

***WINNING THE SKILLS RACE AND
STRENGTHENING AMERICA'S
MIDDLE CLASS:***

**An Action Agenda for
Community Colleges**

**Forum 2008
November 6, 2008**

The College Board's Mission (1958)

*“The College Board’s purpose is to serve educational organizations in connection with the transition of students from secondary schools to colleges . . . and in the coordination of secondary school and higher educational activities relating to the **identification and evaluation of student capacities, the admission of students and their educational guidance.**”*

The College Board's Mission (2008)

*“The College Board’s mission is to connect students to college success and **opportunity**. We are a not-for-profit membership organization committed to **excellence** and **equity** in education.”*

The College Board's increased emphasis on equity, access & success is evidenced in the recent development of new task forces...

- National Commission on Admissions, Access, and Success in Higher Education
- Task Force on Access to College for Low-Income Students
- Rethinking Student Aid

Our Collective Challenge: International Competitiveness

- National Adult Literacy Survey – Only 48% of adults meeting minimum standards
- National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) – Reading scores of adolescents have not improved since 1984
- Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) – In 2006, among 30 countries, US ranked 24th in Math literacy and 17th in Science literacy; in 2003, US ranked 15th in Reading
- As many as 50% of entering college students must complete at least one developmental course

Our Collective Challenge: Access and Equity in Higher Education

- A widening “degree gap” – the difference in the rate of degree production between the USA and its top competitors – threatens our competitive position.
- To reduce this gap, the USA must produce:
 - 25.1% more Associate Degree holders
 - 19.6% more Bachelor’s Degree holders

T. Reindl, Jobs for the Future, 2007

How can the nation respond effectively to these challenges?

- The College Board believes that community colleges must play a more prominent role in addressing...
 - the nation's international competitiveness
 - equity and access
- In response, it established the National Commission on Community Colleges

The Charge of the National Commission on Community Colleges

“ The Commission on Community Colleges will develop a report that documents the critical role that community colleges play in American education and will make recommendations on how the influence of these institutions can be expanded to respond to the challenges facing the nation.”

Commission Findings: *Why are community colleges effective?*

- **Geographic Convenience:** 1,202 public community colleges
 - A campus is within driving distance of 90% of the population
- **Enrollment Capacity:** 11.6 million students
 - 6.6 million students for-credit
 - 5 million students non-credit
 - 40% full-time students
 - 27% employed full time
 - 50% employed part time
 - Average age is 29

Commission Findings...

- **Equity and Access:** Community colleges enroll 46% of all undergraduates in the USA
 - 55% of Hispanics
 - 47% of African-Americans
 - 47% of Asians
 - 57% of Native Americans
 - 40% of all foreign undergraduates

Commission Findings...

- **Degrees:** Award about 800,000 degrees and certificates annually
- **Training:** Certify nearly 80% of all “first responders” (firefighters, policemen, etc.)
- **Transfer & BA Completion:** Nearly 50% of all baccalaureate recipients have attended a community college prior to earning a bachelor’s degree

Commission Findings...

- Yet, community colleges **overlooked** in national discussions about higher education.
- These colleges must be an important part of the nation's response to significant challenges:
 - Economic vulnerability
 - Instability of the middle class
 - Demographic change
 - Challenges to our nation's schools and communities

Commission Findings: *Community colleges face obstacles to continued success...*

- Rising costs
- Mismatch between demands and resources
- A culture that has traditionally emphasized student *access* more than student *success*
- The challenge of monitoring student outcomes

Commission Recommendations Aimed at Three Constituencies

- The Federal Government
- State Governments
- Community Colleges

1. Recommendations for the Federal Government

- *Enact the Community College Competitiveness Act of 2008*

“The Commission recommends that Congress and the President cooperate to enact the Community College Competitiveness Act: federal legislation that will bring community colleges fully into the twenty-first century and allow them to respond to the challenges facing the nation’s workforce.”

Major Features of the Competitiveness Act:

- **Encourage universal public education** through at least 2 years beyond high school as the minimum educational requirement.
- **Institute a new Dept. of Labor program** centering emerging workforce development needs in community colleges.
- **Amend federal financial aid programs** to help all students, especially those in community colleges by:
 - Funding Pell Grants at 70 percent of the average cost of attending a public four-year institution of higher education.
 - Making part-time students eligible for federal financial aid programs.

Major Features of the Competitiveness Act

- **Support new facilities** construction and modernization
- **Increase support for guidance and counseling**
- **Commit to a “culture of evidence”** by bringing to scale nationally the *Achieving the Dream* Initiative

2. Recommendations for States

- *“The Commission recommends that governors and state legislative leaders work with community college leaders to shore up an inadequate system of community college finance, facilitate transfer in areas of critical national and state need, and align K-20 systems.”*

2. Recommendations for States

- **Revise Financing Systems**

- Community colleges are more dependent on state revenues and are disproportionately affected in times of economic downturn
- States must address this broken system of finances

- **Bolster Transfer**

- Powerful mechanism by which 4-yr colleges/universities can address equity challenges they face
- Targeted to high demand areas that can address workforce needs

- **Support K-20 Alignment**

- Increase need for predictability in our system of education
- Community colleges can function in a broker role between K-12 and 4-yr systems

3. Recommendations for Community Colleges

- *“The Commission recommends that two-year college leaders develop new accountability measures that better assess the unique and varied missions of their institutions; respond to national goals for associate and bachelor’s degree production; and commit themselves once again to the expectation of universal student access and success.”*

3. Recommendations for Community Colleges

- **Develop New Metrics for Community College Productivity**

- Current and accepted measures apply in only limited ways to community colleges
- Need to develop consensus on what should be measured

- **Meet National Goals for Associate and Bachelor's Degree Attainment**

- 25.1% more Associate Degree holders
- 19.6% more Bachelor's Degree holders

Next Steps: Follow up Activities in 2008

- The College Board will add its voice to the legislative agenda of AACCC and ACCT where appropriate
- College Board, in partnership with AACCC, will convene a group of professionals from community colleges, accrediting agencies, 4-yr institutions and the Dept. of Ed. to discuss community college accountability

Other Commission Allies

- **Community College Presidents**
- **American Association of Community Colleges (AACCC)**
- **Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT)**
- **League for Innovation in the Community College**
- **Community College Congressional Caucus**
- **Higher Education National Associations and Agencies**
- **Congress and the President**
- **Governors and State Legislatures**
- **Accrediting Agencies**
- **United States Chamber of Commerce**
- **National Alliance of Business**
- **National Association of Manufacturers**

The National Commission on Community Colleges

*“Preparing adults of all ages for life-long
learning and citizenship”*

For a copy of the complete report, go to:

www.collegeboard.com/communitycolleges