



# MID-YEAR REPORT

## College Update

December 2014

With 2014 drawing to a close, marking the midway point of the 2014–2015 academic year, I want to share some of the many important initiatives and other activities taking place at the Community College of Allegheny County. Nearly ten months into my tenure as CCAC's president, I have been grateful for the support of the faculty, staff, students and college leadership as the college undertakes a series of proactive steps to address existing challenges, improve operational efficiency and enhance student success and completion.

These are exciting times for community colleges across the state and across the country. In 2010, President Obama challenged the nation's community colleges to graduate 50 percent more students by the end of the decade. In order for CCAC to meet this challenge, the college must be proactive in implementing the recommendations presented in the 21st-Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges' report, *Reclaiming the American Dream: Community Colleges and the Nation's Future*—to “redesign students' educational experiences, reinvent institutional roles and reset the system so it better promotes student success.”

Recently, I participated in the White House College Opportunity Day of Action, part of the president's commitment to partner with colleges and universities, business leaders and nonprofits to support students across the country to help our nation reach its goal of leading the world in college attainment.

Participants were asked to commit to new action in one of four areas: building networks of colleges around promoting completion, creating K-16 partnerships around college readiness, investing in high school counselors as part of the First Lady's Reach Higher initiative and increasing the



**Dr. Quintin B. Bullock**  
CCAC President

number of college graduates in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

As part of the college's commitment, CCAC has launched new initiatives and programming designed to produce the additional 3,300 graduates needed by the year 2020 to meet the president's challenge. One such initiative is the East/West Project, designed to enable economically disadvantaged, under-represented and first-generation students to attend CCAC's West Hills Center to train for high-demand jobs, while providing transportation, support services and coaching in a team environment. The project was made possible through the support of a \$50,000 grant from a local foundation.

Launched this past spring, the Men of Merit initiative is another example of an innovative college program designed to help students succeed. The program was created to provide mentoring opportunities to male minority students and is being overseen and run through the Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion.

## Highlights:

- **Presidential Vision**
- **Renewed Focus on Enrollment & Student Retention**
- **Strengthening College Operations**
- **Achieving the Dream**
- **Investing in New Educational Opportunities, Programs**
- **Workforce & Career Training**
- **Preparing for Middle States**
- **Student Housing Study, College Survey & PACCC Strategic Planning**
- **Awards & Other Distinctions**

## Presidential Vision

Programs such as the East/West Project and the Men of Merit initiative are excellent examples of the type of programming that will continue to define CCAC as one of the nation's premier community colleges. It also speaks to my personal vision for the college. My vision includes:

- to position CCAC as a vital economic player in Southwestern Pennsylvania;
- to develop and expand our academic and workforce development programs into new and high demand areas;
- to provide exceptional learning opportunities and services to a diverse student body; and
- to make CCAC an outstanding institution for achieving student excellence.

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## Renewed Focus on Enrollment & Student Retention

Increasing enrollment and student retention rates is integral to achieving student success and completion. Along with implementing new initiatives and enhancing existing recruitment and retention strategies, the college is undertaking an Enrollment Retention Plan. In the upcoming semester, Dr. Mary Frances Archey and the campus presidents will be reaching out to members of the faculty to encourage faculty participation in the planning process.

The college has also reviewed and modified processes to improve the delivery of services for both incoming and current students. Improvements now in place include suspending the deregistration process and waiving the \$25 payment plan fee for new students. This, in turn, is helping to stabilize enrollment. For example, comparisons between fall enrollment 2014 (-5.62 percent) and fall enrollment 2013 (-8.62 percent) data show CCAC is making favorable progress toward stemming the rate of decline in enrollment. The college's goal for the spring 2015 semester is to achieve flat enrollment for the 2014–2015 academic year.

In September, CCAC launched its new website, greatly improving student and institutional functionality. The new site features a centralized calendar, improved site navigation and enhanced support of student learning platforms and instructional technology, as well improved capability with mobile devices. The college is also currently developing an intranet portal for both students and employees which is scheduled to launch in 2015.

In addition, CCAC is pursuing new promotional and advertising avenues which will include the distribution of *CareerFocus*, highlighting the college's career and workforce programs. The magazine is expected to hit targeted prospective student households in late spring. CCAC has also kicked off a new series of radio, print, online and outdoor advertising in conjunction with the college's spring enrollment campaign.

