WASHINGTON, D.C.—George R. Boggs, president of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) for a decade and an ardent advocate for community colleges for more than 40 years, has announced his retirement from the association effective December 31, 2010. Boggs made the announcement in a letter to the AACC Board of Directors October 21.

In announcing his decision to step down, Boggs cited both personal and professional reasons. “My wife and I are looking forward to returning to California, where most of my family lives and where we plan to build a new home,” Boggs said. “I feel honored to have served community colleges during a period of their most dynamic growth and achievement. Our colleges have never had greater visibility or respect from policy leaders, the business community and the public at large. I move into a new phase of my life knowing that we have very able colleagues at the highest levels who share my passion for these colleges and their students. I know they will carry on with the commitment we have shared, and I look forward to new opportunities I may have to support these important institutions.”

Boggs began his tenure at AACC late in 2000, in time to lead the centennial celebration of the founding of community colleges in 2001. He succeeded David R. Pierce, becoming the eighth CEO of the organization during its 90-year history. Over the following decade, he helped lead an unprecedented period of achievement and recognition for this largest sector of higher education.

“George Boggs was the right leader at the right time as community colleges really came into their own,” said Mary Spilde, current chair of the AACC Board of Directors and president of Oregon’s Lane Community College. “He has an incredible work ethic, but he also practices creative leadership that empowers staff to seek innovative ways to serve and advocate for community colleges. He will leave a dynamic legacy, and we are grateful for his lifelong commitment to community colleges.”

Politically, community colleges have received greater visibility and more substantive support than at any time in their history. The colleges were lauded by the Bush Administration as critical to preparing the nation’s workforce for in-demand jobs of the future, and a Community Based Job Training Grant program was developed to provide $250 million per year to the colleges.

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Community college leader retires – 2

In Congress, both the Senate and the House established Community Colleges Caucuses, which now number 34 and 201 members respectively.

The Obama Administration has also provided significant support for community colleges, including key appointments of individuals with strong community college backgrounds at both the Department of Education and the Department of Labor. Dr. Jill Biden, a long-time community college instructor and the wife of the Vice President, was given a special assignment to promote community colleges nationally and internationally. The President in July proposed the American Graduation Initiative, a 10-year, $12 billion program to expand capacity and innovation in community colleges that would allow them to graduate an additional 5 million students. That legislation—historic in terms of size and scope -- passed the House Sept. 17 and is now under consideration in the Senate.

Under Boggs’ leadership, corporate and foundation support for AACC and community colleges also reached record levels. Among an array of new programs launched or expanded during his tenure are:

- **Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count** – AACC was a founding partner for this multi-year initiative funded largely by Lumina Foundation for Education to increase success among community college students, particularly low-income and students of color. The effort now involves 102 colleges in 22 states, with a total philanthropic investment of $125 million.
- **The Voluntary Framework of Accountability** initiative, a two-year $1 million program established in 2009 and funded by Lumina Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to develop common performance measurements to evaluate institutional effectiveness.
- **An emphasis on diversity in community colleges** via public statements and the creation of a national database focused on minority male student success.
- **Leadership development initiatives**, funded largely by the Kellogg Foundation, created annual leadership institutes operated by AACC and developed leadership competencies now being used in leadership development programs across the nation.
- **A Nursing and Allied Health Initiative** to strengthen the ability of community colleges to meet a critical and growing need for nurses and other health care professionals was begun in 2002. Community colleges currently educate nearly 50 percent of new registered nurses and the majority of allied health professionals.
- **Expansion of the Advanced Technological Education (ATE) program**, a program founded in 1994 and supported by the National Science Foundation, aims to improve or grow programs that prepare skilled technicians to work in high-tech fields. Proposed funding for 2010 is $64 million.
- **Supported Service Learning** in cooperation with Learn and Service America to infuse service learning practices (combining academic study with community engagement) into college programs. The program was funded in 2009 for its 16th consecutive year.
- **The Plus 50 Initiative**, a 3-year, $3.2 million effort funded by The Atlantic Philanthropies is designed to create or expand programs at community colleges to serve adult learners 50 and older through training or retraining, lifelong learning and civic engagement.

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• **The Walmart Workforce and Economic Opportunity Initiative**, a two-year, $2.3 million effort to improve economic prosperity, especially in under-resourced and rural communities.

• **The AACC Corporate Council**, an advisory group of business leaders begun in 2005 that meets regularly with the association’s board executive committee and since its inception has contributed close to $2 million to support AACC’s work and student scholarships.

In addition to his work to promote community colleges nationally, Boggs has contributed to greater understanding of community colleges – a uniquely American educational model -- internationally. An expanded program of international student recruitment was introduced via student fairs in Asia, Europe and Latin America, along with an annual publication, Web site and outreach to embassies. In addition, he frequently lectured abroad and served in an advisory capacity to the Department of National Education for The Republic of South Africa, and the Higher Colleges of Technology for the United Arab Emirates. He currently serves as chair of the board of directors for the World Federation of Associations of Colleges and Polytechnics.

Boggs is a graduate of the Community College Leadership Program at The University of Texas at Austin, earning his Ph.D. in Educational Administration there in 1984. He earned his bachelor’s degree in chemistry from The Ohio State University and his master’s degree in chemistry from the University of California, Santa Barbara. A prolific writer, he is the author of *Handbook on CEO-Board Relations and Responsibilities*, numerous chapters in books and dozens of articles, many focused on the “learning college” concept, which Boggs helped popularize, and effective leadership and governance.

Boggs returns to an area of California where he served for more than 15 years (1985-2000) as president/superintendent of Palomar Community College District, serving San Diego County and enrolling more than 26,000 students. Prior to that, he was associate dean of instruction (1981-1985), division chair (1972-81) and instructor of chemistry at Butte College in Oroville, Calif.

A national search for the new AACC president will begin early in 2010, with the executive committee of the AACC board coordinating the effort on behalf of the 32-member board. “We intend to conduct a search that is national, inclusive, and thorough,” Spilde said.

**Comments from other higher education leaders:**

“George Boggs has been a tireless proponent of America’s community colleges and the students they serve and has long fought for greater recognition of these institutions that are so critical to our nation’s economic future,” said American Council on Education President Molly Corbett Broad. "While I am sure he will take no credit, George’s efforts were critical to President Obama’s introduction of the American Graduation Initiative, which will provide tremendous new resources to community colleges over the next 10 years.

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George has led the American Association of Community Colleges with great distinction—he is a superb colleague and I look forward to working with him for the remainder of his tenure as president.”
Dr. Molly Corbett Broad
President
American Council on Education

"Dr. Boggs leaves a powerfully positive legacy, as he announces his retirement from the American Association of Community Colleges. The nation's community colleges are respected, a part of every politician's speech, and assuming more and more importance and prominence in the restoration of our nation's economy. Dr. Boggs and his AACC team have increased the visibility and the credibility of our colleges. All of us are indebted to him for a decade of quality leadership and service."
Dr. John E. Roueche
Professor and Director
Community College Leadership Program
The University of Texas at Austin

“George is an extraordinary leader, whose commitment has helped foster access, equity, and an elevated appreciation and respect for community colleges throughout the nation and abroad.”
Noah Brown
President and CEO
Association of Community College Trustees

“Dr. Boggs has provided all associated with community colleges sure and steady leadership during a span of time that has seen our institutions rise to an unprecedented level of awareness and respect - not only in the United States but around the world.”
Rod A. Risley
Executive Director
Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society of the Two-Year College