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NEWS RELEASE

Bellingham Technical College Awarded Achieving the Dream Leader College Status

Bellingham Technical College recognized for commitment to data-informed decision-making and closing equity gaps

Bellingham, Washington (September 22, 2015) – Achieving the Dream today announced Bellingham Technical College (BTC) earned Leader College distinction—a national designation awarded to community colleges that commit to improving student success and closing achievement gaps. Bellingham Technical College has shown how data can inform policy and practice to help community college students achieve their goals, resulting in improved skills, better employability, and economic growth for families, communities, and the nation as a whole.

“Bellingham Technical College is deeply committed to ensuring that students receive an exceptional educational experience and succeed in reaching their goals. We are thrilled to continue our work with the Achieving the Dream network as a new Leader College,” said Dr. Kimberly Perry, Bellingham Technical College President.

Reading Apprenticeship (RA) is one of BTC’s Achieving the Dream interventions. This helps faculty develop new ways of engaging and supporting students as they read and interact with academic, technical, or industry-specific materials. The course success rate for BTC’s Fundamentals of English course, for example, increased by 24 percentage points across a two year period after RA was implemented. Last year alone, almost 25% of BTC students were enrolled in RA courses. The college’s RA champions have become state leaders as a result of their innovative efforts in facilitating student engagement and success.

“Becoming a Leader College is very powerful and affirms the exceptional work and commitment of faculty and staff to their students' success,” said Achieving the Dream Vice President for Community College Relations Cindy Lenhart. “Bellingham Technical College is using evidence to make informed decisions that lead to significant institutional change.”

The 2015 Achieving the Dream Leader Colleges are:

<u>Bakersfield College</u> (Bakersfield, CA)	<u>Kingsborough Community College</u> (Brooklyn, NY)
<u>Bellingham Technical College</u> (Bellingham, WA)	<u>Lorain County Community College</u> (Elyria, OH)
<u>Century College</u> (White Bear Lake, MN)	<u>Muskegon Community College</u> (Muskegon, MI)
<u>College of Southern Nevada</u> (North Las Vegas, NV)	<u>North Lake College</u> (Irving, TX)
<u>Columbus State Community College</u> (Columbus, OH)	<u>Paris Junior College</u> (Paris, TX)
<u>Cumberland County College</u> (Vineland, NJ)	<u>Southwestern Oregon Community College</u> (Coos Bay, OR)
<u>Delta College</u> (University Center, MI)	<u>St. Clair County Community College</u> (Port Huron, MI)
<u>Gaston College</u> (Dallas, NC)	<u>St. Petersburg College</u> (St. Petersburg, FL)
<u>Grand Rapids Community College</u> (Grand Rapids, MI)	<u>West Los Angeles College</u> (Culver City, CA)
<u>Jefferson Community & Technical College</u> (Louisville, KY)	

The 2015 Leader Colleges are making strides in the national movement to increase student completion and close achievement gaps, demonstrating the power of the [Achieving the Dream Approach](#). With the guidance of Achieving the Dream Coaches, colleges not only systemically change the way they operate, but also implement key student supports that align with their overall policies and institutional systems, such as college readiness programs, mandatory new student orientation, student-success courses, developmental course redesign, curriculum redesign, and intensive, individualized advising.

Achieving the Dream grants Leader College designation for three-year cycles. After three years, institutions must undergo a recertification process to maintain Leader College status.

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Bellingham Technical College is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, and offers seven direct transfer degrees such as pre-engineering, pre-nursing, electronics, mechanical engineering, and technology and business. Completion of these degrees prepares BTC students to transfer with a junior status to participating colleges and universities in Washington State. BTC offers 37 associate degree and 51 certificate options providing professional technical education to support local and regional industry workforce needs. For more information, go to www.btc.edu.

For more news, events, and photos from the college follow us on www.facebook.com/bellinghamtech, and www.twitter.com/bhamtechcollege and www.instagram.com/bellinghamtechcollege.

Achieving the Dream, Inc. is a national nonprofit that is dedicated to helping more community college students, particularly low-income students and students of color, stay in school and earn a college certificate or degree. Evidence-based, student-centered, and built on the values of equity and excellence, Achieving the Dream is closing achievement gaps and accelerating student success nationwide by: 1) guiding evidence-based institutional improvement, 2) leading policy change, 3) generating knowledge, and 4) engaging the public. Conceived as an initiative in 2004 by Lumina Foundation and seven founding partner organizations, today, Achieving the Dream is leading the most comprehensive non-governmental reform network for student success in higher education history. With over 200 institutions, more than 100 coaches and advisors, and 15 state policy teams – working throughout 35 states and the District of Columbia – the Achieving the Dream National Reform Network helps more than 4 million community college students have a better chance of realizing greater economic opportunity and achieving their dreams.