Board of Trustees’
Legislative and Community Relations Committee
Meeting Materials

November 4, 2010
3:00 p.m.
The Rouse Company Foundation Student Services Hall
RCF-401
1. Board members practice respectful dialogue that serves the best interests of the college.

2. Each board member works to integrate servant-leadership into the board culture.

3. Each board member has the opportunity to speak uninterrupted.

4. Board members come prepared – board chair needs to understand what is required and set time and material appropriately.

5. Board chair acts as caretaker for the board – acts as filter, evaluates agenda for time well spent.

6. Board chair speaks for the board to the media.

7. Consent materials are available 10 days in advance; remaining board materials are available seven days in advance.

8. Board members should route any requests for additional information to the board chair or the president at least two business days prior to the board meeting.
Howard Community College’s
*Dragon Principles*

We promise to help our students, employees, and community members “get there from here.”

We pledge to...

Be friendly
Be helpful to our students and community
Be considerate of each other

And we pledge to…

*Work with Elected Officials and the Community*
Board of Trustees
Legislative and Community Relations Committee

November 4, 2010
3:00 p.m.
The Rouse Company Foundation Student Services Hall
Room: RCF-401

1. Review of the Howard Community College Legislative Agenda
2. Update on State Funding
3. Overview of College Completion Challenge
4. Planning for the Howard Community College Legislative Breakfast
5. Student Advocacy Day

The last meeting of the legislative and community relations committee for FY11 is scheduled for February 4, 2011.
1 – Review of the Howard Community College Legislative Agenda

Background

Following this item is a revised version of the proposed fiscal year (FY) 2011 Howard Community College legislative agenda. This agenda has been revised to reflect updated enrollment numbers secured from the fall census data report. For ease of review, revisions in the legislative agenda since September are highlighted in yellow.

Recommendation

The administration requests that the committee adopt this legislative agenda and forward it to the full board for approval.
Enrollment at Howard Community College (HCC) is at an all-time high. These key statistics highlight the significant growth at the college:

- Full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment for fall 2010 increased 9 percent from last year.
- A total of 9,568 students enrolled in credit classes at HCC in fall 2010.
- From FY00 to FY11, state-funded FTE enrollment at HCC has increased 72.5 percent.
- One out of four graduates of Howard County Public Schools enrolled at HCC in fall 2010.

HCC offers over 200 programs leading to a degree or certificate. New program options that have been added this year include digital design, film and video pre-production, graphic design, music technology, photography, and television and radio. Future academic programs, which are currently under development, include knowledge management, innovation, entertainment technologies, humanities, paramedic to RN, Associate of Science in Engineering (ASE)-mechanical engineering, cyber-security, and new allied health programs (medical laboratory assistant, dental hygiene, medical sonography, and physical therapist assistant). The following academic programs have been approved by HCC’s curriculum and instruction committee and are awaiting formal approval by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC): ASE-electrical engineering, and ASE-computer engineering. The Associate of Science in Engineering is designated for transfer to a four-year institution to obtain a baccalaureate in engineering.

The continuing education division continues to reach out to the community by offering many diverse classes and programs that attract learners of all ages. A total of 16,584 people enrolled in HCC continuing education classes last year. Highlighting the year were a number of popular programs such as Adult Basic Education/English as a Second Language, which enrolled 3,323 students; career programs’ open enrollment classes, which included 1,855 students; Kids on Campus, which enrolled over 1,645 children representing over 4,425 enrollments from elementary to high school age; and a government contract, which enrolled 1,287 students. Training was provided to 9,379 employees of 49 companies and organizations through contracts and grants. These courses received 100 percent satisfaction rate from employers in the last survey.
Enrollments in classes leading to licensure and certification increased from 6,084 to 7,532 from fiscal year 2008 to 2009 (most current data).

HCC plays an important role in workforce development in Howard County by providing access to training. The college offers courses, certificates, and degree programs for entry-level and incumbent employees, industry certifications, advanced technical programs, and executive development, leadership, and management programs.

Enrollments continue to be strong in certified nursing assistant and other entry-level health care courses, medical billing and coding courses, adult basic skills, English as a Second Language, and project management. The economic climate is reflected in the increased enrollments in those courses that lead to immediate job placement. There were 3,276 students enrolled in courses classified as workforce development in fiscal year 2010.

