



Achieving the Dream™

Community Colleges Count

Dr. Stephen Nacco  
President  
Danville Area Community College  
2000 East Main Street  
Danville, IL 61832

Dear President Nacco:

We deeply appreciate your work and that of your colleagues at Danville Area Community College in being a part of Achieving the Dream (ATD) over the past academic year to advance your student success agenda and goals for your institution.

By design, ATD helps your institution in three interrelated ways. First, we want to **innovate** with you to successfully implement, align, and scale cutting-edge reforms that increase student success, close achievement gaps, and generate economic benefit for communities. Second, our **coaching** helps college leaders build institutional capacity, lead reform initiatives, and sustain continuous improvement. Third, we want to help you **connect** with a network of college leaders to share and learn from one another.

While the Institutional Capacity Assessment Framework and Tool help institutions to better understand their own progress, each year ATD also provides you with a summary of observations about your institution's progress from its work with its ATD coaching team and submitted reflection materials. We hope this letter will help inform your further work to advance student success.

### *Accomplishments*

Among the college's many accomplishments, we especially want to acknowledge these highlights:

- The four areas of strategic focus in the strategic plan provide a sound framework for all the initiatives at the college.
- Operation Graduation has the potential to be a model for other ATD colleges. Following and evaluating its progress will be essential.
- The IR office and Data Team have made progress in data usage and are helping the institution evolve to a culture that makes decisions based on data and evidence.

### *Areas for Improvement and Next Steps*

In terms of further work going forward, we have the following suggestions:

- We recommend the college combine committees and teams for the HLC reaffirmation and ATD and refer to this work under an overarching umbrella and brand of “student success.” Aligning and integrating this work can bring unity to the overall student experience and reduce duplication of efforts by faculty and staff.
  - The Equity Team should become a resource and support that is integrated into all other teams. It should not have separate initiatives but rather should provide guidance to the entire college community on infusing equity into all initiatives.
  - As you integrate multiple student success initiatives into one comprehensive agenda, assess whether some initiatives should be eliminated. Utilizing the completion-by-design model could provide a framework for categorizing the initiatives.
- We suggest the college utilize qualitative research and other tools to move to the next level in its desire for systemic, integrated student success.
  - Conduct focus groups and use CCSSE data and other qualitative methods to understand the “why” and hear the student voice behind the data.
  - Utilize tools such as Gallery Walk, Data Walk, and problems of practice to assist with having interactive methods.

### *Final Thoughts*

Thank you for your leadership in your initial year as president of Danville Area Community College. We look forward to our continued work together for the students you serve.

We encourage you to discuss these observations with your coaching team. We also welcome your campus team’s feedback as we work to support your institution’s innovations. Please share any comments or suggestions for how ATD can continue to be a valuable resource in your student success efforts.

I have written separately about the complement of initiatives in which ATD is engaged for 2017-18. With participation from institutions like yours, ATD is at the vanguard of some truly innovative reform in higher education. Your dedication to that work is what gives our network its vitality. Congratulations again to you and



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your team on another year of excellent work and hard-earned progress. We look forward to continuing our work together this year.

Sincerely,

Dr. Karen A. Stout  
President & CEO