

INCREASE COMPLETION RATES BY 50%

Increase completion rates of students earning community college credentials (certificates and associate degrees) by 50% by 2020, while preserving access, enhancing quality, and eradicating attainment gaps associated with income, race, ethnicity, and gender.

- Publicly commit to explicit goals for college completion.
- Create pathways.
- Expand prior learning assessments.
- Devise completion strategies on both ends of the college experience.
- Establish guarantees for seamless transfer.
- Implement reverse transfer agreements.

DRAMATICALLY IMPROVE COLLEGE READINESS

By 2020, reduce by half the numbers of students entering college unprepared for rigorous college-level work, and double the number of students who complete developmental education programs and progress to successful completion of related freshman-level courses.

- Define and measure college readiness.
- Establish and support community partnerships.
- Participate in implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) or their equivalent in non-CCSS states.
- Collaborate with K–12 partners.
- Strengthen pre-collegiate readiness and success.
- Provide college transitions support.
- Redesign developmental education.
- Build the foundations for gateway course success.

CLOSE THE AMERICAN SKILLS GAP

Close the American skills gap by sharply focusing career and technical education on preparing students with the knowledge and skills required for existing and future jobs in regional and global economies.

- Better understand labor market trends and employers' needs—and communicate them to students.
- Develop career pathways for current and future jobs.
- Redesign student experiences to incorporate more work-based, hands-on, and technology-enriched learning.
- Engage actively with partners to match education and training with jobs.



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REDESIGN.
REINVENT.
RESET.



THERE IS ONE GOAL IN MIND

Giving students the tools, motivation, and support they need to finish what they start—whether it's gaining the skills required for a family-supporting job, transitioning to a four-year college, or advancing in their career.

In 2012, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and its 21st-Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges issued a bold call to action: If community colleges are to contribute to meeting the needs of 21st-century students and the 21st-century economy, education leaders must reimagine what these institutions are—and are capable of becoming.

The Commission's report, *Reclaiming the American Dream: Community Colleges and the Nation's Future*, set a goal of increasing rates for completion of community college credentials by 50% by 2020, while preserving access, enhancing quality, and eradicating attainment gaps across groups of students. The report set forth seven major recommendations connected to attaining that goal.

Now AACC's 21st-Century Initiative moves from idea to action. The implementation guidelines provide a blueprint for colleges and others to implement the recommendations—to redesign students' educational experiences, reinvent institutional roles, and reset the system to better promote student success.

REFOCUS AND REDEFINE

Refocus the community college mission and redefine institutional roles to meet 21st-century education and employment needs.

- Develop the role of community colleges as brokers of educational opportunities rather than solely as direct providers of instruction.
- Strengthen the role of community colleges in advising, learning assessment, and credentialing.
- Redefine faculty roles.
- Create conditions in which part-time faculty can make their best contributions to student success.
- Incorporate ingenious uses of technology in instruction and student services.
- Empower students as partners in developing their paths and achieving their educational goals.

COLLABORATIVE SUPPORT STRUCTURES

Invest in support structures to serve multiple community colleges through collaboration among institutions and with partners in philanthropy, government, and the private sector.

- Develop models for collaborative support structures and brokered/coordinated services.
- Create statewide and border-crossing data systems.
- Create consortia to optimize the capacities of collaborating institutions.

ADVOCACY

Target public and private investments strategically to create new incentives for institutions of education and their students and to support community college efforts to reclaim the American Dream.

- Ensure affordability.
- Promote college completion.
- Strengthen transparency and accountability.
- Build seamless transitions across education sectors.
- Connect education and jobs.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Implement policies and practices that promote rigor, transparency, and accountability for results in community colleges.

- Implement the Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA).
- Develop and use common indicators of student success.
- Develop the VFA's workforce metrics to incorporate labor and wage data that reflect outcomes of community college education.
- Continue work to strengthen ways of reporting student learning outcomes as part of the VFA.
- Encourage colleges nationwide to adopt the VFA, and promote statewide participation.
- Position the VFA as the standard for measuring community college performance.
- Support colleges so they can use the VFA effectively.
- Establish an annual evaluation of the VFA's effectiveness.