



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 27, 2006

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SIX WASHINGTON COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES JOIN ACHIEVING THE DREAM INITIATIVE TO HELP STUDENTS SUCCEED

***Participating colleges and State Board to receive grants and assistance
from College Spark Washington totaling approximately \$4 million***

Seattle – Six community and technical colleges in Washington state have joined *Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count*, a national initiative to help more community college students succeed. Participating colleges receive grant money and support to implement strategies to help more students — particularly low-income students and students of color — earn degrees, complete certificates or transfer to other institutions to continue their studies.

Each Washington college will be eligible for grants of up to \$450,000 over a five-year period to plan, launch and evaluate student success programs at their institution. Additionally, the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges will be eligible to receive up to \$375,000 over a five-year period to assist with the initiative. College Spark Washington has partnered with Lumina Foundation for Education to expand the *Achieving the Dream* initiative into Washington state, and will provide approximately \$4 million in grants and other services to support the initiative.

“In Washington state, more than 60 percent of undergraduates attend our public community and technical colleges, and 58 percent of projected job openings will require at least some postsecondary education. These colleges are a critical access point to higher education and play a vital role by helping people of all backgrounds gain the skills they need in today’s job market,” said Christine A. McCabe, executive director of College Spark.

The participating Washington colleges are: Big Bend Community College in Moses Lake; Highline Community College in Des Moines; Renton Technical College; Seattle Central Community College; Tacoma Community College; and Yakima Valley Community College. The six Washington colleges are among 23 joining *Achieving the Dream* as part of the initiative’s latest expansion. They bring the total number of *Achieving the Dream* colleges to 58 in nine states. More information about *Achieving the Dream*, including a full list of participants, can be found online at www.achievingthedream.org.

“We’re very pleased to welcome these new colleges, new states and new funding partners to *Achieving the Dream*,” said Martha D. Lamkin, president and CEO of Lumina Foundation. “All along,



our goal has been to help create a national movement to help community college students. This expansion is an important step toward that goal.”

Participating colleges identify strategies to help more students continue their studies and earn certificates and degrees. Strategies include helping students better prepare for college-level work by focusing on developmental education, engaging students in the classroom through new instructional techniques that include team learning and the combining of subjects to make learning more relevant to students’ lives, and using student success courses to teach skills such as time management and effective study skills.

Achieving the Dream is a multiyear initiative that focuses on improving the success of students and emphasizes the use of data so colleges can make more informed decisions. In addition to funding, participating colleges receive a range of support from the initiative’s partner organizations. Each college works closely with an *Achieving the Dream* coach, many of whom are former college presidents, and a data facilitator who provides hands-on help with the use of data.

Other partner organizations providing support to the initiative are the American Association of Community Colleges; the Community College Leadership Program at the University of Texas-Austin; the Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University; Institute for Higher Education at the University of Florida; Jobs for the Future; MDC; MDRC; and Public Agenda.

About *Achieving the Dream*

Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count is a national initiative to help more community college students — particularly low-income students and students of color — succeed. The initiative works on multiple fronts — including efforts at community colleges and in research, public engagement and public policy — and emphasizes the use of data to drive change.

About College Spark Washington

College Spark Washington’s mission is to fund programs that help low-income students become college-ready and earn their degrees. College Spark makes grants to organizations and institutions throughout Washington state that are helping low-income students improve their academic achievement, prepare for college life and graduate from college. Past grantees include: community organizations and program providers, technical and community colleges, four-year colleges and universities, other educational institutions, and public agencies. Formerly known as Education Assistance Foundation, College Spark is a Washington nonprofit foundation. For more information about College Spark, please visit www.collegespark.org.

About State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges is the governing agency that oversees Washington’s 34 two-year colleges. The State Board assists colleges by organizing pilot programs that identify ways to serve students better, conducts research, and works with the state Legislature and Congress to secure resources to meet the needs of adult students across the state. The colleges create opportunities for people to obtain skills and knowledge to succeed in the workforce and further their education.