

NEWS RELEASE

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Glen Oaks Community College joins Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count

CENTREVILLE, Mich.---Glen Oaks Community College joins 25 other community colleges from around the nation, including 10 in Michigan, as a new member of Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count. With support from the Kresge Foundation, Glen Oaks has committed to take part in the national initiative to identify strategies to improve student success, close achievement gaps and increase retention, persistence, and student completion rates.

Dr. Gary Wheeler, President, said Glen Oaks has made an initial two-year commitment to focus increased efforts to ensure student success across all demographics, including low-income backgrounds. Glen Oaks will benefit from member colleges that are already a part of Achieving the Dream 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. "Glen Oaks is the institution of higher education in St. Joseph County and we look forward to making lasting changes in policies, programs, and services that are integrated to support success for all students," said Dr. Wheeler.

Conceived in 2004 by Lumina Foundation for Education and seven national partner organizations, Achieving the Dream is focused on creating a "culture of evidence" on community college campuses in which data collection and analysis drive efforts to identify problems that prevent students from succeeding---particularly low-income students and students of color---and develop programs to help them stay in school and receive a certificate or diploma. Achieving the Dream's network now includes more than 130 institutions in 24 states and the District of Columbia, reaching more than one million students.

Dr. Ana Gaillat, Dean of the College, said Glen Oaks currently uses student assessment and course placement evaluations, offers a number of successful college foundation and introductory courses, and operates a free Tutoring and Testing Center with an open door policy. "These efforts are meeting with success, but we want to quantify our process, evaluate our methods, and implement programs and services designed to enhance student performance," said Dr. Gaillat.

"We're excited about the growing number of institutions within our organization," said William Trueheart, President and CEO of Achieving the Dream. "Community colleges are at the forefront of the national college completion movement. To be successful requires a structured, committed focus on using data and evidence to make important decisions that will positively impact students, campuses, and communities. Together, Glen Oaks Community College and the Kresge Foundation have made a vital commitment that will provide benefits to students and the entire community for years to come."