



Dear President Barron:

Thank you for being an Achieving the Dream Institution and for putting what we know is a tremendous amount of effort into improving student success. We reviewed your 2013 Annual Reflection and offer our observations in this letter about the college's progress to date.

We are enthusiastic about your achievements regarding the following:

Your deepening commitment to student success goals is evident not only in the broad scaling of your early interventions but also through your alignment of student success work with other key initiatives and the budget. This is particularly noteworthy given the budget issues of the past few years in Texas. Furthermore, we applaud how you have well-aligned policy modifications with research to strengthen supports for students.

We are encouraged by your progress in implementing the Achieving the Dream model in the following ways:

Committed Leadership

We commend the commitment of the Board and senior administrators, which is evident in everything you do, including your selection to participate in the Dana Center Mathways project. The fact that the Board is now routinely discussing data about student outcomes demonstrates the importance of sharing your goals with them, as does their decision to require a success course of all developmental students and orientation of all students. In addition, your commitment to ensuring that new Board members are oriented fully to your student success agenda is significant.

Broad Engagement

It is important to note that two of your interventions – Zero Week and continuous orientations – continue to build faculty and staff engagement in student success work. In addition, your focus on assessment and student outcomes as you revise your core curriculum provides opportunities for professional development to further improve teaching.

Systemic Institutional Improvement

We are pleased to acknowledge how Temple College has incorporated ATD student success principles into the way the college does business, which is one of the key reasons the college was awarded Leader College status this past year. We find it promising that student success is a focus of your strategic plan, and resources are allocated to support this focus. Also, the college has continued to operate with a Core Team, which helps maintain this focus and promotes innovation, healthy discussion, and collaboration.

Equity

We are encouraged by the focus groups with men of color and believe it should yield helpful information, which we encourage you to share with the Board, faculty, and staff. Also, the

college's core curriculum redesign provides a perfect opportunity to incorporate equity principles across the board.

We recognize that improving student outcomes can be both rewarding and challenging. As you plan for the coming year, we encourage you to take a closer look at the following:

Use of Evidence to Improve Policies, Programs, and Services

We urge the college to continue to explore ways to expand IR capacity and develop an institutional value for evidence. Since you have a relatively large data team, it might be helpful for members to prioritize research projects and conduct some train-the-trainer workshops with them, so that they can help expand your outreach. The college might also consider stratifying research projects, so that the most difficult are handled by IR staff, and some of the easier ones are handled by a data team member. It might be helpful to consider breaking your data team into small sub-groups, each charged with a specific type of research.

Broad Engagement

We suggest the college continue to identify strategies for engaging student voices. We also suggest asking faculty to encourage students to attend the monthly focus groups with the president and administrators, perhaps even making an assignment around their attendance. In addition to staffing a booth on "adjuncts night," the college might also consider making a focused presentation on the importance of student success.

Equity

We ask that you consider investing some time in researching equity best practices. We urge the college to consider designing an institutional equity "infusion program." For example, some colleges have dedicated an entire year to a focus on equity and have kicked off the year with an all-college reading of Ruby Payne's *Bridges out of Poverty* and/or the ATD Finish Line game. As you know, this is a critical time for all of us who are committed to the mission of community colleges. We need to be focused and strategic in our work if we are to create clear and meaningful pathways for our students as they strive toward success. It is our belief that by working together, as a community of learners, practitioners and citizens, we can set high standards and help our students achieve their goals.

We appreciate the time, resources, and hard work that you and your faculty and staff have devoted to your Achieving the Dream efforts. We look forward to working with you in the coming year and to seeing you at DREAM 2014.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carol A. Lincoln". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".