

# Leading Forward brings grad programs together

By MADELINE PATTON

Leaders of university programs that prepare community college administrators recently shared their opinions about how the American Association of Community Colleges' Leading Forward initiative can assist leadership development.

Suggestions mentioned during the March 16 meeting in Washington, D.C., ranged from the association compiling a book of best practices in leadership development, to advocating that a certain percentage of community colleges' budgets be set aside for professional development.

The 32 participants represented the range of graduate schools — from land grant universities to virtual universities — that offer master's or doctoral degrees with a community college administration focus. The eight-hour meeting was the third of four summits convened by Leading Forward to gather input from various community college stakeholders. The association is seeking advice on its plans to address the challenges created by the retirements of community college presidents and senior administrators.

AACC researchers and others estimate 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 challenge, as AACC President and CEO George Boggs described it at the beginning of the day, is not just that 79 percent of the presidents surveyed in 2001 by George Vaughn and Iris Weisman said they would retire by 2012, but that "the people who report to the president are almost as old as the president."

"We've all seen that leadership makes a significant difference," Boggs said, explaining the association's interest in guiding a solution to the leadership "pipeline" issue that blends existing efforts with a new generation of leadership development programs.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation has awarded AACC a two-year planning grant to support this effort, which begun with the summits and includes various research efforts.

Early in the day the graduate school program leaders reached consensus on the key knowledge, skills and values necessary for effective community college leadership. They could not, however, agree on the Leading Forward proposed national framework to connect the various leadership programs in a way that is useful to providers and potential students.

"A national framework presupposes more cooperation, but with the rise of for-profits there will be less, not more cooperation," predicted Linda Serra Hagedorn, chairwoman of Community College Leadership at the Rossier School of Education at the University of Southern California.

Leadership development also "is not a sterile paradigm," according to Richard L. Alfred, associate professor at the University of Michigan's School of Education. "What is an effective leader today may not be an effective leader at another time," he said.

Terry O'Banion, director of the Community College Leadership Program at Walden University, asked whether "leadership development programs can prevent really bad leadership." Later in the day, he questioned how the summit participants could comment on the national framework proposed by Leading Forward without more detailed information.

"We have been struggling over the course of a few months over how much to define the national framework," explained Steve Brigham, chief operating officer of AmericaSpeaks and facilitator of the summits.

Information from the summit participants already has been used to compile an inventory of community college leadership development programs that provides contact information and descriptions of the various programs. The

## Outstanding leadership programs should be recognized

Leading Forward should recognize the complexities of graduate education and understand what the various leadership development providers offer and how they operate, said Debra Bragg, a professor at the College of Education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, in an e-mail following the third Leading Forward summit.

"Each of the groups of 'providers' that AACC has targeted is quite different," she said. "Councils can and do offer short-term professional development without many external demands or constraints (like accreditation or certification), and that's great. They are key to Leading Forward, but they are very different from graduate programs that operate within colleges or schools of education that have multiple and competing constituencies.

"... Graduate educators have heard the call for help from AACC, and they've responded — with gusto. However, these efforts are often by one or two faculty operating within an environment that isn't all that conducive to what we're doing.

"If Leading Forward could play a role in recognizing outstanding community college leadership graduate education and directing its resources to supporting high quality community college leadership graduate programs, then we'd all benefit!"

inventory and detailed accounts of the summits can be viewed at [www.aacc.nche.edu/ccleadership](http://www.aacc.nche.edu/ccleadership). Leading Forward summits have been held previously with representatives of AACC's Affiliated Councils and regional, state and local leadership development programs. The fourth summit was held March 26.

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