



Achieving the Dream™

Community Colleges Count

August 22, 2012

Alice Jacobs, President
Danville Area Community College
2000 E. Main St.
Danville, IL 61832

Dear President Jacobs,

Thank you for your Achieving the Dream efforts this year and for submitting your annual report. We reviewed your annual report and consulted with your Leadership Coach and Data Coach. We offer our observations regarding the college's progress to date.

We are enthusiastic about your achievements regarding:

- Your courageous decision to change late registration policies and to require orientation for all students
- The developmental education changes and improved outcomes in this area
- The professional development focused on equity and on collaborative learning
- The commitment to add staff to IR and to strengthen decisions based on data across the culture.
- The leverage of Achieving the Dream with existing grants and college initiatives
- Continued review and update of the college success course
- Ongoing commitment to embedded tutoring and continued development for both full and adjunct faculty

We are encouraged by your progress in implementing the Achieving the Dream model:

Committed Leadership: We commend your college's leadership and your commitment to the equity agenda. We are thrilled that you continue to be highly involved and committed to the student success agenda. Institutional transformation is evident in your willingness to reallocate funds to further the student success agenda. Also, the progress with the Board engagement, the shift from a paradigm of access to student success, and the continued development of leaders within the faculty and staff are impressive.

Use of Evidence to Improve Policies, Programs, and Services: *The changes in critical policies and services relating to advising, registration, orientation, and tutoring are excellent. We applaud your heavy reliance on survey and focus group data to improve policy and practice, as evidenced by a recent revision in the college success course. This change, along with the changes in developmental education and instructional pedagogy, show great promise.*

Broad Engagement: *The engagement of external community, increasing engagement of faculty and staff, and the involvement of students have been key factors in the transformation at the college. We are delighted that the development of the web page and intent to increase data capacity will further engage both internal and external stakeholders. We are pleased to learn that outreach to schools continues to be exemplary.*

Systemic Institutional Improvement: *We recognize that collaboration with established campus teams such as CQI strengthens your Achieving the Dream work and that leveraging Achieving the Dream work with existing grants and plans to leverage with future grants strengthens the success agenda. We are pleased that Achieving the Dream and the student success agenda drive the strategic plan and are expressed in the vision, mission, values, and goals of the institution as the student success agenda continues to be the focus of the college leaders. We believe it is promising that there is growing evidence of budgeting and reallocation of funds designed to improve student success. We applaud the interweaving of the Virginia Redesign into the college curriculum.*

We recognize that improving student outcomes can be both rewarding and challenging. As you plan for the coming year, we encourage you to take a closer look at the following:

Committed Leadership: *As leaders are retiring, please continue to focus on the student success agenda as a primary consideration in hiring. We believe you would benefit from providing support and training to the new dean of student success.*

Use of Evidence to Improve Policies, Programs, and Services: *In this area we recommend that you:*

- *Continue to strengthen evaluation plans and processes*
- *Continue to support the tracking of disaggregated cohort data*
- *Continue to rapidly scale successful initiatives and re-evaluate those that are not successful*
- *Continue to increase data capacity*
- *Reconstitute or update the data scorecard to keep faculty and others advised*

Broad Engagement: *Some other colleges have found it helpful to use convocation to revitalize faculty and staff to be motivated about student success. We recommend that you continue your excellent work with the community and your work on equity.*

Systemic Institutional Improvement: *We recommend that you continue to embed Achieving the Dream processes of evaluation and improvement in every department across the college. Further, we urge you to continue to institutionalize and scale promising practices.*

Other recommendations: We encourage you to continue to integrate the student success division with the academic divisions in ways that are mutually supportive of student success.

As you know, the past year has been an important and critical time for community colleges. There is much that is expected of us and much that we need to accomplish if we are to create clear and meaningful pathways for our students as they strive toward success. It is our belief that working together, as a community of learners, practitioners and citizens, we can set high standards and accomplish these goals.

We appreciate the time, resources and hard work that you and your faculty and staff have devoted to your Achieving the Dream efforts. We look forward to working with you in the coming year and seeing you at DREAM 2013.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rachel Singer', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rachel Singer
Vice President for Community College Relations and Applied Research
Achieving the Dream

cc: Linda Watkins, Leadership Coach
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