HCC also offers courses and programs at two other locations:

- The Laurel College Center (LCC), operated jointly with Prince George's Community College (PGCC), continues to be a marked success for the community. Designated as a regional higher education center by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC), the LCC provides students access to associate, bachelor, and master's degree programs. In addition to the courses offered by PGCC and HCC, several four-year institutions, including Towson University, University of Maryland University College, and College of Notre Dame of Maryland, offer bachelor and master's programs at the LCC. Students can study business administration, general studies, criminal justice, and applied information technology.

- HCC's Charles I. Ecker Business Training Center, located in the Gateway building with its professional meeting spaces and computer labs, is a resource for the local business community to meet and train so these businesses can continue to be regional, national, and international leaders in their respective industries.

HCC is an institution that strives for excellence. For the second consecutive year, The Chronicle of Higher Education named HCC a 2010 "Great College to Work For" based on the college's exceptional work environment and classified the college as an Honor Roll institution. HCC was one of only 20 community colleges in the nation to be selected, and was one of only nine community colleges in the U.S. to be given Honor Roll status for 2010. The results were based on a survey of more than 42,000 employees at 275 colleges and universities in the U.S.

The college, which continues to promote an institutional culture that is committed to continuous quality improvement, was named a finalist for the nation's highest recognition of excellence, the 2008 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. The college has adopted a performance excellence framework to measure and improve performance.
In 2008, HCC was the proud winner of the 2007 U.S. Senate Productivity Award, which is Maryland's top annual award for performance excellence as presented by the Maryland Performance Excellence Awards (MPEA) Program. HCC also won a Bronze Maryland State Quality Award in both 2002 and 2003 and earned a silver award in 2006.

HCC is focused on the changes that will come to Howard County as a result of the federal Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) initiative. The college is actively involved and taking leadership to ensure that Howard County is prepared for the influx of people and jobs that will be coming into the region.

HCC is equally committed to addressing the shortage of health care workers in Maryland by developing programs and initiatives to increase the number of graduates entering high-demand occupations. Recently, U.S. Senators Barbara A. Mikulski and Benjamin L. Cardin, and Congressmen Elijah Cummings and John Sarbanes announced $1 million in federal funding to help the partners of Howard, Frederick, and Carroll Community Colleges lease a new health care education center in Mount Airy, Maryland. When complete, the Mount Airy College Center for Health Care Education will train 300 to 500 students a year, helping students prepare for in-demand jobs and to alleviate the shortage of health care workers in Maryland. The center will house science, computer and medical simulation laboratories, and classrooms for allied health education programs.

Among the grants HCC has received recently is a $544,164 three-year “Who Will Care” grant from the Maryland Hospital Association to develop a retention program that will address the need to improve the completion rate for students in the college's nursing program. In addition, a five-year grant for $961,830 has been secured from MHEC/MD Health Services Cost Review Commission to increase nursing graduates and graduate nurse retention through the Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) Pathway Sequence.

HCC works in concert with the Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC) and the other fifteen community colleges in the state to pursue a state-focused legislative agenda that collectively addresses the needs of Maryland's community colleges. Last year, statewide enrollment increased by over 9 percent resulting in approximately 12,000 more FTE’s — a growth the current size of Prince George's Community College’s student population. HCC encourages the Maryland General Assembly and the executive branch of state government to support the priorities developed by MACC. Statewide and local priorities of special concern to HCC are outlined in this legislative agenda.

**Operating Budget**

Position:
Support funding for HCC at the state level and through county appropriations at the local level.
HCC receives funding for its unrestricted budget and auxiliary funds from multiple sources. State funding accounts for 14 percent of support; the county provides 29 percent; tuition and fees 38 percent; and 19 percent comes from other sources.

In addition to serving more students each year, HCC is working hard to manage recurring costs such as replacing and upgrading campus technology and increased health care costs.

Community colleges receive the state portion of their operating budget through the Cade funding formula. There have been a number of adjustments to the formula since its enactment in 1996, all aimed at increasing the state's portion of a community college education in order to keep the student's portion affordable. Unfortunately, the recent economic situation has reduced the state's appropriation to community colleges to below the 2009 appropriation. This decrease is particularly problematic because enrollments are surging at many community colleges in Maryland. HCC’s full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment for fall 2010 increased 9 percent from last year.

