



Dr. Stephen Nacco
President
Danville Area Community College
2000 E. Main St.
Danville, IL 61832

Dear Dr. Nacco:

Achieving the Dream has completed its first twelve years of gathering data and determining what works in order to improve college completion rates, especially for our most vulnerable students. We are deeply appreciative of you and your colleagues' continued commitment. In particular, your institution's work to streamline processes for students from onboarding through completion is a testament to its dedication to student success. We have worked closely with your coaching team to provide observations on your institution's progress over the past academic year. We hope this letter will help guide Danville Area Community College as your team continues to work towards its student-centered goals.

Accomplishments

As we reflect on all of your work over the past year and your plans going forward, we are most impressed by these accomplishments.

- We wish to extend our congratulations to your previous president, Alice Jacobs, for her 17 years of service to Danville Area Community College. Her dedication and commitment to excellence has established the college as a premier learning environment.
- The college has demonstrated a clear vision of its goals for retention and persistence. Its work on equity, leading to closing gaps between groups of students, is also notable.
- The college's plans to use new technology to improve student planning and retention are commendable. In spite of financial challenges, funds were found to buy new software for student planning and retention.
- We also applaud the college's streamlining of processes from connections through completion. The new mentoring program and financial literacy classes are especially exciting.

Areas for Improvement and Next Steps

We recognize that the distinct environment of each college poses unique challenges and opportunities. In terms of next steps, we would like to suggest the following as possible ways to improve student outcomes over the next year.

- Professional development will be essential for faculty and staff as the college focuses on key performance indicators and especially as new software is implemented. This development should further engage personnel in the analysis of data and the use of data for improvement. To those ends, we urge further work with the Data Team to analyze and use data as they assist the Institutional Effectiveness office with the KPI's. We further recommend that the college use its



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sub-team retreat to refocus on clear goals and metrics and a communication plan that will further engage faculty and staff.

- We recommend that the college evaluate key interventions and commitment to taking to scale what is most effective. As a strategy in that regard, it might help to intentionally tackle one intervention at a time, discussing evaluation results and then deciding what is most important to scale.

Final Thoughts

Under difficult circumstances this year, the College has made excellent progress. Going forward in pursuit of the college's vision for improving outcomes for students, it will be important to continue to strengthen the connections between faculty, staff, and students. Your leadership will be especially important as the college continues its student-focused efforts.

We encourage you to discuss these observations with your coaching team and look forward to continuing our work together. We also welcome your campus team's feedback as we work to support innovative institutions such as yours.

Congratulations to you and your team on another year of excellent work and hard-earned progress toward your student success goals. With the rollout of the new institutional capacity framework, it is an exciting time to be a part of Achieving the Dream. Your dedication to transformation is what gives our network its vitality. As I stated at DREAM, our journey is not a linear one; in the Achieving the Dream Network, we continue to learn from our efforts and from each other.

Sincerely,

Dr. Karen A. Stout
President & CEO