



Dear Dr. Rose:

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 Passaic County Community College's 2013 Annual Reflection with your coaches and offer our observations in this letter about the college's progress to date.

We are enthusiastic about PCCC's achievements regarding the following:

- The commitment of PCCC's leadership, faculty, and staff to the Achieving the Dream initiatives and to the student success agenda is extraordinarily strong, broadly based, and growing.
- The leadership of the ATD Co-Chairs has been open, focused, and capable; both generating and sustaining an expanding level of faculty and staff engagement in ATD that is invigorating and transforming the college.
- ATD Initiatives in Accurate Placement, Math Prep, Curriculum Redesign, and ESL have been successfully implemented, with an Academic Support Center initiative planned.
- Your gracious willingness to step up and take over as Lead College for the Round 3 TAACCCT grant: Northeast Resiliency Consortium. We at ATD are particularly grateful for this 'eleventh hour save' and true act of leadership, collaboration and courage!!!

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

#### *Committed Leadership*

You and your executive leadership have been committed to and engaged in the ATD Initiative and the student success agenda. We are impressed with how actively you have engaged with the ATD Core Team, as have the college deans, and that engagement is recognized throughout the college as is evidenced by the overwhelming 96% of the Principals Assessment Survey responders who agreed the senior administration strongly supported efforts to improve student success.

#### *Use of Evidence to Improve Policies, Programs, and Services*

Remarkable progress has been made in the past year in collecting, analyzing, and reporting data; using evidence to improve policies; and creating a culture of data-informed decision making at the college. Your talented new Director of Institutional Research leads a capable and dedicated IR staff. IR Department has the capacity to meet data needs at the college and is prepared to evaluate the ATD Initiatives as was recognized by a strong 96% of survey responders.

#### *Broad Engagement*

We are delighted that Math, English, and English Language Studies (formerly ESL) faculty have led in the design and implementation of three primary ATD Initiatives. Executive leaders,

student support staff, and the IR Department have also been engaged in the ATD Initiative and the student success agenda. A broadly based ATD Core Group continues to examine assessment data and review plans for improvement.

#### *Systemic Institutional Improvement*

PCCC's strong culture of assessment has developed into a culture of inquiry. Contributing to the development of this culture has been an on-going ATD Core Group examination of assessment data, a more open and institutionally engaged IR department, and you and your leadership team who are committed to data-informed, systemic institutional improvement. This progress was recognized within the college, where 76% of survey responders felt that a culture of assessment was well established and 24% indicated that this was an increasing practice.

#### *Equity*

Passaic County Community College has one of the most diverse student demographics of any community college in America. We applaud you, your staff, and the faculty at PCCC who live and breathe a daily commitment to equity; and the focus on sub-group and longitudinal data that ATD has helped spur is providing appropriate data and assessment to this commitment.

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:

#### *Committed Leadership*

As evaluation evidence is collected on what are likely to be successful initiatives, we suggest that the leadership focus shift from one of initiating activities to the challenge of expanding programs to scale and committing the resources necessary to sustain them.

#### *Use of Evidence to Improve Policies, Programs, and Services*

We encourage you to continue and to expand the persistence and achievement data studies for all identified sub-groups, and to design specific intervention strategies where appropriate. We find promising PCCC's review of African-American male persistence and the possible design of an intervention strategy.

#### *Systemic Institutional Improvement*

We encourage you to continue the remarkable progress that has been made in developing and analyzing data, sharing and discussing meaningful data within the college community, and making data-informed decisions to improve student success at the college. We also encourage PCCC to develop robust evaluation plans to illustrate progress made and to inform improvements that may need to be made.

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, dedication 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 "Carl A. Lincoln". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.