Similar to FY09, the community colleges were asked to return funds in FY10. This reduction equated to five percent of their FY10 appropriation. Due to the structural state deficit, the Governor was forced to introduce a budget for FY11 with considerably less funding than 2010. The FY11 funding is roughly equivalent to the FY08 appropriation level and factors into a 21.8 percent tie to the four-year institutions for FY11. The funding will remain at the same level for FY12 and then begin to increase in FY13 and each year thereafter until the 2010 statutory intent of the 29 percent funding of the four-year institutions is reached in FY21. The Cade formula was used to distribute the FY11 funding and due to HCC’s growth, the reduced appropriation for HCC in FY11 ($12,290,083) is approximately, one-percent less than the final FY10 reduced funding ($12,410,298), a difference of $120,215. (It is important to note that retirement benefits were part of the college’s allocation; although it appeared that the college received the same amount from the State, it was actually cut by $120,215.) HCC joins MACC and the rest of the community colleges in supporting the preservation of the Cade formula to determine the state appropriation in future years and the level funding in FY12.

Access and affordability of higher education are directly associated with the level of state and county operating funds received by the institution. Strong operating support from the state and county, coupled with prudent fiscal management by HCC, helps to keep student tuition as affordable as possible. In FY11, the college increased tuition by two dollars per credit hour. This increase was the first since FY08 and was caused by the reduction in funding from the state and level funding from the county, while enrollment and other costs increased.

Due to governmental budget constraints in the early 2000’s and large enrollment increases at HCC, state funding has not kept up with student needs. In fact, state funding per FTE has increased minimally this decade. The charts following this document shows a graphic representation of the proportion of funding contributed to the HCC operating budget by the state, county, and tuition dollars (see attachment 1) and the state, county and tuition dollars per FTE (attachment 2).
The college’s contribution from the County for FY09, FY10, and FY11 remained the same at $25,195,470.

Capital Budget

Position:
Support funding of HCC capital projects for FY12

Over the past several years, the college has received significant state and county support, which facilitated the construction of three new buildings and the renovation of three existing buildings on campus:

- Duncan Hall for English, Languages, and Business, constructed in 2003;
- Horowitz Visual and Performing Arts Center, constructed in 2006;
- The Rouse Company Foundation Student Services Hall, constructed in 2007;
- Children's Learning Center, renovated in 2008;
- Smith Theatre and McCuan Hall, renovated in 2009; and
- James Clark, Jr. Library Hall, renovated in 2010.

Additionally, the county has supported the phased athletic fields’ renovations from 2004 through 2009, plus the college built a parking garage in 2006 with $450,000 from the state and the balance paid for by a bond floated by the county, which is being repaid by student fees.

Even after deducting the new space acquired by these recent capital projects, the college continues to show a current space deficit of 189,921 net assignable square feet (NASF) with the most severe deficit being in academic class lab space.

The college's large space deficit emphasizes the seriousness of the campus space deficiencies. HCC’s capital needs are urgent and critical and a top priority for the president and board of trustees. In order to continue to carry out the mission and vision of the college, the proper infrastructure must exist.

Continued state support is necessary to manage growth in higher education and specifically for community colleges as the funds available for capital projects have become even more competitive. Efforts by the community college boards and presidents have secured additional funding for the community colleges in the capital budget over the past couple of years and the presidents are continuing this endeavor for FY12. However, while the overall capital grant program funds have increased, the number of projects eligible for funding has greatly diminished. One reason is that the costs of the projects have increased dramatically over the last few years increasing competition for the available funds. In order to alleviate some of the burden, the community colleges have agreed to work with the state to split-fund the construction dollars on eligible projects such as HCC’s health sciences building. In addition, the community colleges have worked together to produce a prioritized list of capital projects.

The college has received strong support from the county over the past several years. In FY10, the college received $4,320,000 from the county to fund three projects: the health
sciences building design phase; Clark Library Hall furniture and equipment; and safety, compliance, and facility renewals. In FY11, the college received $12,823,000 from the county to fund three projects: the health sciences building construction phase one; parking garage number 2 construction phase; and safety, compliance, and facility renewals. HCC recognizes the limitations on the county's bond funding and has requested state funding on eligible projects, and where applicable, split funding on construction phase projects. It is mandated, however, that 50 percent local participation be achieved to obtain the state match. In addition, the uncertainty of state support places a heavier funding burden on the college and the county. Parking garages are not currently supported by State funding. Based on a recommendation from HCC, MACC requested that the State review its current position of not funding parking garages. A committee at the State level has been formed to review this request.

Over the next decade, community colleges will continue to serve the largest share of undergraduates; it is critical that the state and county support the FY12 capital request. Current facilities must grow to support the college's customers and stakeholders - the citizens of Howard County and the State of Maryland.

