



FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE March 3, 2011

For more information please contact:
Heather Gingerich (College Spark) 206.461.5374
Michelle Andreas (SBCTC) 360.704.4338

TEN 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 \$6.6 million

Seattle – Ten more community and technical colleges in Washington state have joined *Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count*, a national initiative focused on bold solutions to help more community college students succeed, particularly students of color and low-income students – earn degrees, complete certificates or transfer to other institutions to continue their studies. The organization works on multiple fronts — including efforts on campuses and in research, public engagement and public policy — and emphasizes the use of data to drive change. Launched as an initiative in 2004 with funding provided by Lumina Foundation for Education, *Achieving the Dream* is built on the belief that broad institutional change, informed by student achievement data, is critical to significantly improving student success rates. Today, *Achieving the Dream*'s network includes 160 institutions in 30 states and the District of Columbia, serving more than 2 million students.

Each Washington college will be eligible for grants of up to \$250,000 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 \$600,000 over a five-year period to assist with the initiative. College Spark Washington will provide approximately \$6.6 million in grants and other services to support the initiative.

The participating Washington colleges are: Bellingham Technical College; Clover Park Technical College; Edmonds Community College; Everett Community College; Grays Harbor Community College; Lower Columbia Community College; Northwest Indian College; Skagit Community College; Spokane Falls Community College; and Whatcom Community College. The ten Washington colleges are joining *Achieving the Dream* as part of the initiative's latest expansion. More information about *Achieving the Dream*, including a full list of participants, can be found online at www.achievingthedream.org.

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.

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.