



**EMBARGOED UNTIL 4:00 A.M. EASTERN  
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**New Report ‘Seizes the Moment’ to Improve College Readiness**  
*AACC, ACCT and Higher Ed for Higher Standards partner to improve  
community college, K-12 collaboration for student success.*

Washington, D.C.—The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) and Higher Ed *for* Higher Standards today released ***Seizing the Moment: Community Colleges Collaborating with K-12 to Improve Student Success***. The report calls on community college presidents and trustees to embrace the higher standards many K-12 school systems have adopted and implement strategies to increase college readiness and success.

“We have a preparation gap in this country that’s leaving too many young people unprepared when they arrive in community colleges, says **Matt Gandal**, the organizer of Higher Ed *for* Higher Standards, a coalition of college presidents working to improve student success. “Community colleges have an opportunity to close this gap by working together with their K-12 counterparts to adopt proven strategies that are getting real results for students. It all starts with high expectations.”

The report bases its recommendations on examples of community colleges around the country that have adopted innovative approaches to working with their local high schools to increase college readiness rates, while also changing their approaches to placement and first year course design. The recommendations cover three critical areas:

1. Precollege interventions to help students speed up and catch up while still in high school;
2. Streamlined postsecondary placement practices to smooth student transitions into college; and,
3. Redesigned freshman-year experiences to meet student needs and maximize their chances for success.

“One of the great strengths of the American education system—as with the United States as a whole—is its great diversity,” says ACCT President and CEO **J. Noah Brown**. “At the same time, we have a responsibility to unify our public high school and community college systems to give students their best chances of success.”

*Seizing the Moment* profiles proven programs that effectively advance student success throughout the country, including a broad array of models that range from providing remedial education and enabling students to earn college degrees while still in high school to aligning academic expectations from high school to college, using early assessments to increase readiness and success, customizing developmental education to meet students’ needs, and more.

College and organizational programs profiled in the report include: Chattanooga State Community College; El Paso Community College; Elgin Community College; Washington Community and Technical College System; Illinois Council of Community College Presidents; Long Beach College Promise; Lehigh Carbon Community College, Ivy Tech Community College; State University of New York and City University of New York.



“Students who are prepared for college succeed in college, and students who go to and graduate from college have strong chances of great success in life,” says AACC President and CEO **Walter Bumphus**. “AACC and ACCT are extremely proud of the work our member colleges are doing, and it’s time to start finding common ground among the disparate efforts and taking conscientious, consistent and official steps to learn from and propagate the best of them.”

The report recommends that community college presidents and trustees:

1. Partner with K-12 to bring more substantial college readiness supports and interventions into high schools;
2. Identify college-readiness measures that can be used in high school to trigger these supports and acceleration strategies for students;
3. Revise institutional placement practices to honor college-ready achievements;
4. Provide first-year students who are not yet college ready with co-requisite and other evidence-based remediation opportunities and guided pathways; and
5. Work with system leaders and policymakers to adopt statewide policies that encourage these practices.

The partners are encouraging community college leaders to review the report and consider how their institutions can advance this work in their communities in order to reduce the need for developmental education in college.

More innovative models will be presented during the 96<sup>th</sup> Annual AACC Convention this April 9-12 in Chicago and the 2016 ACCT Leadership Congress this October 5-8 in New Orleans. Additional resources and opportunities for collaboration will also be made available to institutions interested in advancing this work.

Community college leaders who would like to get more involved in the ongoing effort to close the gap and improve college readiness are encouraged to go to [higheredforhigherstandards.org/seizingthemoment](http://higheredforhigherstandards.org/seizingthemoment) to download the report and learn about next steps.

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**About AACC**

Founded in 1920, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) is the primary nonprofit advocacy organization for community colleges at the national level, representing nearly 1,200 two-year, associate degree-granting institutions and more than 13 million students. AACC's mission is to "Build a Nation of Learners by Advancing America's Community Colleges" by



supporting and promoting its member colleges through policy initiatives, innovative programs, research and information, and strategic outreach to business and industry as well as the national news media. For more information, visit [www.aacc.nche.edu](http://www.aacc.nche.edu).

#### **About ACCT**

Founded in 1972, the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) is the nonprofit educational organization of governing boards, representing more than 6,500 elected and appointed trustees of community, technical, and junior colleges in the United States and beyond. ACCT's purpose is to strengthen the capacity of community, technical, and junior colleges and to foster the realization of their missions through effective board leadership at local, state, and national levels. For more information, visit [www.acct.org](http://www.acct.org). Follow ACCT on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/CCTrustees](https://twitter.com/CCTrustees).

#### **About Higher Ed for Higher Standards**

Higher Ed for Higher Standards is a growing coalition of college and university leaders who believe college- and career-ready standards are critical to improving student success. Higher Ed for Higher Standards supports K–12 efforts to raise academic standards in the classroom and urges policymakers to stay the course on standards-based reforms and the alignment of higher education policies and practices to improve student transitions and success. For more information, go to <http://higheredforhigherstandards.org>.