National Association Expands Effort to Help Colleges Facilitate Green Job Growth

New action plans aimed at positioning colleges as leaders in the future green economy

WASHINGTON, DC – For colleges trying to advance sustainability initiatives on campus, a new series of action plans provide models and resources that could ultimately lead more students to consider careers in green and sustainably-focused industries.

The American Association of Community Colleges’ (AACC) Sustainability Education and Economic Development (SEED) initiative is launching the SEED Green Action Plan Series. The first action plan, Creating an Environment for Growing Green Jobs: Community Colleges Shaping State and Local Energy Policies, describes how colleges can play a more active role in advancing state and regional clean energy policies that will ultimately drive demand for more jobs and training opportunities.

SEED, which includes over 425 member community colleges, is an initiative that aims to help two-year colleges transform their curricula, workforce development, and overall community to become more sustainable.

“Community colleges are uniquely positioned to be leaders of the sustainability and green economy movement,” said Walter G. Bumphus, president and CEO of AACC. “The SEED Green Action Plan series, aimed at senior administrators, faculty, and staff, is an important resource to ultimately speed the implementation of these efforts.”

Tools like this will be needed to continue to build on what is an emerging green economy. A new Brookings Institution report highlights that, since 2003, newer clean economy businesses (namely those segments such as wind energy, solar PV, and smart grid) have added jobs at a “torrid pace.” As importantly, the study claims that the median wages in the clean economy are 13 percent higher than median U.S. wages.

“For an emerging industry like this—where job growth potential is significant but great uncertainty surrounds market conditions—colleges can be doing a lot to prepare for promising future opportunities,” said Bumphus. “These action plans will help colleges not only to build a skilled pipeline of workers, but also to become change agents in regional efforts to grow the green economy itself.”

SEED and its action plan are supported by The Kresge Foundation, which seeks to support Pathways to and Through College. By advancing campus sustainability and green jobs, Kresge hopes to provide opportunities for community college graduates to find middle class jobs. “There are a growing number of innovative community college practices in the green space,” explains Bill Moses, Kresge’s program director for education. “These plans will help to identify some of the fundamental steps already taken to promote the green economy, and support hundreds of other community colleges to effectively link students to long-term careers.”

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About SEED
The American Association of Community Colleges’ Sustainability Education and Economic Development (SEED) initiative aims to advance sustainability and green workforce development practices at community colleges. With more than 425 college members, SEED identifies and shares promising models and resources and builds the capacity of college leaders, faculty, and staff. This program is consistent with AACC’s commitment to access and completion as part of the national goal to increase the number of students who complete degrees, certificates, and other credentials with value in the workplace. More information can be found at www.theseedcenter.org.

SEED was created with ecoAmerica and is supported by the Kresge, Flora Family, and Surdna foundations.

About the American Association of Community Colleges
Located in Washington, D.C., the American Association of Community Colleges is a national organization representing the nation’s close to 1,200 community, junior and technical colleges. Community colleges are the largest and fastest growing sector of higher education and enroll almost half (46 percent) of all U.S. undergraduates. For more information, visit www.aacc.nche.edu/.

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