FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HIGHER ED ASSOCIATIONS LAUNCH FIRST NATIONAL ATTAINMENT COMMISSION

Washington, DC – The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) yesterday joined five other presidentially-based higher education associations to announce the creation of a national Commission on Higher Education Attainment.

The commission’s goal is to chart a course for greatly improving college retention and attainment and, in turn, restore U.S. higher education preeminence.

Commission members were nominated by each of the presidential associations, which, in addition to AACC, include the American Council on Education (ACE), the Association of State Colleges and Universities, Association of American Universities, Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, and the National Association of Independent Colleges. A complete list of members is available online.

E. Gordon Gee, president of The Ohio State University, will serve as commission chair. The three vice chairs are Andrew K. Benton, president of Pepperdine University (CA); Gail O. Mellow, president of LaGuardia Community College (NY); and George A. Pruitt, president of Thomas Edison State College (NJ).

Other commissioners representing community colleges are Brice Harris, chancellor, Los Rios Community College District (CA), and Rufus Glasper, chancellor, Maricopa Community College District (AZ).

“Being part of this groundbreaking commission further underscores the commitment community colleges are making to meeting President Obama’s challenge to have the U.S. achieve the highest level of postsecondary educational attainment in the world by 2020,” said AACC CEO and President Walter G. Bumphus. “All of higher education must work together to make this happen, but as the largest and most accessible sector, community colleges have a particularly important role to play.”

The specific work of the commission will be defined by the participants, but anticipated topics to be explored include the following:

- The changing nature of students seeking a degree or credential.
- The ability of higher education to attract, retain and graduate the increasing number of adults seeking a degree or credential.
- The current capacity of higher education to accommodate the large number of students who will need to enroll if we are to increase the number of graduates.
- The opportunities to increase efficiency and enhance productivity in meaningful ways.

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The first commission meeting will take place Oct. 31 at ACE’s Washington, DC, offices. The commission is expected to complete its work by fall 2012.

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Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the American Association of Community Colleges is the leading advocacy organization representing close to 1,200 community, junior and technical colleges nationwide. Community colleges are the largest sector of higher education, enrolling 13.4 million credit and non-credit students each year. To learn more about the AACC, visit [www.aacc.nche.edu](http://www.aacc.nche.edu)