

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Trish Onion, Vice President for Educational Services
360.383.3076 / ponion@whatcom.ctc.edu

Whatcom
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
An Achieving the Dream™ Institution



WHATCOM COMMUNITY 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, WA, March 4, 2011 – Whatcom Community College is joining the national Achieving the Dream project and will receive a \$250,000 grant over the next four years to increase the number of students who stay enrolled and graduate. Signifying a strong commitment to student success and completion, Whatcom is one of thirty community colleges nationwide selected for the Achieving the Dream 2011 Cohort. This grant supports WCC’s work of identifying strategies to improve student success, close achievement gaps, and increase retention, persistence, and completion rates. Outcomes are closely aligned with the State’s Student Achievement Initiative, supporting the development and implementation of research-based policies and practices based on quantitative and qualitative analyses of our strengths, problem areas, and gaps.

Whatcom Community College 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, Whatcom 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.

WCC President Kathi Hiyane-Brown shared, “I am very proud to say that Whatcom Community College is now a part of the Achieving the Dream network. With four other regional colleges also receiving an Achieving the Dream grant who are members of the Northwest Higher Education Coalition (NWHEC, we have the opportunity to closely collaborate on student success and completion strategies in our local area—making an even larger impact. Achieving the Dream supports the work that Whatcom has already begun, bolstering a culture of evidence to affect change that will result in improved student success.” She continued, “Achieving the Dream is another way for Whatcom to uphold its promise: To transform lives through education by supporting student growth, respecting student investment, embracing diversity, promoting excellence, and creating opportunities.”

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

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

Whatcom Community College is an accredited, comprehensive two-year college serving over 7,600 students quarterly. Whatcom offers transfer degrees, professional and technical training programs, as well as basic education, job skills and enrichment classes. For more information about WCC, please contact Nate Langstraat at 360.383.3310 or visit www.whatcom.ctc.edu

###