



Dr. James S. Klauber Sr.  
President  
Calhoun Community College  
6250 U.S. Highway 31 North  
Tanner, AL 35671

Dear President Klauber:

Thank you for being part of the Achieving the Dream (ATD) National Reform Network and for your continued commitment to student success and equity. After reviewing your Implementation Plan and receiving input from your coaching team, we offer several observations in this letter about your institution's progress to date regarding the student success and equity goals you have identified. Specifically, the feedback will note some of your Implementation Plan's strengths and identify areas of potential improvement or recommend areas for further exploration.

#### *Strengths of the Implementation Plan*

As we reflect on all of your work over the past year and your plans going forward, we are most impressed by these accomplishments.

- Throughout the past year, the leadership at Calhoun Community College (Calhoun) has demonstrated a strong commitment to transforming the way the college serves its students. Additionally, there is a clear understanding of the urgency and magnitude of the work the college is striving to achieve. This combination of understanding and commitment will position Calhoun for success on its Achieving the Dream journey.
- Calhoun's data team and institutional research (IR) staff should be commended for their efforts to analyze the college's Achieving the Dream cohort data. Additionally, the qualitative inquiry conducted to understand the reasons behind the observed student achievement gaps by surveying students, faculty, and staff demonstrates the college's deep commitment to effectively serving its students.
- We celebrate the courage shown by Calhoun's leadership in sharing this data broadly across the college and applaud the increased level of discussion that is now taking place about student achievement.
- It is a pleasure to note that Calhoun's Implementation Plan directly and thoughtfully addresses many of the achievement gaps identified through the analysis of this qualitative and quantitative data.
- We applaud the college for identifying three bold priorities that will significantly impact the college's culture and systemic operations. It is particularly commendable that two of

these priorities were selected largely based on student feedback while the third is based on needs identified by quantitative data.

- The establishment of a faculty-led and faculty-driven Excellence in Learning Taskforce to tackle the teaching and learning priority—comprised of ten faculty members—is an exciting development that signals the leadership’s understanding of the importance of faculty voices in this work.

### *Focus on Institutional Change*

Achieving the Dream institutions recognize the importance of designing effective, scalable changes that fit together to build whole-college solutions to improving student outcomes. Your institution has demonstrated its commitment to institutional change through its efforts over the past year and its plan for implementation.

Calhoun’s commitment to institutional change to improve student outcomes has been clearly demonstrated over the past year. We applaud the college’s leadership for its clear and open commitment to transformative change punctuated by increased engagement of all stakeholders across the college in the process of analyzing and using data to inform decisions.

### *Areas of Improvement and Recommended Next Steps*

We recognize that the distinct environment of each college poses unique challenges and opportunities. In terms of next steps, we would like to suggest the following as possible ways to improve student outcomes over the next year.

- The level of participation in the Principles Assessment process was very impressive and demonstrates the leadership’s commitment to an inclusive change process. One challenge that many community colleges face in this work is supporting and promoting the engagement and inclusion of adjunct faculty. We were pleased to note that your Implementation Plan recognized this challenge and encourage the college to consider a strategy that would enable at least one adjunct faculty member to serve on the Excellence in Learning Taskforce.
- We encourage the leadership of this work to focus on maintaining momentum and continuing to grow faculty and staff engagement in designing initiatives and measuring their impact on student success. Simultaneously, a strong student success communications plan that provides regular updates to the whole college community is necessary to keep the college community abreast of current and planned initiatives and underscore your vigilance and ongoing insistence on progress.
- Calhoun’s excellent analysis of its data has positioned the college well to move forward with designing strategies to address the achievement gaps identified throughout the planning year. As the college moves ahead with its plans, it will be important to be forthcoming about the identified achievement gap challenges and engage the college

community in designing targeted strategies to provide the additional required support to particular groups.

Calhoun Community College is boldly undergoing, with a true sense of urgency, deliberate and wholesale transformative change. It is a credit to the champions leading this work including you as president; faculty leadership-especially Acting Vice President-Stephen Calatrello; Professors Chuck Holbrook and Heather Congo; Dean of Institutional Research-Debi Hendershot; and Director of Recruitment, Retention and Student Success-Brian Gann. The work that you all are leading has the potential to change the lives of generations of Calhoun students.

ATD is continuously building upon the institutional change lessons learned from our network over the last ten years and, as a result, we have recently released the next iteration of our institutional change framework. This framework identifies seven core capacity areas essential to growing colleges' abilities to impact student outcomes through systemic and sustainable practices. In the next year, ATD plans to release a new suite of tools and other resources to undergird colleges' implementation of and maturation in the core capacity areas. We urge you to make the most of the new framework and resources as you take your student success work to the next level.

We appreciate the hard work, time, and resources that your institution devotes to your Achieving the Dream efforts. We encourage you to discuss the feedback in this letter with your Leadership Coach and Data Coach, who are ready to support and guide you moving forward as it may assist you in shaping the direction of your ongoing student success efforts. We look forward to working with you in the coming year and welcome your questions and comments along the way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen A. Stout". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K'.

Dr. Karen A. Stout  
President & CEO

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cindy Lenhart". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C'.

Cindy Lenhart  
Vice President for Community College Relations