

Initiative seeks to inform and prepare new leaders

Local, state and regional leadership developers share ideas at second Leading Forward summit



Cheryl Gamble/AACC

Community college leaders gather Jan. 9 for the second Leading Forward summit.

By MADELINE PATTON

Twenty community college leaders involved in local, state and regional leadership development programs that cater to community college personnel and other higher education administrators met Jan. 9 for Leading Forward's second summit.

During their eight-hour meeting the summit participants shared ideas for identifying potential leaders, developing their skills and sustaining them as they take on the additional responsibilities

that come with leadership. The day's discussions elicited numerous ideas for building a national framework that will disseminate information about leadership programs and help advance a process that will prepare more people, quickly and effectively, for leadership posts.

"An absence of good ideas is not the problem," said Joseph Zolner, director of the Harvard Institute of Higher Education at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education.

The challenge, which the Ameri-

can Association of Community Colleges is tackling with Leading Forward, is how to coordinate the information about the disparate programs in a way that is useful to attendees and program designers alike and leads to greater collaboration and builds on the many excellent leadership programs already available. And, most importantly, how to develop programs that address community colleges' unmet leadership needs as well as ensuring the availability of programs for people interested in improving their leadership skills.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation awarded AACC a two-year planning grant to support these efforts, which are beginning with these summit meetings to gather ideas from those individuals already working on community college leadership programs. In November, representatives of 19 AACC Affiliated Councils met for the first Leading Forward summit. In March, Leading Forward will bring together professors and administrators from universities that offer masters and doctoral degrees in community college administration. Representatives of community colleges in underserved areas will meet for the fourth and final summit, also

in March.

AACC President and CEO George Boggs called the enormous number of presidents and top administrators reaching retirement age a "challenge," rather than a "crisis."

"In some ways this challenge that lies ahead of us is an opportunity," Boggs said, explaining that the administrative changes could bring more women and minorities into leadership roles at community colleges.

In his welcome to the summit participants, he highlighted the seriousness of the potential leadership void at community colleges around the nation. Seventy-nine percent of the presidents who responded to a survey conducted in 2001 by Iris Weisman and George Vaughn said they planned to retire by 2012. But the exodus is not limited to chief executives. "The people who report to presidents are almost as old as the presidents," he said.

Research by AACC and others estimates that 700 new community college presidents and campus heads, 1,800 new upper-level administrators and 30,000 new faculty members will be needed in the next few years. The number of students currently enrolled in

graduate school programs for community college administration would fill only a fraction of these openings; the number of advanced degrees conferred in community college administration decreased 78 percent between 1983 and 1997.

The goal of the first phase of Leading Forward is to produce an integrated action plan, or a national framework, that is endorsed by the various stakeholders and that uses an array of strategies to develop new community college leaders.

At the second summit it was suggested that such a framework include a comprehensive catalog of community college leadership programs, much like a Consumer's Report, delineated by geographic region and the particular niche the programs target. A "leadership development index," which would allow institutions to see how their leadership programs compare with other offerings, was another suggestion.

The lists developed at the summit and a more detailed account of the day's discussions will be available at www.aacc.nche.edu. A database of the 189 leadership development programs can be found there as well.



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William Raspberry, a Washington-based urban and minority affairs syndicated columnist appears in 180 newspapers across the nation. Addressing the latest issues and proposals for answers to social dilemmas, Raspberry says, "I don't enjoy celebrating problems. I talk about problems with a view to inching toward solutions."



Leslie Sanchez, president and CEO of Impacto Group LLC, a strategic communications and marketing firm dedicated to building integrated, effective solutions for clients who target Latino customers. Sanchez was recently named one of the "100 Most Influential Hispanics" by Hispanic Business magazine.

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- Minneapolis has more golfers per capita than any other city.
- Minneapolis is home to the country's largest shopping and entertainment complex, The Mall of America.
- Minneapolis was ranked Number 7 out of 200 U. S. cities by *Ladies' Home Journal* as one of the Best Cities for Women in 2002.