HCC requests support for the following projects included in its FY12 annual capital budget request:

Health Sciences Building
FY12: $15,058,000 (approximately 75 percent from the county) and $9,466,000 (approximately 50 percent from the state)

The college is constructing a new health sciences building of 94,830 gross square feet (GSF) and 55,650 net assignable square feet (NASF) to support the allied and health sciences disciplines. This facility is vital for the college and addresses the state's critical workforce shortage needs. Maryland projects the greatest job growth in the nursing and allied health fields. Programs to be housed in the new building include the following: cardiovascular technology, emergency medical technician/paramedic, exercise science, life fitness, health care, health education, human services, nursing, radiologic technology, surgical technology, physical therapy, and respiratory therapy. In addition to these offerings, dental assistant/hygienist and occupational therapy are new programs proposed to be housed in the new building. The college is requesting funding for the second year of construction for the building and the balance of the county share as well as funding for the quad and traffic circle improvements in FY12. The total cost of the construction phase for the building is $37,852,000. In FY11, HCC received $4,623,000 (approximately 25 percent) from the county and $9,465,000 (approximately 50 percent) from the state.

Science, Engineering, and Technology Building
$5,920,000 for Design and Planning Phase
FY12: $2,960,000 (county) and $2,960,000 (state)

The college is proposing construction of a new science, engineering, and technology building of 79,240 net assignable square feet (NASF) and 133,140 gross square feet (GSF) to support current and projected enrollments in the science and technology
Functions to be housed in the proposed facility include biology; chemistry; physics; physical science; geology; engineering technology; telecommunications; computer forensics, including cyber forensics and cyber security; biomedical engineering; advanced computer systems; astronomy; meteorology; and horticulture. This project supports the college’s mission to help improve the learning outcomes of all its students by providing facilities that support science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) initiatives. This building will be designed with interactive learning environments that engage students and prepare them for the workforce. This proposed building will serve 17,291 weekly student contact hours generated for the science and technology division.

Safety, Compliance, and Facility Renewals
$3,450,000 for Design, Construction, and Equipment
FY12: $3,450,000 (county)

This project includes systemic renovations as well as deferred maintenance and facility renewals at all the college campuses including the Ecker Business Training Center, and the Laurel College Center. With the implementation of new state and county codes, revised Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and safety compliance, and critical maintenance requirements, the following projects are proposed for FY12:

- Phased installation of campus-wide security systems;
- ADA renovations;
- Public restroom renovations;
- Deferred maintenance per building assessment study;
- Interior improvements (classrooms, offices, and other);
- Information technology modifications and upgrades;
- Phased signage package installation;
- HVPA storage building;
- Parking area resurfacing; and
- Rigging system replacement.

Laurel College Center

Position:
Support state funding for the Laurel College Center

The Laurel College Center (LCC) was formed as a partnership between Prince George's and Howard Community Colleges in 2001. The LCC has expanded educational opportunities to many residents in the Laurel region. In addition to the courses offered by PGCC and HCC, several four-year institutions, including Towson University, University of Maryland University College, and College of Notre Dame of Maryland, offer bachelor and master's programs at the LCC. Students can study business administration, general studies, criminal justice, and applied information technology.

The LCC is an important access point to higher education. In fall 2009, there were 1,036 credit students enrolled in courses offered by HCC and Prince George's
Community College at LCC, which accounted for 1,485 enrollments. In fall 2009, there were 811 noncredit enrollments at LCC. There were 192 noncredit unduplicated headcount HCC students taking courses at the LCC in fall 2009. The total enrollment in fiscal year 2010 for classes offered by the LCC’s four-year partners was 470; this number shows a 24 percent increase from fiscal year 2009.

The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) has developed criteria to calculate a level of base funding each of the regional higher education centers (RHEC) in the state should receive based on enrollments and programmatic offerings. While these criteria do not exist in statute, HCC believes they are a reasonable way to determine equitable funding levels for regional higher education centers. Based on these criteria, the FY12 request for the LCC is:

- **$200,000** base allocation*
- **124,834** incentive funding based on FTE
- **77,525** lease costs*
- **441,400** special funding
- **$843,759** TOTAL

*Definitions are as follows:

**Base Allocation:** The base allocation supports the basic operation of a RHEC. This allocation may include a minimum amount of the cost to maintain and operate center facilities as well as staff needed to support the core functions of the center (i.e., the administration of the facility and coordination of center activities). The statewide RHEC workgroup recommended that the base allocation be funded at $200,000 for each center. MHEC allocated the funding for the base amount of $200,000 in FY11.

