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## Local community college wins national Bellwether Award for innovation

For immediate release

ORLANDO, FL.—The Community College Futures Assembly (CCFA) has announced that Alamo Community College (Texas), Pasadena City College (California), and Quinebaug Valley Community College (Connecticut), were this year’s winners of the prestigious Bellwether Awards, which recognize outstanding and innovative programs in community college education. The winners were announced recently (Jan. 31<sup>st</sup>) at the CCFA annual meeting in Orlando.

Alamo Community College, San Antonio, Texas, won in the Planning, Governance and Finance category, which recognizes programs or activities that improve efficiency and effectiveness in the community college. The program titled, ***Collaboration, Communication and Consensus: An Organic Approach to the Budget Crisis*** tackled fiscal cuts in the midst of unprecedented enrollment increases and rising operating costs. Fifty leaders from throughout the organization, including trustees, met the challenge head on during six days of budget retreats. Twenty-five budget reduction strategies, focusing also on student success, were identified and implemented.

Pasadena City College, Pasadena, California, won in the Instructional Programs and Services category, which recognizes programs and services that foster or support teaching and learning in the community college. The program titled, ***Math Jam: Setting First-Year Students on the Right Pathway*** is an award-winning two-week, no-cost summer program that provides a creative, engaging, no-stress environment in which first-year community college students can experience math success before beginning college. The transition-to-college program offers innovative math instruction, structured supplemental support, and orientation-to-college activities.

Quinebaug Valley Community College, Danielson, Connecticut won in the Workforce Development category, which identifies strategic alliances that promote community and economic development. The program titled, ***Breaking Down the Walls: A Pathway to the American Dream***. STRIDE (Skills, Transition, Respect, Integrity, Direction, and Employment) is an innovative, state-funded transitional workforce program serving parents both pre and post-release coming out of incarceration. Curriculum and post-release case management supports are designed to assist parents in reentering the workforce resume their parental roles and reduce recidivism.

The Community College Futures Assembly issued a call for Bellwether Award nominations in the fall of 2011, and 30 finalist colleges in three categories were competitively chosen from the applicants. Ten finalists were selected in each category: *Instructional Programs and Services*, co-sponsored by the National Council of Instructional Administrators; *Planning, Governance and Finance*, co-sponsored by the Council for Resource Development; and *Workforce Development*, co-sponsored by the National Council for Continuing Education and Training. All finalists presented at the Assembly and one winner was then selected from each category by a panel of national experts within each category.

The Community College Futures Assembly, now in its 18<sup>th</sup> year, convenes annually as an independent national policy forum for key opinion leaders to work as a “think tank” in identifying critical issues facing the future of community colleges, and to recognize Bellwether Finalist colleges as trend-setting institutions. For more information, consult the Community College Futures Assembly website, <http://futures.education.ufl.edu/> or email [futures@coe.ufl.edu](mailto:futures@coe.ufl.edu).

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