



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

Dear President Jacobs:

We are thrilled to have Danville Area Community College as part of the Achieving the Dream (ATD) National Reform Network, and are deeply appreciative of you and your colleagues' continued commitment to student success and equity. After reviewing your 2014 Annual Reflection and receiving input from your ATD coaching team, we offer several observations in this letter about your institution's progress to date. We have arranged the review using the five broad principles that ATD views as key to institutional transformation, which also serve as the section topics for your Principles Assessment Survey. This feedback is offered in support of your institution in its efforts to achieve the student success and equity goals identified by your team.

#### Reflections on the Five Achieving the Dream Principles

##### *Committed Leadership*

We applaud the vision communicated by you and the board of trustees at the college. We find the representation of the board of trustees at DREAM especially commendable. We are impressed by the increasing focus of communication reflecting an emphasis on student success.

##### *Use of Evidence to Improve Policies, Programs, and Services*

We commend the addition of new personnel to the institutional research office and the improved analysis and use of data as a result of the strengthened data team. We find it promising that you routinely use surveys and focus groups as an effective method to review programs and policies.

##### *Broad Engagement*

We applaud your recent work with the local high schools for curriculum alignment and professional development. We are pleased to acknowledge your increasing assessment of student success strategies through current research. We ask you to consider providing ongoing professional development focused on barriers that students experience.

##### *Systemic Institutional Improvement*

We find it promising that ATD has been institutionalized within Danville Area Community College as the culture transforms to one based on a strategic plan with student success at its core. We are pleased to

acknowledge how the ATD progression and completion sub-team has strengthened the review and revision of policies and procedures. It would be an admirable goal to institutionalize regular review of course and program outcomes.

### *Equity*

We commend the work of the equity and inclusion sub-team, the Small Business Development Center, and the director of career services. This is an excellent collaboration working to address poverty in the community and at the college. We are particularly impressed by the study conducted regarding the demographics of your staff compared to service area demographics. This action is indicative of your commitment to equity.

### Final Thoughts

Your college is effectively integrating major ATD principles with accreditation processes and building a culture of inquiry, evidence, and action.

As we reflect on all of your work leading up to and in the past year we find it promising that the college demonstrates leadership in the field through presentations at the local, state, and national levels, sharing lessons learned. We applaud the institution's continued focus on equity, particularly the work of the equity and inclusion sub-team and the Carol Nichols, the Director of the Small Business Development Center. We are impressed by engagement by the board of trustees in the institution's Achieving the Dream work, including the attendance of the board chair, Dave Harby, at DREAM 2014.

We recognize that the distinct environment of each college poses unique challenges and opportunities. In terms of next steps, we would like to suggest the following as possible ways to improve student outcomes over the next year. Please consider ways to involve part-time faculty with work groups and the student success agenda. Also, determining how your institution can engage part-time students in understanding and completing their educational goals would be an admirable goal as well.

We appreciate the hard work, time, and resources that your institution devotes to your Achieving the Dream efforts. We encourage you to discuss the feedback in this letter with your Leadership Coach and Data Coach, who are ready to support and guide you moving forward. Please consider reviewing this letter with your ATD Core Team and college at large if you so wish. It may assist you in shaping the direction of your ongoing student success efforts. We look forward to working with you in the coming year and welcome your questions and comments along the way.

Sincerely,



Carol A. Lincoln  
Senior Vice President