**Incentive Funding:** Incentive funding is designed to encourage baccalaureate and graduate degree offerings at RHECs. The funding formula includes an incentive multiplier amount per targeted full-time equivalent student (FTEs). Targeted FTEs include: eligible, credit lower division FTEs in 2+2 programs** that are offered at the center, upper division FTEs, and graduate FTEs. Incentive funding is based on dollars per upper-division and graduate division FTEs enrollments and lower division FTEs enrolled in 2+2 programs offered at the center. Shady Grove's general fund appropriation per FTEs is used to set the benchmark for dollars per FTEs. This benchmark is then inflated annually by the Higher Education Price Index (HEPI) for the recommended funding level per FTEs for the current fiscal year. The resulting inflated funding per FTEs figure is multiplied by the number of upper division, graduate division, and 2+2 lower division FTEs to determine that center's incentive funding amount.

For FY11, $11,024 (or 10.59 percent of the request) was allocated.

**Leasing Costs:** Leasing costs are based on dollars per upper division and graduate FTEs at centers that lease facilities. The leasing appropriation is calculated by dividing the annual lease cost by the number of total FTEs at the center (lower, upper, and graduate). The resulting number is multiplied by the total number of upper division and
graduate FTEs at the center to determine the amount of the grant. To date, this funding has not been received.

Special Funding: Special funding is designated for initiatives such as start-up of new centers; support for high need, critical, and special programs to meet regional needs; one-time enhancement funding; and funding for non-capital equipment (i.e., any equipment with a useful life of less than 15 years and is not funded with debt and must be financed through the operating budget). Each request is examined on a case-by-case basis. The LCC has typically submitted a list of computer needs and furniture and equipment for this amount. To date, this funding has not been received.

Based on the above, $211,024 was allocated in FY11 for the Laurel College Center Regional Higher Education Center funding.

**A 2+2 program refers to a lower division program of study that may result in an associate degree that directly and intentionally articulates to upper division work for the completion of a baccalaureate degree. The incentive funding formula includes only those 2+2 FTEs that have documented intent to enroll in upper division degree programs offered at the center. These students should be documented either through a letter of intent as part of their academic advising or via a joint application filed with the lower division and upper division degree granting institutions that offer courses at the center.

Financial Aid

Position:
Support student financial aid

Howard Community College must be affordable for students. The college financial aid office works diligently to make sure students are aware of various federal and state aid programs. The college also sets funds aside from its operating budget ($717,147 in FY10) to provide aid to students, and the Howard Community College Educational Foundation, Inc. (HCCEF) raises scholarships funds. For FY10, the HCCEF distributed $402,172 in scholarships, which is up approximately 6 percent over FY09.

In FY10, about thirty-six percent of all HCC students received some form of financial aid totaling more than $13.2 million, a 46.6 percent increase from FY09 to FY10. This funding helps offset educational expenses for tuition, fees, books, supplies, child care, and other expenses. Even with these funding resources, many students still have unmet needs that make it a challenge for them to afford college.

In FY10, HCC experienced a 50.8 percent increase in Pell Grant recipients. In addition, the average Pell Grant award received increased from $2,420 in FY09 to $3,033 in FY10. This increase is due to both the combination of additional recipients and the maximum award increasing by $619 or 13 percent. The maximum Pell Grant award is $5,550 for FY11.
Even with the significant increase in Pell Grant funding, the number of loan borrowers from FY09 to FY10 increased 32.8 percent. In addition, the number of financial aid applications received by the college increased 22.5 percent in August 2010 compared to August 2009.

HCC experienced a 15 percent decrease in funding from MHEC from FY08 to FY09. State funding for HCC increased 17 percent from FY09 to FY10; however, this figure is still a one percent decrease from the funding received in FY08. Currently for FY11, HCC has received a 12.5 percent cut in the Maryland part-time program, a 427 percent decrease in the Maryland Campus-Based Educational Assistance Grant, and 7.7 percent less in the Howard P. Rawlings Program of Educational Excellence Award. MHEC also recently announced that due to the significant change in the appropriation for FY11 to the Workforce Shortage Student Assistance Grants, no new grants would be offered.

Because of this continuing need, HCC asks that the state make funding for financial aid programs, particularly need-based aid, a priority in the state budget.
Sources of HCC Funds

- Tuition/Fees: 38%
- Auxiliary: 10%
  - State: 14%
  - County: 29%
- Other: 9%

**FY11 Unrestricted Budget: $88,015 million**

**Attachment 2**

**Local, State, and Tuition per FTE**

- FTE
- State $ per FTE
- Local $ per FTE
- Tuition $ per FTE

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2 – Update on State Funding

Background

The opening of the 2011 Maryland General Assembly marks the beginning of new four-year terms for the State Legislature, Governor, Comptroller, and Attorney General. Early indicators are predicting that the newly elected body will have to spend the next four years addressing budget deficits. The projected state budget deficit for the year that started July 1, 2010, as of now, is about $1.1 billion and is expected to grow.