## Strengthening College Operations

Despite beginning the year with many challenges, significant progress has been and is continuing to be achieved. The budget has been successfully balanced and vital capital improvement projects are underway. Eighty-six employees participated in the college's Retirement Incentive Program, enabling the college to reduce operating expenses by approximately \$2M per year and balance the operations budget. The college also continues to undergo a comprehensive review of all vacant positions to assess which positions are mission critical and thus, need to be filled.

As many of you may have noticed, there are a number of construction projects and other facility-related improvements

taking place across the college system. These projects include the West Hall and Physical Education building renovations, part of the Ridge Avenue Revitalization Project, and the construction of the egress road at South Campus. The targeted occupancy date for the West Hall building is February 2016, with classes in the building scheduled to take place during the 2016 summer term. The Physical Education building renovations will include an expanded college bookstore and the addition of a Starbucks Coffee store. These renovations and the South Campus egress road are scheduled for completion by June 2015.

The college is also undergoing upgrades to its IT infrastructure. Wireless expansion, including the addition of new wireless access points, is taking place at Allegheny Campus and the West Hills and Homewood-Brushton centers. The vast majority of the work is scheduled to be completed before the start of the upcoming spring semester.

## Achieving the Dream

In response to the college's 2014 Annual Reflection report, the national body provided feedback on the college's ATD initiatives as represented by ATD's five guiding principles. Here are excerpts from ATD's feedback:

*Committed Leadership*—CCAC's ATD Core Team was recognized for its "outstanding" work, with ATD Coordinator Mary Kate Quinlan singled out for special recognition. ATD cited the willingness of the team to use data in discussions about student success and completion as central to the team's success. ATD recommendations include having the ATD Core Team investigate ways to more deeply engage key personnel, including campus presidents and additional faculty and staff, in the student success and equity agenda in order to mitigate the effects of staff and resource shortages and ensure the sustainability and institutionalization of the college's work.

*Use of Evidence to Improve Policies, Programs and Services*—CCAC's "data-rich" ATD newsletters were cited as vital to keeping the student success agenda "front and center" at the college. As data and research needs continue to increase, ATD recommends that the college seek ways to support CCAC's Institutional Research team. This includes increasing the ability of faculty and staff to access, analyze and interpret data in order to ensure that CCAC's IR staff expertise is used in the most efficient manner possible.

*Broad Engagement*—ATD was very impressed by the high level of active participation of the faculty and staff directly involved in CCAC's ATD work, noting that faculty/student dialogues and student involvement in the design of the Roadmap to Success helped to

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broaden college participation, resulting in stronger solutions to student's challenges. ATD recommends exploring ways to make engagement more systemic for faculty, staff and students at all locations. ATD suggests leveraging the expertise and connections of existing faculty and staff engaged in ATD work as an effective avenue for reaching new audiences.

*Systemic Institutional Improvement*—CCAC was commended for achieving systemic institutional improvement, noting the *SDS 102 Academic and Personal Development* course requirement for students placing into three developmental courses and the expansion of the Math Cafés to all campuses. ATD recommends that the college develop a comprehensive college-wide strategy that promotes and supports student success and closes existing achievement gaps. In addition, ATD suggests that where the data shows a lack of progress on a student success initiative, steps are taken to determine the cause and develop a corrective action plan, even if this means terminating an ineffectual program or policy.

*Equity*—CCAC received high marks for the college's focus on closing achievement gaps, as evidenced by the African American Male Initiative. ATD was particularly encouraged to see data showing that African American students who take *SDS 102 Academic and Personal Development* are achieving higher grade point averages. ATD suggests that the disaggregation of data of other initiatives, such as Math Cafés and the Accelerated Learning Project, would be helpful in understanding CCAC's equity needs. ATD also recommends broadening the understanding of what equity means, why inequities exist and what this means for students. ATD sees engaging a broad group of stakeholders—particularly faculty and staff from each of the campuses—as an effective means of developing support for the college's equity agenda.

**Land Administration**—Effective fall 2015, CCAC has expanded this program to include geoscience test technician and geophysical data course offerings.

**Transportation Security Administration**—Offered at all four campuses, CCAC has expanded this program beyond Allegheny County to include TSA employees across the region.

**CCAC & Area Schools**—Thanks to support from The Pittsburgh Promise, this fall CCAC expanded dual enrollment opportunities to students in the Pittsburgh Public Schools as well as to students from other school districts (including career and technical schools) pursuing career track programs. Programs include Culinary Arts, HVAC and Allied Health.

