

2022 DALLAS HERRING LECTURE DISCUSSION GUIDE

2022 Dallas Herring Lecture | November 8, 2022

Featured Lecturer:

Mike Flores
Chancellor, Alamo Colleges District
ATD Leader College of Distinction
Aspen Prize Winner 2022, 2019 and Finalist with Distinction 2017, 2021

Featured Respondent:

Janet Spriggs, Ed.D
President, Forsyth Technical Community College
ATD College

Enhancing Equity and Economic Mobility in Higher Education

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

Chancellor Flores's lecture focused on the thesis that community colleges can advance equity and enhance economic mobility by becoming critical actors in local collective impact strategies that utilize a framework focused on student success and ensure the elevation of our diverse communities. His remarks highlighted the collective impact work undertaken by the Alamo Colleges District and regional residents aimed at ending generational poverty.

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. Based on your discussions, what action steps have you identified to improve equitable student access and success in your community?

Understanding inequality in education starts with embracing the communities we serve

Chancellor Flores began his lecture by saying that colleges must understand and embrace the communities they serve before they can effectively advance equity and enhance economic mobility.

- *How is your college or organization deepening its understanding of the communities you serve?*
- *Has your student profile changed since Covid-19? Who isn't attending college and what do you understand about why that is so?*
- *What might your institution do to better understand the needs of your community and the people who live there?*

Embracing the power of Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) and Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) as economic drivers

Chancellor Flores shared data illustrating how the face of America is changing with more than 40% of the U.S. population identifying as one or more racial and ethnic groups. Prominent among them are Hispanic and Latino populations who, like many others, view the choice of attending college with an eye for return on investment of both time and money. Chancellor Flores suggests there are lessons from HSIs and MSIs in how to provide more intensive and intentional college and career advising, wraparound student support services, and pathways for life-long learning at an affordable cost for students.

- *What shifts in demographics are occurring in your community? What do we know about the financial, housing, child or elder care needs, or unique challenges that may require new ways of supporting these populations?*
- *In what ways is the community and the college preparing to meet the needs of new or growing populations?*
- *Who might your institution partner with to meet the needs of these populations?*

Prioritizing outcomes for the most marginalized community members

While our nation continues to underproduce enough talent to meet the growing demands of industry, Chancellor Flores pointed out that increased utilization of technology in the workplace and the classroom is accelerating a skills gap and further creating inequities in our country. He noted the concerning decline in Black and African American student enrollment, attainment, and transfer rates as well as the significant numbers of adults with some college but no credential. Community colleges play a critical role in providing a pathway for students to increase their economic and social mobility by providing both the technical and essential skills they need for the jobs of today and tomorrow. Their efforts are enhanced by critical partnerships with city and county government, businesses, nonprofits, and community members who similarly prioritize equity and economic mobility.

In her response to Chancellor Flores's lecture, Dr. Spriggs emphasized the need for community colleges to not only embrace these partnerships, but to take a lead role in creating new partnerships that challenge the familiar, conventional models of the past.

- *Who are the marginalized members of your community?*
- *What actions are needed by the college and other community partners to create greater educational and economic opportunities for these groups?*
- *Who should be enlisted as critical partners in addressing the economic inequities in your community? What role can the college play in creating new collective impact partnerships that challenge the status quo?*

Creating diverse pathways for students

Research has shown that to help students persist and complete, colleges must create diverse pathways. Significant among the strategies used by the Alamo Colleges District are its dual credit/dual enrollment programs, AlamoINSTITUTES, and the AlamoPROMISE. The District has tapped into collective impact networks to improve and expand dual credit offerings and resources and has organized their more than 350 degree and certificate programs into six career clusters aligned with both K-12 and industry to create a tailored individual pathway for each student.

AlamoPROMISE, the collective community moonshot to end cycles of generational poverty in the region, provides tuition-free assistance and wraparound services such as free food and clothing, low-cost childcare and healthcare, and emergency financial aid for items such as rent and car payments.