The 2012 state appropriation to community colleges was determined in the last session. It will remain the same at $194.4 million for the Cade-funded institutions, as cited in the Budget Reconciliation Act. The presidents have requested that these funds be distributed through the Cade formula.

MACC opposes a shift in the cost of retirement and pension benefits that would directly impact the college operating budgets. State funding of teacher pensions is a long-standing part of the complex balance between the State and local jurisdictions on both revenue and expenditures.

In addition to level-funding the community colleges, the 2010 General Assembly further rebased the funding formulas that determine the annual state appropriation to community colleges in the out years. Next year (FY13), the percentage tie in the Cade formula begins to increase by one percent each year until it reaches 29 percent in FY21.

Last year, statewide enrollment increased by over 9 percent, resulting in approximately 12,000 more FTEs – a growth the current size of Prince George’s Community College’s student population.

Recommendation

This item is for information only and requires no action.
3 – Overview of College Completion Challenge

Background

Dr. Hetherington will provide a verbal update on the college completion agenda, which was focused upon during the recent Association of Community College Trustees’ National Congress. The article that follows is an excerpt from the fall 2010 issue of Trustee Quarterly, providing a brief background on the completion agenda.

Recommendation

This item is for information only and requires no action.
"The real game-changer for low-income young adults is a postsecondary credential. Whatever data you look at, it's clear that a postsecondary credential is the pathway of possibility."

Dr. Mark David Milliron

Excerpt

**Dr. Mark David Milliron**  
**Deputy Director for Postsecondary Improvement**  
**The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**

Dr. Mark David Milliron serves as the Deputy Director for Postsecondary Improvement with The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, leading efforts to increase student success in the U.S. postsecondary education sector. An award-winning leader, author, speaker, and consultant, Milliron works with universities, community colleges, K-12 schools, corporations, associations, and government agencies across the country and around the world. In addition, he serves on numerous other corporate, nonprofit, and education boards and advisory groups; guest lectures for educational institutions nationally and internationally; and authors and moderates the Catalytic Conversations blog.

Milliron founded and served as CEO for the private consulting and service group Catalyze Learning International (CLI). In addition, he previously served as an Endowed Fellow, Senior Lecturer, and Director of the National Institute of Staff and Organizational Development in the College of Education at the University of Texas at Austin; Vice President for Education and Medical Practice with SAS, the world's largest private software company; and President and CEO of the League for Innovation in the Community College.

In 2007, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) presented Milliron with its National Leadership Award for his outstanding accomplishments, contributions, and leadership.

Milliron spoke with Trustee Quarterly about the Foundation's role in convening a Summit on Completion and other community college initiatives, the goals he believes should drive the development of the Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA), and the importance of looking at the completion agenda as a "social justice goal."
Q: President Obama has announced a goal of increasing the nation’s educational attainment by 50 percent by 2020. What challenges do community colleges face in spearheading this effort?

The biggest challenge for community colleges is taking the completion challenge to heart and owning it the way they owned the access challenge. I would argue that community colleges have been the champions of higher education access for the past 30 to 40 years. They are at the heart of why we have been successful in opening the doors to higher education for diverse populations and low-income individuals. Now is the time not only to embrace access, but also to embrace with equal vigor the completion agenda — always underlining both access and completion. It’s going to take a willingness to look at all of our systems and processes and figure out how we can structure them the best way so that the most students can complete at high levels.

Q: What steps need to be taken to make that happen?

One is getting clear on what your data are saying about what is happening at your institution, and deeply analyzing where you’re losing students and getting clear on the associated challenges — what we call loss points. If we can analyze our loss points and our momentum strategies, we can begin to do the work of putting together an intentional system that helps students become more successful in completing. We can innovate against anything if we know the challenges, but the first step is getting clear about what the challenges are. Our data shows that the biggest challenge for most colleges is in developmental education. In short, if you don’t get developmental education right, then it will be almost impossible to rise to the challenge of increasing college completion rates for low income students.

The first step is getting your arms around your own data and understanding what is happening at your institution, and then the second step is coming together as a leadership team and working with your board and your faculty and staff to see what you need to do differently.

Q: How has The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation’s work in education evolved to embrace completion?

