

(Draft Template)

## **Accepting the College Completion Challenge A CALL TO ACTION**

In recognition of the central role that [INSERT NAME OF YOUR COLLEGE] has in meeting the educational and training needs in our community and, more broadly, in contributing to an educated U.S. citizenry and a competitive workforce, we pledge to do our part to increase in the number of Americans with high quality postsecondary degrees and certifications to fulfill critical local, state, and national goals. With the “completion agenda” as a national imperative, [INSERT NAME OF YOUR COLLEGE] has an obligation to meet the challenge while holding firmly to traditional values of access, opportunity, and quality.

### **We Believe**

- We believe the student success and completion agenda is the future of [INSERT NAME OF YOUR COLLEGE].
- We believe that completion matters and that every student counts.
- We believe in every student’s potential and responsibility to succeed—and that an engaged student is more likely to persist in college.
- We believe the “open door” must not be a “revolving door,” and that [INSERT NAME OF YOUR COLLEGE] must take responsibility for student success.
- We believe that community colleges are the gateways to the middle class and beyond for millions of Americans.
- We believe that community colleges are an invaluable economic engine driving the nation toward renewed and sustained economic prosperity.
- We believe the talented and committed people working “heart and soul” at [INSERT NAME OF YOUR COLLEGE] are ready to take on leadership roles to increase student success and college completion.

### **We Commit**

- We commit to a change in institutional culture, from emphasis on access only to emphasis on access *and* success.
- We commit to courageous conversations about diversity, equity, and evidence reflecting student success and institutional performance.
- We commit, while increasing success rates for all students, to eliminating the attainment gaps that separate student groups on the basis of race, ethnicity and family income.
- We commit to acting on facts to make positive changes in the interest of student success and college completion.
- We commit to promoting faculty and staff development focused on evidence-based educational practice.
- We commit to providing development opportunities, for college administrators, trustees, faculty, staff, and students to build and sustain leadership for student success.

### **We Ask**

- We ask every trustee, administrator, faculty member, counselor, advisor, financial aid officer, staff member, and student organization to examine current practices, to identify ways to help students understand the added value of degrees and certifications, and to help them progress toward their goals.
- We ask every student to help one other student succeed.

- We ask community members to support and work with us to help more students succeed.
- We ask elected officials to create the policy conditions that enable, support, and reward our work to strengthen student success.
- We ask other community colleges to join us by signing and sharing this commitment and call to action.

This signed Call to Action commits [INSERT NAME OF YOUR COLLEGE] to promote the development and implementation of policies, practices, and institutional cultures that will produce 50% more students with high quality degrees and certificates by 2020. We call upon every sector and constituency of our college and community to join us in this work. Our democracy needs every one of us.

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Chair, Board of Trustees

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College President/Chancellor

### Pathways to Success - Certificate/Degree Completion

Colleges have done a great job with improving access, but now the new mantra and focus has turned from access to completion.

1. College completion starts with orientation. Engage the students **immediately!** Proper orientation provides a completion pathway. Success, if it is to happen with marginal or high-risk students, must be intentional and proactive.
2. Community colleges have done a good job with *improving access* to all students, but the drop-out rate or non-completion is still a problem.
3. There are steps that community colleges can take to insure progress in the direction of course and program completion.

#### Faculty Training [in-service], Staff Training [in-service], and New Student Orientation [Pathways to Success Class]

- a. Knowing and applying the Universal Standards of Civility and Life Skills. A major emphasis must be placed on self-worth thus building self-confidence. Survey to determine students' needs and the obstacles they face. Put your arms around them so to speak. Students don't care how much you know until they know how much you care!
- b. Creating a Personal Dream Statement [Mission Statement] Renewing and freeing minds. This is at least a 2-year trip plan for each individual that can be prepared using team of student/advisor/teacher/counselor. It can be done as a class project in the Pathways to Success Classes.
- c. Setting goals and objectives using a format/plan to insure success in achieving them. Focus on obstacle removal. Work with the Foundation to provide assistance to students who need financial help to continue.
- d. Assessing the extent to which goals and objectives have been met, then monitoring or adjusting accordingly.
- e. Encouraging accountability partners.
- f. Counseling based on needs, not just on academic issues. IEPs for each student.

#### Student Success Center – [use IEPs]

- a. Math Labs – Professional tutors; student tutors [more information from the math lab instructors could be provided here]
- b. Writing Labs – Professional tutors; student tutors [more information from the writing lab instructors could be provided here]

#### Financial Challenges

- a. Less money – more online education. [Has pros & cons, but lets students travel at their own pace]
- b. A US Education goal is a student increase of 40 million. Distance education is the only answer. There are not enough funds to teach these students.

- c. Have the moral fortitude to step out of your comfort zone and address this issue.
- d. Hire faculty who know and retain faculty who are willing to learn up-to-date online technology that can be used to further the education of their students.
- e. College is not longer an economic filter; it is a social filter. The students are adept at using all sorts of social media no matter what their socio-economic background may be.
- f. Distance education is growing at 20% per year in the US. There are high expectations by the students, and we must deliver!
- g. Soon students will need no textbooks, paper, or pencil; they will be replaced by individual iPads or other mobile platforms of their choice. Again, we must be ready!
- h. Libraries are going away because electronic media are easier to access and provide information for a lower cost.

**Faculty In-Service [Many Community College faculty have not been trained in the skills of Pedagogy]** If we are to compete on the global scale we must educate better than, or at least as well, as other countries. Students need to retain concepts for long-term application – not just to pass a test.

Psychological implications for information storage in LTM [Long-Term Memory]

- 1. Meaningfulness
  - a. Attachment of Emotion
  - b. Organization of Knowledge
  - c. Motivational Techniques
  - d. Attachment to Prior Knowledge
- 2. Distributed Practice
- 3. Attention Span
- 4. Learning Styles

**Frequent Tracking, Assessment, and Intervention**

- a. Quantitative – look at the numbers, what do they mean?
- b. Qualitative – ask open-ended questions. We don't always see the problem as the student sees the problem.
- c. If necessary adjust your **completion plan** based on the data you've collected.

**Persevere [Never give up; there are solutions to every problem]**

In the words of Thomas Edison who had over 1000 attempts to make a lead storage battery (car battery) and over 500 attempts to make a light bulb,

***“Many of life’s failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.”***

Aren't you glad he didn't give up?

## Other Thoughts

- Something else to consider is providing placement tests to HS Sophomores and/or Juniors. This might be a wake-up call for some of them to aggressively pursue better grades in Math and/or Language. At the community college level, the two to three year remediation just to get students ready for college frequently expends all the monies provided for their education. Then they quit! Non-completion!
- When these placement tests are given it might be wise to counsel the students as to what being prepared for college level courses means to their future and the number of years required for their community college certificate/degree completion.
- Maybe HS teachers ought to take the placement exams then they would know what the students are facing.
- Community colleges could have an aggressive 2-week immersion writing intensive program before starting college for students who are just shy of making it on the Language placement exam. The same holds for math.
- Community college English faculty could match up with HS English faculty to prepare a scoring rubric to score for [ex: meaning, information, mechanics] the same concepts. [Students would know what is expected of them all the way through HS and CC]
- The bullet above holds true for math and science as well. For example, a common grading rubric for lab reports would not be difficult to devise.
- Overall, HS and CC teams could work to align curricula so that common scoring systems are used.