Linn-Benton Community College (OR)*	South Seattle Community College (WA)
Columbus State Community College (OH)*	Monroe Community College (NY)	Tallahassee Community College (FL)*
Community College of Philadelphia (PA)*	Mt. San Antonio College (CA)	Tulsa Community College (OK)**
Cuyahoga Community College (OH)*	Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (WI)*	Wallace State College (AL)*
El Paso Community College (TX)*	Paris Junior College (TX)*	Western Wyoming Community College (WY)
Front Range Community College (CO)	Pierce College District (WA)*	Zane State College (OH)*
Indian River State College (FL)*	Prince George's Community College (MD)*	<i>*Current Network College</i>
	St. Petersburg College (FL)*	<i>**Former ATD Network College</i>

ATD's involvement in the project is extensive. Our CEO, Karen Stout, is a member of the steering committee, and provides guidance about the design and implementation, including development of institutes on key components of structured

pathways. A few well-established ATD Leadership Coaches are being tapped to be among the Pathways Project Coaches. Their involvement will help ATD further develop its coaching capacity for pathways and help introduce all ATD colleges to this work.



For structured pathways to be effective, institutions must be able to use technology more effectively. ATD is working closely with EDUCAUSE to pioneer a new approach on campuses called the **Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success in Higher Education (iPASS)** initiative. This initiative supports colleges and universities in leveraging technology to enhance and streamline course advising, selection, and registration. The technology also tracks student progress to improve academic decisionmaking. In 2015, Achieving the Dream began offering technical assistance on planning, implementation, progress monitoring, and change management to 14 of the 24 community colleges and universities selected to participate in iPASS. The initiative is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust.

### iPASS Institutions Supported by ATD

- Community College of Philadelphia (PA)
- Doña Ana Community College\*(NM)
- Georgia State University
- Honolulu Community College/University of Hawai'i System\*
- Montgomery County Community College (PA)
- Northeast Wisconsin Technical College
- Northern Essex Community College (MA)
- Patrick Henry Community College (VA)
- Queensborough Community College (NY)
- Seattle Colleges (WA)
- South Texas College
- Guttman Community College (NY)
- Trident Technical College\* (SC)
- University of Texas-San Antonio
- Zane State College\* (OH)

\*STEM-focused institutions

ATD is not only a crucial player in expansion of guided pathways, funder-supported initiatives are also helping colleges in the network explore new career pathways for students. Achieving the Dream continues to collaborate with partner Jobs for the Future on **STEM Regional Collaboratives** to help colleges develop close partnerships with employers, P-12 school systems, and community organizations to strengthen their middle-skill STEM pathways. With support from the Walmart Foundation, we are working with four colleges to implement a **Strengthening Pathways to Retail Careers** initiative, which is designed to lead to higher, family-sustaining wages in the retail and hospitality industries.

Achieving the Dream continues to lead seven regional colleges in the **Northeast Resiliency Consortium**, funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, to support workforce development. The effort gives workers credit for previous learning and builds regional capacity to retrain the unemployed, veterans, and other workers in critical occupations, such as healthcare, information technology, and environmental technology.

In June 2015, Achieving the Dream received recognition for its **Clinton Global Initiative (CGI)** Commitment to Action. As part of the commitment, ATD is bringing promising practices and interventions in community colleges to scale. ATD and four partner community colleges involved in the Catalyst Fund, including Brazosport College (TX), Bunker Hill Community College (MA), Durham Technical Community College (NC), and Patrick Henry Community College (VA), will engage in national demonstrations and create and share a tool on the promising practices that identify meaningful approaches to accelerate institutional change. ATD will disseminate findings and encourage colleges to apply the new practices.

## WHAT WE'RE LEARNING

"By emphasizing the crucial role of data analysis and calling for broader institutional change, (Achieving the Dream has) changed the reform conversation."

– Thomas R. Bailey, Shanna Smith Jaggars, and Davis Jenkins in *Redesigning America's Community Colleges: A Clearer Path to Student Success* (2015)

Our initiatives are teaching us about how innovations can be introduced to serve students and communities and spread through the network. Over the past decade, ATD has uncovered key principles of improvement that now are widely accepted in the field. We have learned that to improve student success on a substantial scale, community colleges need to engage in bold, holistic institutional change that goes

beyond boutique interventions, address problems at scale, and serve all the students who need help. We've also learned that cultivating full-time and adjunct faculty engagement is challenging, but essential. These lessons, drawn from research on our efforts, have guided the redesign of our institutional model and also our efforts to take bold positions on issues of crucial importance to institutions.