The Foundation has invested close to $5 billion in the last decade on education-related programs. Three years ago, after the Warren Buffett contribution to the Gates Foundation, the question was asked, “What else should we be doing in the world of education beyond the commitment to college readiness?” After a significant amount of research about all the different types of issues we could help the country tackle, the answer that came back was that the real game-changer for low-income young adults is a postsecondary credential. It breaks the cycle of poverty. And because of that, a commitment was made to double the number of low-income young adults who graduate from college with a credential. Given that community colleges are the primary gateway for low-income young adults in our country, we’ve focused our energies there in a big way.

This strategy was born out of a social-justice goal. We’re trying to make the American Dream real for young adults, and what we’ve found is that the best use of our resources is to try to catalyze greater completion in postsecondary education, in particular in the 16-26 year old age range. If you make a difference for those folks, then you change the game not only for them, but also for their kids and sometimes their extended families. Of course, we care about all secondary education, but we’re pretty focused on low-income adults and using education as a springboard to opportunity for them. That’s been the goal of our program from the very beginning.

Q: ACCT, with the support of The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, will be convening a Summit on Completion immediately before the 2010 ACCT Leadership Congress. Why is this summit necessary, and what does the Foundation hope to come of it?

If trustees in community colleges understand the completion challenge, embrace it, and understand that we need to be as aggressive on completion as we have been on access, then real change can happen.

Trustees have to own this agenda for anything to really happen on the ground. There are clearly institutional practices that are going to have to change if we’re going to take this seriously and make an impact, but there are broader institutional policies that enable, inform, and guide those practices that are all driven by trustees. Trustees are an incredibly important audience in this conversation. They are the ones who need to be the vanguards for many of these discussions because they are the link to the community, to the larger purpose here. So for us, starting this conversation with trustees is absolutely essential. We want them to be a key part of the conversation.

Q: The Foundation is committed to advancing postsecondary student success through a variety of different projects, including your
support of the new Governance Institute for Student Success (GISS), a partnership between ACCT and the University of Texas at Austin’s Community College Leadership Program. What is the Foundation’s particular interest in this state-based model?

We at the Foundation are big believers in networks. Networks allow you to scale more elegantly. Clearly, community colleges in the United States are not uniform. Every state seems to have a different structure for finance, governance, and for operations. Because of that, we believe in starting the conversation not just nationally about the broader completion agenda, but also on the issues in a state that are going to be either helpful to college completion or have to be tackled to make the transformations easier.

Our biggest interest in the state-based training programs is to see if we can make an impact in that state network and help everyone in a state get on the same page to begin to tackle their system, and then hopefully learn from that process and transfer it to other states. The goal is to leverage that state network as a way to make a bigger, broader change in a system of colleges given the way they’re governed.

Q: The Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA) for Community Colleges encourages community colleges to measure their performance with data to aid in measurable improvements. How will the VFA benefit colleges and the students they serve?

I think the danger of the completion initiative is coming up with simplistic solutions. The truth is that you could increase completion rates pretty easily. One of the ways to do it is to lower standards — just give out degrees easily. Or you could just close the doors to the hardest-to-serve students and bring in the best and the brightest, and your completion rates will go up. Neither of those outcomes is what we want to happen, but if you put the wrong accountability standards in place, you could actually incent those things to happen.

So one of the [goals] for the VFA is to ensure that we have an incentive structure so people will be motivated to serve the hardest-to-serve students and then reward them for doing the hardest work, like developmental education. We can also set it up so that colleges get the credit they deserve for the work they’re doing in any given state. But a solid, quality accountability system that would incent positive behavior, drive college completion, and allow for productive conversations on the ground can’t be invented from on high. You have to come together on the ground to find out what the core issues are so that the right pieces and parts can be put in place. That’s why the VFA matters.

This isn’t about explaining away challenges; it’s about facing tough realities and developing the right kinds of incentive programs. The goal is to help the most students be successful. The VFA is a mechanism that can help start conversations within the state, within institutions, and deeper than that in program decisions. When you think about the contributions that community colleges make in a state around transfer education and multiple pathways to completion, you think about them as part of a family of higher education providers. That will help us be much more nuanced and smarter about how different pieces and parts of higher education are incented. We need trustees and presidents to help us understand what the right measures are.

Q: How has the current economic climate has simultaneously enhanced the role of community colleges and presented unique challenges to these systems?

Community colleges have suddenly been thrust into the national spotlight. Many people are returning to community colleges because they are changing careers, and they’re reskilling and up-skilling at the same time. When we moved from a time when only some of our population needed to be college educated to a time when most need to be college educated, suddenly the role of community colleges became not just nice and important; it became vital. It’s a great position to be in — but, boy, the stakes are high.

