

Wayne County Community College District Becomes a Part of Achieving the Dream Initiative

By LISA JACKSON

Wayne County Community College District (WCCCD) is proud to announce that it has become an Achieving the Dream (ATD) institution. Achieving the Dream is a multi-year national initiative to help more community college students succeed through earning degrees and certificates or by transferring to senior institutions to continue their studies. The effort targets low-income students and students of color; groups that in particular have faced the most significant barriers to success. WCCCD will receive a \$50,000 grant this year to plan and launch ATD, and will be eligible for an implementation grant worth up to \$400,000 over four years from the Kresge Foundation.

ATD works in various ways through efforts at select colleges by researching effective practices at community colleges; public policy work; and outreach to communities, business and the public. WCCCD is one of six colleges from Michigan, and 26 overall, joining the initiative this year. The initiative has now grown to 83 participating institutions in 15 states. This marks Achieving the Dream's first expansion into Michigan.

The first ATD colleges joined in 2004 and are located in Florida, New Mexico, North Carolina, Texas and Virginia, and were chosen because of the large number of low income students and students of color enrolled. In 2005 three community colleges from Connecticut and five from Ohio joined; in 2006, seven colleges from Pennsylvania, 10 in Texas and six from Washington became members. ATD was launched in 2004 with start-up funding from the Lumina Foundation for Education.

As part of its work with Achieving the Dream, WCCCD will further expand its role in the community by reaching out to and working with, K-12 educators, business, social service and civic organizations.

"To be chosen to be part of the Achieving the Dream initiative is a great milestone in our history," said John Bolden, WCCCD executive vice chancellor. "To be recognized nationally as an institution whose primary goal is the personal and professional advancement of students is a wonderful distinction."

WCCCD, like other ATD colleges, will have the support of a coach and data facilitator. Many ATD coaches are former college presidents, and will help in developing strategies, set priorities and implement institutional improvements. They will help colleges collect data from students, faculty and staff within the community to analyze it, helping to adopt strategies for improvement based on these findings.

Dr. Christine McPhail, a former community college president who is now professor and graduate coordinator of the community college leadership program at Morgan State University, and Dr. Kriesta Watson, an institutional research specialist at Coppin State University in Baltimore will serve as WCCCD's coaches. The coaches will assist the WCCCD teams responsible for planning and implementing its Achieving the Dream program: the Core Team, chaired by John Bolden, will provide general leadership for the program; and the Data Team, chaired by Dr. Bernadette Spencer, will provide student performance data and progress for use in making decisions regarding needed improvements. Achieving the Dream will be integrated into WCCCD's Pathways to the Future initiative along with other ongoing strategic initiatives such as the Higher Learning Commission's re-accreditation, the WCCCD assessment plan, and the annual continuous improvement cycle.

"We are proud to be an Achieving the Dream institution, and look forward to transforming lives through innovative approaches that we will develop through this initiative," said Dr. Curtis L. Ivery, WCCCD chancellor.

**ACHIEVING
THE DREAMSM**
COMMUNITY
COLLEGES
COUNT