

## Overview: 4 Principles, 5 Steps, 1 Goal

Achieving the Dream's student-centered model of institutional improvement is focused on creating a culture of evidence in which data and inquiry drive broad-based institutional efforts to close achievement gaps and improve student outcomes overall.

**Four Principles of Institutional Improvement:** Most efforts to improve community college student outcomes involve relatively small innovations or changes at the margins. Achieving the Dream is based on the premise that to improve student success on a substantial scale, colleges need to fundamentally change the way they operate. Achieving the Dream colleges that effectively promote student success adhere to four principles:

Principle 1) Committed Leadership

Principle 2) Use of Evidence to Improve Programs and Services

Principle 3) Broad Engagement

Principle 4) Systemic Institutional Improvement.

**Five-Step Process for Increasing Student Success:** Achieving the Dream helps colleges transform themselves according to the principles of institutional improvement through Achieving the Dream's five-step process:

Step 1) Commit to Improving Student Outcomes

Step 2) Use Data to Prioritize Actions

Step 3) Engage Stakeholders to Help Develop a Plan

Step 4) Implement, Evaluate, and Improve Strategies

Step 5) Establish a Culture of Continuous Improvement

**One Goal – Student Success and Completion:** Achieving the Dream seeks to help more students earn postsecondary credentials, including occupational certificates and degrees. Since community college students often take a long time to earn certificates or degrees, Achieving the Dream works with institutions to improve student progression through intermediate milestones.

*[Note that the website refers to the national goals, while the Washington Community and Technical Colleges in the 2011 cohort will be measured on goals directly related to the Student Achievement Initiative Points]*

- [Field Guide for Improving Student Success](#) 

Published September 2009

The "Field Guide for Improving Student Success" is Achieving the Dream's most comprehensive overview of the signature framework for helping more students finish the courses they start, persist from one term to the next, and earn a certificate or associate degree. The Field Guide includes an in-depth overview of Achieving the Dream's four principles and five-step process, case studies, and a readiness assessment for prospective colleges to determine how their policies are practices measure up.

Source: <http://www.achievingthedream.org/CAMPUSSTRATEGIES/OVERVIEW/default.tp>

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