I come from a community college background — I wouldn’t be doing what I’m doing now if I hadn’t started at Mesa Community College in Arizona and done deep work later with the League for Innovation in the Community College, American Association of Community Colleges, and ACCT. I think this is the time for community colleges to shine and not the time to explain away problems, point fingers, and talk about how challenging things are. It’s the time to step up and actually show the difference that we’re making. It’s the time to own our challenges, to understand where we’re not doing so well, and be courageous in taking steps to make sure that our colleges can help our students have greater opportunities.

This is a special time in the community college movement. It’s a time when we’re explicitly embracing a broader mission — access, quality, and completion. Our ability to rise to this challenge will make a powerful difference in our nation, states, communities, and most important, with the students that continue to walk through our open door.
A Call to Action

Attention Community College Trustees,

Increasing community college student completion has become a major national focus and a key priority for AACC and ACCT. Business leaders, policy makers, and leading foundations are emphasizing the importance of increasing the number of students who complete degrees, certificates, and other credentials with value in the workplace. We are writing now to ask you to join us in a call to action to engage our institutions to advance what has come to be called the completion agenda.

Last April, AACC and ACCT joined with four other national organizations to express our shared commitment to student completion. Partner organizations including the Center for Community College Student Engagement, the League for Innovation in the Community College, the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development, and Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society participated in an unprecedented joint signing ceremony, committing our organizations to assist our members to produce 50 percent more students with high quality degrees and certificates by 2020. The signatory organizations have posted the call to action on their Web sites. See www.aacc.nche.edu/About/Pages/calltoaction.aspx and www.acct.org/2010/04/acct-co-signs-democracys-chall.php for the AACC and ACCT postings. We believe it is time now to expand the commitment beyond organizations to our campuses.

The timing of such action is important. Community colleges are currently in the national spotlight, but the increased attention also means increased responsibility to our communities, our states, and our country — as well as to our students. Both AACC and ACCT have been working to help our member colleges and their students through aggressive federal advocacy efforts; the creation of a voluntary framework of accountability for community colleges; and professional development institutes for trustees, college leaders, and future leaders. Our public commitment to raising student completion rates further underscores the transparency and accountability community colleges are courageously espousing. We invite you to join us at the ACCT Leadership Congress, the AACC Convention, or any of several institutes to learn more about these growing priorities.

To assist you in accepting the completion challenge for your college, we have attached a draft template that you may want to adopt, adapt, or use in other ways. To access the template, simply go to www.acct.org/CompletionSample.doc. Please keep us informed of any action your college takes to accept the completion challenge as this information will be valuable to us in our federal advocacy efforts.

Sincerely,

GEORGE R. BOGGS
AACC PRESIDENT AND CEO

J. NOAH BROWN
ACCT PRESIDENT AND CEO
4 – Planning for the Howard Community College Legislative Breakfast

Background

The college has changed the original date of Howard Community College’s annual legislative breakfast as a result of a direct conflict with the Maryland Association of Counties’ (MACo) annual winter conference, which draws a number of delegates and county elected officials. With the hope that the college’s elected officials will be able to attend the college’s event, the breakfast has been rescheduled for Tuesday, January 4, beginning at 8:00 a.m. with the program starting promptly at 8:30 a.m. in Room 400 of the Rouse Company Foundation Student Services Hall. The breakfast precedes the 428th session of the Maryland General Assembly, which convenes Wednesday, January 12, and ends Monday, April 11, 2011.

All legislators have been e-mailed save-the-date letters with an RSVP request by Monday, December 13. Two student speakers and one parent speaker are in the process of being identified. One of the students will be in the nursing program and the other student will be in a cyber-related field of study.

Parent advocates and veteran students will be included among those seated at the tables. The selection of invited students will commence in the coming weeks. Board members and senior college staff will also be invited to attend and will be given talking points, as well as yellow buttons that say, “Funding Makes HCC Students Fit In The Classroom & Workforce.”

A briefing will be held with students prior to the event in order to review talking points and assign them to legislators according to their respective districts.

Recommendation

This item is for information only and requires no action.
5 – Student Advocacy Day

Background

Representatives from each community college in the State of Maryland participate annually in Student Advocacy Day. Designed to solicit continued support for the community college mission, Student Advocacy Day engages state representatives in support of the college’s legislative agenda. Student Advocacy Day has been scheduled for Wednesday, February 9, 2011.

As in past years, selected students will be invited to travel by bus to Annapolis to meet with senators and delegates to tell their stories about the impact that community colleges have made in their lives. Key talking points will be provided to the students for their meetings with the legislation.

Recommendation

This item is for discussion only and requires no action.