I want first to thank everyone, the entire Alamo Colleges family, for all the progress we have made over the past 6 years, and especially all of you here today and the
teams you represent. I’m very proud of the progress we’ve made and the many individual and collective awards we’ve received. I want especially to congratulate Jackie Claunch and her team for the significant Baldrige recognition in leadership and customer/student service that they just received. They express the potential of the Alamo Colleges to be the best in the nation and are the model for the rest of us.

Today’s “Call to Action” is the kick-off of a larger process intended to engender greater collaboration across our district and reinforce the journey we began 6 years ago to be the best. But our environment today is significantly different than it was in 2006. So I needed to discuss this “New Era” so that everyone understands my perspective of the new context in which we now operate. Our ongoing process is to implement quarterly meetings that will focus on the presentation of high priority strategies being developed and/or implemented by their owners in order to improve awareness throughout the district and garner additional improvements. Drs. Cleary and Flores are organizing the first meeting to be held in the first quarter of 2013. The goal: greater collaboration, understanding, speed and ingenuity in the development of our strategic initiatives.

Recently, I welcomed the Achieving the Dream coaches to their retreat in San Antonio, Mike Flores was there, and during my introduction, which referenced my four CEO leadership positions, Kay McClenny couldn’t resist calling out that I couldn’t keep a job. But when I took the podium, I retorted that the real truth is that I have been looking for the right board! And I have found it; and for the trustees’ forward thinking and very considerate and deliberate leadership, I am very grateful; we and the entire community should all be very grateful.

I am also blessed with a wonderful leadership team, all of you here today, a hard working staff and a faculty with a heart that is truly in the right place. And, we all do love the Alamo Colleges and I know you share with me an appreciation for the diversity of each of our campuses - of the spirit of each college; for they reflect our history, traditions and, frankly, our individual personalities.
Students Want:

- High quality programs
- High quality customer service
- High quality academic and student support
- That academic programs make sense
- An aligned relevant and efficient academic experience across the Alamo Colleges

Our students also love their colleges, though they tell me regularly and persistently, that they want the same high quality programs, the same high quality customer service and the same high quality academic and student support across all of the colleges, as so many attend more than one. They want our academic programs to make sense for them, to fit within their goals and ensure they transfer and are employed successfully. In short, because most are “fitting this into their lives,” they want a relevant and efficient academic experience.

Most students are pleased, but some aren’t, with their faculty, with the attention they receive from our staff and with the facilities we have built and maintained. They do want greater clarity and focus in their journey and the way programs are designed and presented. They are often frustrated with the absence of simplicity in our operating systems and attentiveness when they get stuck.

If MyMap fulfills its potential, it will address these issues. We all need to celebrate the hundreds of our colleagues who have been contributing to its design and development. It’s this kind of initiative that our students need and want and when we free ourselves from our encumbrances and collectively focus on students, we consistently accomplish great things.

For example, Achieving the Dream was moribund for its first 4 years. But, when we collectively put our shoulders behind the program, we progressed and achieved Leader College recognition. This says so much about how we have matured as an organization. The Board charged me, and I in turn charged you, to bring five, assertively separate campuses into a single system and to change the culture of the Alamo Colleges to become uniformly focused on student success. I believe we are on
the verge of accomplishing both. Only we, not our students or community, stand in the way of achieving our potential. We are responsible.

I’m especially pleased with our progress because it wasn’t just the culture that prevented our Achieving the Dream progress, but our “culture of separateness” ensured that our fundamental operating systems couldn’t work. But pursuing the Baldrige and AtD models has provided a way for us to establish a common language, tools and vision that has prioritized and focused us collectively on becoming a High Performance Academic Organization. As a result, systems that didn’t exist were created and those so pitifully broken were redesigned.

Some of you have heard me speak of Jim McLaughlin’s and my amazement at discovering a culture that was built on multiple layers of costly bureaucracy, the absence of common systems and outcomes that prompted us to marvel that if 6 signatures were required to approve something, than 8 would be better!
That was where leadership had focused its energy, on signatures not performance! The great news is that it’s been about two years since I stated at almost every board meeting that: “Every time I picked up a rock there was a snake beneath and the snake had a hundred babies!”

