

**For Immediate Release**

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**KC selected to join ‘Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count’**

Signifying a commitment to student success and institutional improvement, Kilgore College, along with 26 other colleges from seven states and the District of Columbia have joined “Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count”, and will begin work to identify new strategies to improve student success, close achievement gaps and increase retention, persistence and completion rates.

Conceived in 2004 by Lumina Foundation for Education and seven national partner organizations, Achieving the Dream is focused on creating a “culture of evidence” on community college campuses in which data collection and analysis drive efforts to identify problems that prevent students from succeeding—particularly low-income students and students of color—and develop programs to help them stay in school and receive a certificate or diploma.

With these new institutions, the Achieving the Dream network now includes more than 130 institutions in 24 states and the District of Columbia, reaching more than one million students.

“As our mission statement stresses, improving and assuring student success is critical for Kilgore College,” said Dr. Bill Holda, college president. “As the primary point of access for educational opportunities in the communities we serve, and as the principal contributor toward community development, Kilgore College is excited to join the culture of evidence created by ‘Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count’ to embark on a journey of improved student success.”

Each new college has made an initial two-year commitment to focus its efforts on closing performance gaps among student sub-groups including students of color and low-income students.

These colleges will not only learn from those that are already a part of Achieving the Dream, they will receive assistance from experienced practitioners in building a culture of evidence campus-wide, using data to identify problems, setting priorities and measuring progress toward increasing student success.

“The long-term vision of Achieving the Dream is that all community colleges and states across the country will adopt a culture that promotes and supports student success,” said William Trueheart, President and CEO of Achieving the Dream. “The evidence is clear that success in higher education, whether obtaining a two-year degree or credential or a four-year degree, is a critical pathway to better jobs, a more vibrant economy, and greater U.S. competitiveness.”

Trueheart said that Achieving the Dream colleges are intended to make lasting changes in policies, programs and services that are integrated to support success for all students.

In addition to those colleges that are self-funding the work with Achieving the Dream, this most recent expansion of institutions has been made possible with grants provided by five foundations across the country.

The Greater Texas Foundation is supporting Kilgore College, along with four other community colleges in Texas, and the Meadows Foundation is supporting four community colleges in Texas.

The New Economy Initiative is funding two community colleges in Michigan, The Charles Stuart Mott Foundation is supporting one community college in Michigan and The Kresge Foundation is supporting seven community colleges in Michigan.

This expansion allows us to grow our network and bring proven student success methods to even more students, communities, and states,” Trueheart said. “Community colleges are at the forefront of the national college completion movement. To be successful requires a structured, committed focus on using data and evidence to make important decisions that will positively impact students, campuses and communities.”