



Discussion Guide

2020 Dallas Herring Lecture



NOVEMBER 10, 2020

Featured Speaker:

Dr. Pam Eddinger

- President, Bunker Hill Community College
- Chair, Board of Directors, Achieving the Dream

NC State's Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research hosts the Dallas Herring annual lecture in honor of W. Dallas Herring, whose transformative vision and tireless work culminated in the inception of North Carolina's community colleges. The Belk Center invites top community college leaders to speak on urgent and emerging topics, framing how to address the issues and proposing a path forward.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Dr. Eddinger's lecture touched on timely issues worthy of further reflection and discussion by community colleges and their allies as they seek to expand access to higher education, increase student success, and build more equitable institutions and communities. The questions below are discussion starters. Groups may wish to allocate 15 to 20 minutes to discuss each cluster of questions and then decide which ones to pursue in greater depth at a subsequent time. Richer conversations and more actionable responses are likely to happen if the discussions are grounded in disaggregated data on trends in enrollment, retention, completion, transfer, and labor market success.

THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE CONTEXT

Dr. Eddinger began her presentation by quoting W. Dallas Herring who, over fifty years ago, said, "We must take the people where they are and carry them as far as they can go within the assigned function of the system."

- In this age of lifelong learning when workers will change jobs and careers multiple times, how does the phrase, "carry them as far as they can go" resonate?
- What structural barriers limit how far students advance in higher education?
- How would you update or expand upon Herring's vision to reflect the role community colleges play today?

The lecture references moving from students being college-ready to colleges becoming student-ready.

- What does it mean for a community college to be student-ready?
- What are the key markers that indicate a college is transitioning into a student-ready environment?

A NEW ERA: THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE HUB

Dr. Eddinger notes that even before the COVID-19 disruption, many community colleges had built infrastructure on their campuses to compensate for the lack of support resources in individual families and in the community. She added that because of COVID, many colleges further picked up the burden as social service and education hubs to advance economic mobility.

- How has COVID impacted students in your community? Were new needs revealed by the “lightening of the pandemic”?
- How has your institution and your community responded?
- What opportunities did you discover to do things differently?
- What partnerships emerged to support students?
- Are there untapped opportunities for additional alliances to better support students?

THE COLLEGE MOBILITY NARRATIVE AND THE DOUBLE BIND

Dr. Eddinger describes two narratives that she says are alive and well in higher education: one holds that if an individual has talent and merit, they can climb to the top, while the second proposes that if you fail to partake in college, you are without ambition. She sees these unspoken tenets as contributors to the underinvestment of community colleges and the students and communities they serve and as a symptom of structural racism and systemic marginalization.

- In what ways have you seen these narratives play out in your community or institution?
- What is the impact on students? On students from marginalized backgrounds?

THE VISION OF A JUST RECOVERY AND THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE HUB

Dr. Eddinger promotes an equity-minded approach that shifts our “gaze” from focusing on student deficits to the readiness of the institution to see students through an asset-based lens and to provide appropriate support for students to reach their potential.

- In what ways are colleges readying themselves to better support students? Consider, for example:
 - What is being done to know students in the context of their lived experiences as well as their data profile?
 - How is the college dismantling negative narratives?
 - How does the college identify and value the cultural wealth of its students?
 - How does the college ensure that it does not inadvertently build biases into interactions with and guidance to students?

ASSEMBLING THE HUB

According to a July 2020 [Brookings report](#), COVID has provided a window of opportunity to rebuild, better. Dr. Eddinger suggests doing so by creating a community that fosters a sense of belonging for all.

- What can community colleges do differently to embrace a culture of collaboration and open the doors wider to every sector of the community?
- What can we learn from existing hub initiatives such as Early College?
- How do community colleges strengthen relationships and fuse industry spaces and expertise with traditional community college structures?
- Where can corporate philanthropy and the formation of new collectives catalyze a “Just Recovery”?
- What new partners – non-profits, local social services, and others – are needed to form collectives that are locally designed and responsive?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

McNair, T. B., Albertine, S., Cooper, M. A., McDonald, N. L., & Major, T. (2016). *Becoming a Student-Ready College: A New Culture of Leadership for Student Success*. Wiley

McNair, T. T., Bensimon, Estela Mara, Malcom, Lindsey (2020). *From Equity Talk to Equity Walk*. Jossey-Boss

Teaching and Learning Toolkit: A Research-Based Guide to Building a Culture of Teaching & Learning Excellence by Achieving the Dream

<https://www.achievingthedream.org/resource/18241/teaching-learning-toolkit-a-research-based-guide-to-building-a-culture-of-teaching-learning-excellence>

Holistic Student Supports Redesign Toolkit by Achieving the Dream

<https://www.achievingthedream.org/resource/17502/holistic-student-supports-redesign-a-toolkit>

Toolkit for Actionable Decision Making in Times of Disruption by Achieving the Dream

<https://www.achievingthedream.org/resource/18100/toolkit-for-actionable-decision-making-in-times-of-disruption>

#RealCollege During the Pandemic

<https://hope4college.com/realcollege-during-the-pandemic/>

Dire Disparities: Patterns of Racially Inequitable Funding and Student Success in Public Postsecondary Education

<https://ticas.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/dire-disparities.pdf>

Racial Equity in Funding for Higher Ed

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/10/29/racial-disparities-higher-education-funding-could-widen-during-economic-downturn>

The Post-Pandemic College

<https://store.chronicle.com/products/the-post-pandemic-college>

ABOUT

THE BELK CENTER

[The Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research](#), at North Carolina State University's College of Education, develops and sustains exceptional community college leaders who are committed to advancing college access, the social and economic mobility of their colleges' students, and the economic competitiveness of their regions. The Center conducts and disseminates research to address current and emerging student success challenges facing community college leaders and policymakers in North Carolina and beyond. To date our work has focused on economic mobility, community building, and improving success outcomes for historically underserved populations in higher education, in support of the mission of community colleges and their efforts to uplift their communities.

ACHIEVING THE DREAM

[Achieving the Dream](#) (ATD) leads a growing network of more than 277 community colleges committed to helping their students, particularly low-income students and students of color, achieve their goals for academic success, personal growth, and economic opportunity. ATD is making progress in closing equity gaps and accelerating student success through a unique change process that builds each college's institutional capacities in seven essential areas. ATD, along with nearly 75 experienced coaches and advisors, works closely with Network colleges in 44 states and the District of Columbia to reach more than 4 million community college students. Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

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For more information contact us at belk_center@ncsu.edu