August 14, 2015

Dear John,

The American Association of Community Colleges, with generous funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, recently launched a national project focused on building capacity for community colleges to design and implement structured academic and career pathways at scale, for all of their students. Building on emerging research and experience in the field, the project reflects AACC’s commitments to follow through on recommendations set forth in the 2012 report of the 21st Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges, *Reclaiming the American Dream*, and the 2014 implementation guide, *Empowering Community Colleges to Build the Nation’s Future*.

I am pleased to invite you to engage in the application process through which 30 institutions will be selected for participation over three years of intensive Pathways Project work. The selection criteria are intentionally rigorous, as the project is designed to help colleges already progressing on a student success agenda to move that work to the next level.

Attached for your review and response are the following documents:

- The brief [project description](#) provides additional information.
- The [readiness assessment](#), developed by project partners, will help your college consider whether the work of this project is a good fit with your institutional strategies to improve college completion and equity. Completion of this assessment, based on engagement and discussion with your leadership team, faculty and staff leaders, and key administrators, is required to be considered for project participation. Submission deadline is September 21, 2015. (Note: If the form does not open correctly for you, please try opening it in a different Internet browser.)
The project participation agreement describes the significant commitments that will be expected of Pathways Project colleges, including full participation of designated college teams in a series of six pathways institutes during the 2016-2018 project period (dates provided), along with related advance work, follow-up tasks, and project reporting. A completed and signed agreement must be submitted with the readiness assessment.

After reviewing colleges’ submitted materials, project partners will in late September conduct one-hour telephone interviews with leadership teams from finalist institutions. In October, selected colleges will be notified and will soon thereafter begin advance work for the first Pathways Institute, scheduled for early 2016. In addition to the criteria reflected in the readiness assessment, priority will be given to colleges located in focus states for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation: CA, FL, GA, KY, NC, NY, OH, TN, TX, and WA. Ideally, a number of colleges from other states also will be selected.

If you are interested in pursuing this opportunity, please complete the accompanying readiness assessment and participation agreement and submit it to Sarah Cale, project manager, by no later than September 21, 2015. If you have questions, or would like further information, please contact Kay McClanney, senior advisor to the president & CEO, or Gretchen Schmidt, executive director of the Pathways Project.

Thank you for your commitment to student success and equity.

Sincerely,

Walter G. Bumphus
President and CEO
American Association of Community College