



An Achieving the Dream™ Institution



## **For Immediate Release**

Media Contact:

Marni Saling Mayer, Director of Communications

Phone: 360.752.8325

Email: [msmayer@btc.ctc.edu](mailto:msmayer@btc.ctc.edu)

# **Bellingham Technical College Commits to Rigorous Student Success and Completion Work**

**Joins Achieving the Dream – the leading national community college reform network of 160 colleges committed to improving student success and completion**

BELLINGHAM, WASHINGTON, March 9, 2011 – Bellingham Technical College (BTC) joins the ranks of thirty community colleges nationwide selected for the Achieving the Dream 2011 Cohort. The focus of this \$250,000 is on helping students succeed in the community college setting, especially students of color and low-income students. The Achieving the Dream project is a multifaceted approach which includes developing a data driven culture of assessment and scrutinizing processes and research to improve student retention, access and opportunity.

Key to the success of this project is identifying the students that have the greatest academic need coupled with added challenges such as personal and financial issues. It is imperative that they are given the opportunity to develop the skills and earn credentials necessary to become successfully employed.

“Achieving the Dream is a project that has a proven track record nationally to make a difference for student success; it has enabled colleges to institutionalize proven strategies for the future,” said Dr. McKeown, President of BTC. “This grant will enable Bellingham Technical College to more effectively use data to continuously assess those strategies and adjust as needed for student success. We see this opportunity as a privilege and are excited to join the Achieving the Dream alumni colleges, our regional colleges, and the six other new Washington State institutions embarking on this project. Achieving the Dream will enable BTC to increase the success of students achieving their educational and career goals.”

As an Achieving the Dream institution, BTC will develop and implement research-based policies and practices based on quantitative and qualitative analyses of its institutional strengths, problem areas, and achievement gaps. BTC has committed to assessing the effectiveness of these policies and practices, institutionalizing the approaches that prove successful, and sharing the findings widely. Through Achieving the Dream, BTC will have the opportunity to learn from other Achieving the Dream institutions, and receive assistance from experienced practitioners in building a culture of evidence

campus-wide, using data to identify problems, setting priorities, and measuring progress toward increasing student success.

“Closing achievement gaps and improving student outcomes is extremely difficult work. The ambitious commitment of BTC is commendable,” said William Trueheart, President and CEO of Achieving the Dream. “Adding 30 colleges to the Achieving the Dream national reform network means that an additional 300,000 students now have a better chance of earning a certificate or degree, realizing greater economic opportunity, and achieving their dreams.”

Conceived in 2004 by Lumina Foundation for Education and seven founding partner organizations, Achieving the Dream, and its signature Student-Centered Model of Institutional Improvement, is focused on creating a culture of evidence in which data and inquiry drive broad-based institutional efforts to close achievement gaps and improve student outcomes overall. The Achieving the Dream model is designed to help more students earn postsecondary credentials, including occupational certificates and degrees. With these 30 new institutions, Achieving the Dream’s network now includes 160 institutions in 30 states and the District of Columbia, serving more than two million students.

### **The 2011 Achieving the Dream Cohort of Community Colleges:**

Amarillo College (TX)	Cumberland County College (NJ)
Grays Harbor College (WA)	Los Angeles Harbor College (CA)
Northwest Indian College (WA)	Skagit Valley College (WA)
Athens Technical College (GA)	East Los Angeles College (CA)
Jefferson Community & Technical College (KY)	Los Angeles Mission College (CA)
Passaic County Community College (NJ)	Spokane Falls Community College (WA)
Bellingham Technical College (WA)	Eastern Maine Community College (ME)
Lane Community College (OR)	Los Angeles Trade Technical College (CA)
Pierce College (CA)	The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College (TX)
Century College (MN)	Edmonds Community College (WA)
Lorain County Community College (OH)	Los Angeles Valley College (CA)
Prince George’s Community College (MD)	West Los Angeles College (CA)
Clover Park Technical College (WA)	Everett Community College (WA)
Los Angeles City College (CA)	Lower Columbia College (WA)
Raritan Valley Community College (NJ)	Whatcom Community College (WA)

**Achieving the Dream** Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count is a national nonprofit that helps more community college students succeed, particularly students of color and low-income students. The organization works on multiple fronts—including efforts on campuses and in research, public engagement and public policy—and emphasizes the use of data to drive change. Launched as an initiative in 2004 with funding provided by Lumina Foundation for Education, Achieving the Dream is built on the belief that broad institutional change, informed by student achievement data, is critical to significantly improving student success rates. Today, Achieving the Dream’s network includes 160 institutions in 30 states and the District of Columbia, serving more than two million students. Achieving the Dream continues to work closely with Founding Partners: the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC); the Community College Leadership Program at the University of Texas-Austin (CCLP); the Community

College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University (CCRC); Jobs for the Future (JFF); MDC; MDRC; and Public Agenda.

**About Bellingham Technical College**

Bellingham Technical College is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, and offers 35 associate degree and 64 certificate options providing professional technical education to support local and regional industry workforce needs. For more information, go to [www.btc.ctc.edu](http://www.btc.ctc.edu)

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