- *Does your college disaggregate data from the dual credit/dual enrollment programs to understand how marginalized and low-income students are being served? How might the enrollment of these students be increased in your community?*
- *How does your college help students learn about and enroll in postsecondary programs leading to family sustaining wages?*
- *How does your community and your college help reduce the cost of going to college for low-income students?*

Providing holistic student support

Having worked to understand the needs of the community, the Alamo Colleges District has deployed holistic student support innovations that match those needs, with the goal of creating a place where students feel welcome and cared about.

AlamoADVISE is an intentional case management approach with certified advisors who help students formalize an academic plan and mission statement and connect with each student at 15, 30, and 45-hour touchpoints.

Transfer Advising Guides (TAGs) provide a two-year, course-by-course crosswalk from the Alamo Colleges to the university of choice by reverse mapping all required university degree requirements, enabling students to transfer with degree applicability. Through a variety of community partnerships, the District provides access to food banks, healthcare, mental health, and emergency services.

- *How does your college make students feel welcome and cared about?*
- *In what ways does the college help students stay on track to timely completion of their programs?*
- *How does the college support the successful transition to university? Do your programs lead to seamless transfer pathways? How do you know?*
- *How does the college and its community partners meet the nonacademic needs of students? What additional community partners can be enlisted to provide unmet needs?*

Reengaging those left behind

Chancellor Flores concluded his remarks with a description of Ready to Work, San Antonio's newest workforce program and the community's use of the U. S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) framework, which is helping to create strategic alignment between classroom and career.

Noting that more than 70% of jobs by 2030 will require some type of postsecondary credential, he called attention to the need for reskilling and upskilling programs for adults in industries undergoing transition, short-term and micro credentials designed in partnership with local employers to create pathways out of poverty, and continued investments in high school equivalency and GED training for those who are not yet on a track to postsecondary education and training. He added, "We are partners for all of our students' journeys, no matter their life circumstances."

- *How is your community and college addressing the need for reskilling and upskilling? What partnerships have been or could be initiated to better serve adult learners?*
- *How is the college ensuring workforce programs are aligned with business and industry needs and preparing students for the jobs of today and tomorrow?*
- *What patterns or equity gaps exist at your college relative to different student groups enrolling in and completing programs offering the highest earnings and lowest debt?*
- *What else can be done to ensure your credential earners are earning higher wages and can realize economic mobility (such as moving up two or more income quintiles in 10 years relative to your state)?*
- *San Antonio's focus on poverty provides a framework for thinking beyond completion. What role can your institution play in elevating community conversations and action focused on equity, economic mobility, and community vibrancy?*

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Knowing Our Students: Understanding and Designing for Success

<https://www.achievethe dream.org/KnowingOurStudents> — a resource for institutional leaders and student success teams who are ready to talk openly about the students they serve and who are eager to learn practical strategies from national experts and peer institutions

Holistic Student Supports Redesign Toolkit

<https://achievethe dream.org/holistic-student-supports-redesign-toolkit/> — a guide that helps institutions from initial exploration of student needs through design, evaluation and refinement of a more personal, seamless, and comprehensive support experience that equips students to learn and succeed

Prioritizing Adult Community College Enrollment

<https://achievethe dream.org/initiatives/pacce/> — an initiative supported by Lumina Foundation and involving 20 colleges in 8 states focused on scaling innovative approaches to reaching and enrolling learners 25+ years of age

Stronger Partnerships Between Community Colleges and Local Employers Help Communities Thrive

<https://www.achievethe dream.org/news/17552/stronger-partnerships-betweencommunity-colleges-and-local-employers-help-communities-thrive>

Playbook: How to Build a Promise

https://assets.website-files.com/61ba001bb59d0528645a4bf9/627bc801a14a082bf255f965_guide-playbook.pdf — a resource for creating College Promise programs