## WHAT IT TAKES

**Changes in policy and practice.** To support changes in policy and practice, ATD worked closely with prominent national organizations over many months to develop a set of developmental education design fundamentals using the successful work of ATD colleges to inform the discussions. The results were released in a November 2015 document, *Core Principles for Transforming Remediation within a Comprehensive Success Strategy*, which will create new momentum for ATD's work to increase student persistence and completion and return to a focus on equity.

Achieving the Dream has advocated for bolstering tuition support for students through College Promise campaigns. We also recognize that the student success agenda requires not only adequate financial support for students but new funding models to help colleges provide needed academic and nonacademic supports and technology systems. We are increasingly working with policymakers at the state and national level to make student success and college completion a top priority.

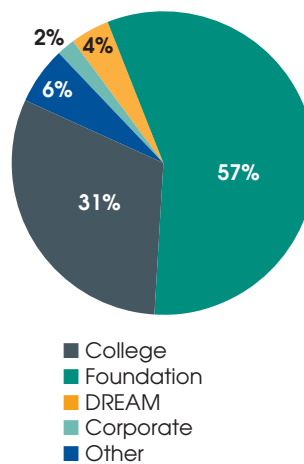
**Best-in-class meetings and peer learning.** Achieving the Dream's 2015 annual student success institute DREAM drew nearly 2,000 attendees, the largest learning event in ATD's history. Achieving the Dream and SAS, the software analytics company, also co-sponsored an inaugural Data and Analytics Summit that convened representatives of more than 80 community colleges to discuss sharing, analyzing, and visualizing data to improve student outcomes. ATD worked with the Aspen Institute to launch Presidential Leadership Symposia that enable its presidents to engage in collaborative problem solving over a two- to three-day period. ATD also launched Benchmarking Site Visits, which are comprehensive two-day visits from an expert ATD/Aspen team followed by an extensive feedback report that benchmarks the practices and performance of the college with those of the nation's most effective colleges.

**Ongoing commitment to changing institutional culture.** Our colleges give ATD high marks for changing institutional culture, with presidents reporting an intensified focus on student success (97 percent), increased use of data (94 percent), and changes in policies to support student success (79 percent), according to our 2015 survey of participants. About two-thirds of college leaders reported improved student outcomes and greater commitment to equity.

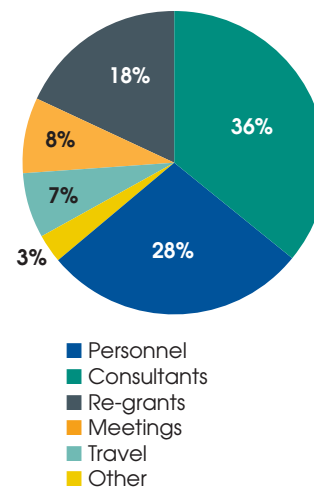
**New members and funding for innovation.** We're reaching out to new colleges to invite them to join with us and have lined up new funded initiatives that address crucial challenges that students and institutions face. In 2015, 16 community colleges joined ATD and 19 ATD network institutions earned Leader College status for measureable improvements in student success. Twenty-eight institutions that have been Leader Colleges for three or more years were re-certified as Leader Colleges.

The chart below indicates where ATD's revenues come from and where our money goes. The chart on the left shows the organizations sources of revenue to support our work. As the chart at right shows, ATD also changed how it uses funds, more than doubling the amount of money used for re-granting to ensure that more colleges can participate in foundation-funded initiatives.

**ATD 2015-2016  
SOURCES OF REVENUE**



**ATD 2015-2016  
USE OF FUNDS**



**Strong partnerships.** ATD recognizes that many groups are contributing to significant changes in the field. We have sought to establish strategic partnerships that augment our in-house knowledge with the experience of external partners who are sharing their expertise to make a difference for millions of students.

Working together, we expect 2016 to be an even more exciting year, and one marked by continuous improvement at our member institutions.



Achieving the Dream™

Community Colleges Count

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ACHIEVING THE DREAM:**

Visit [www.AchievingtheDream.org](http://www.AchievingtheDream.org)

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