**IUP/CCAC Stem Collaborative for Middle School**—This initiative launches fall 2015.

Following the fall 2014 term launch of both degree and certificate options for the Paramedic program, the college celebrated the dedication of the Prism Health Services Paramedic Laboratory on September 16. The new student-focused laboratory includes a simulated emergency room as well as a small apartment designed to replicate a residential rescue. The program remains unique to the region as CCAC is the only institution in Allegheny County offering a Paramedic Associate of Science degree program.

On October 29, the college entered into a memorandum of understanding with the Energy Innovation Center (formerly Connelley Vocational Institute) with the goal of offering workforce development training and a variety of courses to support students in career and skilled trades program tracks at the center's facility located in the Hill District. This partnership, made possible with the assistance of the CCAC Board of Trustees, including Workforce Development Committee Co-chair Bill Cagney, enables the college to offer educational and workforce training opportunities to a broad and diverse student population, including students from surrounding communities.

## Investing in New Educational Opportunities, Programs

CCAC has recently approved new academic and career programs scheduled to launch in both the spring and fall semesters of 2015. In addition, other programs have been enhanced and/or expanded. These programs include:

**Cybersecurity**—CCAC is offering both Associate of Science and Certificate program options beginning spring 2015 at all four campus locations.

**Multimedia Programming, Simulation and Gaming**—CCAC is offering this Associate of Science program at North Campus beginning fall 2015. In addition, the certificate program curriculum has also been updated.

## Workforce & Career Training

CCAC has quite rightly earned a national reputation for delivering affordable and accessible quality educational programming. As a result, the college is increasingly being tapped by business and community leaders—both nationally and here at home—to deliver the type of responsive, industry-led, career-based training and education required for today's competitive global marketplace. President Obama and Vice President Biden's visit to West Hills Center in April showcased the excellent programming taking place within CCAC's Workforce Development division. Now, with the arrival of the division's new vice president for Workforce Development, Theresa Bryant, who brings with her more than 30 years' experience in both workforce development and continuing

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education at institutions of higher learning, CCAC is well positioned to continue the type of innovative programming witnessed during the presidential visit.

Here are some examples of recent accomplishments within the division:

Better Choices, Better Health is a partnership between Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield, Allegheny County Medical Society Foundation, United Way of Allegheny County, Vintage Inc., and the Community College of Allegheny County. This program provides free workshops to empower adults to proactively and regularly manage their chronic diseases. CCAC offers six workshops each year.

The Generations program is a McKinsey Social Initiative designed to create a sustainable and scalable program to accelerate learning and place disconnected young adults on a career path, equipping them with skills and support for personal and professional success, while addressing entry-level needs for employers. The first program in the United States was launched in Pittsburgh in partnership with CCAC to train young people for entry level positions as nurse aides. Three classes were successfully offered from July through December 2014. In addition to CCAC, the key Pittsburgh partners include the Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board, UPMC, Presbyterian SeniorCare, Goodwill SWPA, and Dress for Success Pittsburgh.

Beginning this past fall term, CCAC began offering its highly touted Mechatronics Technology program in both associate degree and certificate options. Many may recall President Obama acknowledging this program during his visit, calling it *“a model for the nation.”*

## Preparing for Middle States

As many of you may know, CCAC is in the process of organizing for the decennial self-study under Middle States, the first step in the college’s re-accreditation process. In May 2015, a commission vice president will visit CCAC in order to review the college’s self-study design and readiness for the self-study process. Co-chairs Kevin Smay and Stephen Wells have undergone training, and work will begin on forming the steering committee early in the spring semester.

## Student Housing Study, College Survey & PACCC Strategic Planning

This past fall, CCAC retained Anderson Strickler, LLC to conduct a housing market and demand study to test the interest in providing onsite student housing at the Boyce Campus and West Hills Center locations. The study will include focus groups, an off-campus market analysis, a student survey and a demand analysis. Results from these differing means of assessment will help determine the viability of offering housing to CCAC students. By providing student housing, it is hoped that students from regional distressed communities will benefit from a positive and safe learning environment while undertaking their studies at the college. And furthermore, it is hoped that the success of these students will then foster a positive impact in these students’ respective communities. The cost of the student housing study is \$38,300 and is being underwritten by the Buhl Foundation. The study is expected to be finalized in early 2015.

The college also recently undertook and completed an institutional climate survey in which one in four CCAC employees participated. A summary of the survey’s results has been developed and will be presented and discussed at each of the campuses with the goal of garnering input from the college community, beginning in January.

On another front, the Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges is currently conducting a comprehensive strategic planning process designed to identify priorities for the next three to five years. To that end, CCAC is working with the commission to assist in providing critical information on academic and career educational programming and training initiatives.

