



## American Association of Community Colleges 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Commission and *Reclaiming the American Dream* FAQ

### What is the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Initiative?

Last year the American Association of Community Colleges launched their 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Initiative in response to the nation's challenges for prosperity and global competitiveness and with an overall goal to educate an additional five million students with degrees, certificates or other credentials by 2020.

The Initiative is divided into two phases. Phase I focused on gathering information from a diverse group of stakeholders from across the country via a listening tour. The report of the listening tour can be found here: [http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Publications/Reports/Documents/ListeningTour\\_report.pdf](http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Publications/Reports/Documents/ListeningTour_report.pdf).

Phase II included the creation of a report, *Reclaiming the American Dream*, which will be released at the 2012 AACC Annual Convention in Orlando, Florida. The report recommendations will be broadly disseminated among educators and policymakers.

### What topics did Phase I of the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Initiative explore?

In a series of meetings, stakeholder groups comprising college faculty and staff, senior administrators, trustees, college presidents, and state policymakers provided regional perspectives on challenges and opportunities that community colleges confront.

Phase I gathered information in the following areas:

1. Student success
2. Voluntary Framework of Accountability
3. Strategies for dealing with budget constraints
4. Big ideas for the future of community colleges
5. What AACC can do for members

Other goals included:

- Increasing focus and building momentum for the community college completion agenda and identifying AACC's role in that effort;
- Promoting the contributions and challenges of community colleges among the public, policymakers, and business leaders; and
- Building support for accuracy and accountability in monitoring community college performance.

Read the report of the Listening Tour at:

[http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Publications/Reports/Documents/ListeningTour\\_report.pdf](http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Publications/Reports/Documents/ListeningTour_report.pdf)

### What is the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Commission?

The 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges is charged with comprehensively examining the challenges and opportunities facing the fastest-growing sector of higher education. Its membership includes representatives from an array of constituencies and expertise including education, business, policy and communications.

Learn more about the Commission at

[http://www.aacc.nche.edu/AboutCC/21st\\_century/Pages/commission.aspx](http://www.aacc.nche.edu/AboutCC/21st_century/Pages/commission.aspx).

### **Who led the Commission?**

The 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Commission is chaired by Dr. Walter G. Bumphus, president and CEO of the American Association of Community Colleges.

The Commission has three co-chairs:

- Mr. Augustine P. Gallego, Chancellor Emeritus  
San Diego Community College District (CA)
- Dr. Kay M. McClenney, Director  
Center for Community College Student Engagement  
The University of Texas at Austin
- Dr. Jerry Sue Thornton, President  
Cuyahoga Community College (OH)

### **How many Commission members are there?**

There are 38 members of the Commission. To view the complete list visit:

[http://www.aacc.nche.edu/AboutCC/21st\\_century/Pages/commission.aspx](http://www.aacc.nche.edu/AboutCC/21st_century/Pages/commission.aspx).

### **What are the main recommendations of the Commission's final report, *Reclaiming the American Dream*?**

The Commission calls for a new vision for community colleges grounded in the "Three Rs": *redesign* students' educational experiences; *reinvent* institutional roles; and *reset* the system to create incentives for student and institutional success.

There are seven recommendations around the three Rs:

*Redesign* students' educational experiences:

1. Increase completion rates of community college credentials (certificates and associate degrees) by 50 percent by 2020, while preserving access, enhancing quality, and eradicating attainment gaps associated with income, race, ethnicity, and gender.
2. Dramatically improve college readiness: by 2020, reduce by half the numbers of students entering college unprepared for rigorous college-level work, and double the rate of students who complete developmental education programs and progress to successful completion of related freshman-level courses.
3. Close the American skills gaps 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.

*Reinvest* institutional roles:

4. Refocus the community college mission and redefine institutional roles to meet 21<sup>st</sup>-century educational and employment needs.
5. Invest in support structures to serve multiple community colleges through collaboration among institutions and with partners in philanthropy, government and the private sector.

*Reset* the system:

6. Target public and private investments strategically to create new incentives for educational institutions and their students and to support community college efforts to reclaim the American Dream.
7. Implement policies and practices that promote rigor, transparency, and accountability for results in community colleges.