Achieving the Dream™

2021 DALLAS HERRING LECTURE
DISCUSSION GUIDE

2021 Dallas Herring Lecture | November 16, 2021

FEATURED SPEAKER:
Gregory Adam Haile, J.D.
President, Broward College
ATD Leader College
Aspen Prize Finalist 2013, 2019 and Finalist with Distinction 2017, 2021

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

President Haile's lecture focused on the thesis that: To accomplish the community college objective of providing equitable access to higher education, community colleges are obligated to develop innovative approaches to being proximate with the communities they serve. This topic is 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 that follow 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.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THERE IS NO ACCESS

President Haile shared national statistics regarding the value of higher education in terms of lifetime earnings and health and well-being. We know higher education levels also contribute to the economic and social vitality of a community.

- *In what ways might increased postsecondary engagement contribute to the vibrancy of your community? To opportunities for upward mobility?*

THE THREE PROXIMITIES OF CONNECTING PEOPLE TO EDUCATION

President Haile reminded us that community colleges were designed to improve access – but not just access, but rather EASY access and at low cost. And yet, as he points out, the unfortunate reality is that there are still many low income, nontraditional, first-generation, immigrants, and ethnic and racial minorities who are not being reached.

- *Who is being reached by higher education in your community and who is missing?*

- *What strategies are currently used to connect with underserved populations?*

PHYSICAL PROXIMITY

President Haile shared, "Despite the advances of online learning and expedited use of remote learning during the pandemic, schools have prioritized the return to in person learning because of the value of educators and students being in the same room together." He describes several reasons physical proximity can be out of reach for many potential students.

- *What physical barriers are limiting participation in higher education in your community?*

- *How do K-12 students learn about the value of attending community college? In what ways are they encouraged to see themselves as college students?*

SOCIAL PROXIMITY

- *How does the college create a sense of belonging for minoritized populations and other traditionally underserved populations?*

FINANCIAL PROXIMITY

- *What types of financial supports are available to students in your community? How much of the true cost of going to college is covered by these types of support?*

- *What is the availability of emergency financial support?*

CREATING URGENCY AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Broward UP seeks to increase college access and attendance, improve degree and certificate attainment, and holistically raise social and economic mobility. This community centric approach targets zip codes with high unemployment and low postsecondary attainment rates. It uses a case management model to help students set goals and earn credentials.

- *Are there neighborhoods or communities in your service area that are not benefiting from the services of the college and its partners? Specifically which ones are they?*

- *In what ways might a zip code or neighborhood approach to increasing connectivity to college address equity and mobility in these neighborhoods or communities? Are there other approaches that you think would work better? If so, what are those approaches and to what extent are they -- like Broward UP, collaborative, replicable, and disruptive?*

- *What services are most needed to increase college going and credential attainment rates in your area?*

- *What partnerships are needed to increase physical, social, and financial proximity?*

CALL TO ACTION

President Haile said, "we cannot risk further delay in finding new ways to use the concepts of proximity to expand access throughout our communities."

- *How might the college and its community partners create a sense of urgency and build support for renewed efforts to expand access to the poorest residents, neighborhoods, and communities in your area?*

- *What role should college leaders play? Who should they seek out – non-profits, local service providers, employers, and others -- as advocates and collaborators?*

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Reimaging Access by Karen A. Stout, May 26, 2021, Inside Higher Ed
https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2021/05/26/community-colleges-need-equity-focused-agenda-opinion

Knowing Our Students: Understanding and Designing for Success
https://www.achievingthedream.org/KnowingOurStudents

Stronger Partnerships Between Community Colleges and Local Employers Help Communities Thrive
https://www.achievingthedream.org/news/17552/stronger-partnerships-between-community-colleges-and-local-employers-help-communities-thrive