## Awards & Other Distinctions

CCAC is fortunate to have many accomplished individuals and innovative programs. And over the last several months, the president and staff have been working very closely with both the CCAC Educational Foundation and the Office of Institutional Advancement to support these programs—and the talented faculty and staff running them—by identifying and securing new resources to enable the college to achieve its mission and meet its goals regarding student scholarships, services, equipment and other funding priorities. Here are a few examples of people and programs receiving special recognition and/or funding in the past several months:

Julia Fennell, professor of English, received the National Collegiate Honors Council Ron Brandolini Award for Excellence at a Two-Year Institution for her work with

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CCAC's Honors Program and at the national level. Fennell was presented with the award at the NCHC Conference in Denver, Colo., at the organization's 50th Anniversary Kick-Off Celebration held November 8. Julia has been with the college since 1988.

Mary Beth Johnson, professor of Court Reporting, was named 2014 Educator of the Year by the National Court Reporters Association. The announcement was made at a special awards luncheon held during NCRA's national Convention & Expo in San Francisco, Calif., July 29 through August 1. Mary Beth has been with the college since 1993.

CCAC's Automotive Technology facility and program earned an "excellent" rating on the Pennsylvania Safety Inspection Academic Audit from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's Bureau of Motor Vehicles, Inspections Division. The three-part audit reviews the facility, tools and vehicles; academic instruction; and record keeping. In a letter to CCAC, the division coordinator commended Automotive Instructor Bob Koch, writing he "epitomizes quality teaching."

For the second year running and thanks to the ongoing efforts of the Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion, CCAC has been selected to receive the 2014 INSIGHT Into Diversity Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award for its continued commitment to expand and promote diversity and inclusion initiatives at the college and in the community. The HEED Award is the only national recognition given to colleges, universities and school systems that exhibit outstanding efforts and success in the area of diversity and inclusion. On a related note, I was pleased to accept the 2014 Pennsylvania Diversity Council's Pennsylvania Leadership Excellence Award presented to me on behalf of the many innovative diversity initiatives taking place at the college.

Thanks to the continued efforts of the Office of Veterans Services, CCAC received two awards for the support the college offers to veterans and individuals serving in the US Armed Forces. For the second year in a row, CCAC has been designated as a 2015 Military Friendly School by Victory Media, a global media outlet connecting the military and civilian worlds. In addition, CCAC has been selected as a 2015 "Top School" by *Military Advanced Education*, following a research study undertaken by the magazine which publishes a list evaluating best practices in military education. Schools were selected based upon their respective achievements in military culture, financial aid, flexibility, on-campus support and online support services.

CCAC has engaged in educational and workforce training opportunities designed to support the One Northside Community Consensus Plan 2015 that focuses on three principle areas: education, employment and quality of place.

CCAC has been awarded a \$642,000 grant by the National Science Foundation to support the delivery of instruction in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) programs. The funds will also be used to develop a dual-track hybrid technician program to train science and engineering technicians for family-sustaining employment in the region's growing energy sector. Gretchen Mullin-Sawicki, dean of Academic Affairs for North Campus and Ron Logreco, assistant dean of the West Hills Center, will serve as the project's directors.

CCAC has been awarded a \$300,000 grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration for behavioral health workforce education and training for professionals and paraprofessionals. Funded at \$100,000 per year for three years, the award will enable CCAC to provide 42 scholarships (including tuition, fees and supplies) per year for students enrolled in the college's Drug and Alcohol diploma and Social Work: Fundamentals of Social Work Foundation certificate programs. In addition, the funding will help CCAC enhance the curriculum in order to give students more hands-on time in the field which will lead to job-ready skill sets for graduates. Christopher Robinson, assistant professor of Social Work, will be running this program on behalf of the college.

The efforts of these and so many other individuals within CCAC are the reasons why the college continues to receive recognition, secure vital funding and most importantly, attract students to our institution. Through the American Association of Community Colleges, in November, I was part of a panel of the American Association for Medical Colleges invited to discuss the critical role of community colleges in developing a diverse workforce and how community colleges can help prepare individuals for medical school. This panel discussion, like many others I have attended, underscores how critically important and how widely respected community colleges have become in educating individuals across the broad spectrum of abilities, backgrounds and career aspirations. With your continued hard work and dedication, CCAC will continue to be the premier provider of higher education and skills-based training for the residents of Southwestern Pennsylvania.

**Happy Holidays,  
Dr. Quintin B. Bullock**