Now look how far we’ve come! We have been able to hone our focus on operational performance and student success, what we now call “the Alamo Way.” There has emerged an acceptance, even an embracing of the value of a district-wide approach to “raising all boats” so that every student, regardless of the program or college(s) attended, has the full potential to successfully graduate and pursue a successful career.
Why is this so critical? Because, the Alamo Colleges is the path to economic prosperity. With such high levels of economic disparity, but with such demographic growth and economic opportunities expanding our region’s prosperity potential, it is on our shoulders to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to be educated. I believe we are all committed to this agenda and to our vision: “to be the best community college district in the nation in student success and operational effectiveness.”
We have in a large sense caught up operationally, though not academically, with our peer community colleges in Texas. But we had fallen so far behind. I installed banner in Connecticut in 1996, 11 years before the Alamo Colleges. Frankly, we were painfully stuck. Fortunately, and thanks to everyone’s hard work, we have progressed rapidly and all of us expect that the momentum we have created through our academic, student and organizational initiatives will carry us directly to achieve our vision.

- We face a rapidly and dramatically altered world
- We face challenges and complexities demanding that we achieve much, much more, more rapidly and at much lower cost

However, and this is the fundamental message of my comments: We face a rapidly changing and dramatically altered world. We face challenges and complexities demanding that we achieve much, much more, more rapidly and at much lower cost. We are plowing new ground. Thus, addressing this assertively and disruptively is why I have called us together: to set us more deliberately and collaboratively on the course that achieves our vision but in an environment that is very different than it was just 6 years ago.
• Addressing this assertively and disruptively
• Deliberately and collaboratively
• In an environment very different than 6 years ago

Of course, every other college and university is facing the same dynamics and they are beginning this same journey. So we are measuring our progress, and being evaluated publically, against a moving target. We are also facing direct competition as never before, especially from those moving quickly and deliberately into this New Era. And, as a recent article in the November 19, 2012 issue of Forbes about Salman Kahn reports, private investment is creating the real disruptions and we will increasingly be compared against startups that are accelerating the use of technology, data collection and distance education to produce better results at far less cost. Advocates of this revolution, many who are faculty from Stanford, Harvard and MIT, have become the founders of EDX, Udacity and Coursera. Even not-for-profit entrepreneurs like Salman Kahn are promoting free education, which currently is a help to our efforts but potentially is a direct threat. The more free resources are successful and increasingly available, the greater the potential that our students will take a different route to learning. Funding for these not-for-profit initiatives is provided primarily from successful entrepreneurs like Bill Gates. Private investment has doubled from $3.5 billion over the past 10 years to suddenly $7 billion now and expected to grow dramatically. Meanwhile, our public resources are in decline. But most educators are responding by trying to maintain and protect the same model developed 800 years ago! Our responsibility is to define our Alamo Colleges niche, including adaption of the new, beneficial learning approaches, and prove that we are better than the alternative!

What’s behind this new era are several substantive forces. None of them are really new. But suddenly they have coalesced and reached a tipping point, which according to most experts, has been driven by technology.
First, technology is changing everything and truly making the world flat. Technology is assuring equal power to those who have it: North Korea, Pakistan and Iran are harbingers of this truth. It is also providing EDX and Salmon Kahn the ability to reach and provide everyone across the globe with quality learning. In turn, technology is defining the skills students need that are paramount to prepare for today’s, not just tomorrow’s careers.

Second, a major driver in creating this New Era is the public’s expectations for education.

Critical Factors

1. The Public expects we behave differently
2. “Let the user pay”
3. Technology is driving costs down
4. Competition is driving costs down

CONCLUSION: WE MUST DRIVE COSTS DOWN BECAUSE OTHERS ARE

In light of the continuing decline of our nation’s global educational and economic standing, there is a deepening of the public’s expectation that we do something differently in order to reestablish U.S. hegemony in higher education and economic prowess. We frequently read that the era of the USA as the most powerful nation on earth has ended; that China, India, Brazil and multiple other nations are asserting their economic, and especially their educational resources, more effectively than we, and may soon replace us.

The economic downturn appears to have been the reason for the disinvestment in education. But this is the “too close to the ground view.” The emerging design began well before the economic impact of 2008. That event, politically, became a means to accelerate this disinvestment strategy. I saw it begin in New York back in the early 1990’s when tuition was “freed” from legislative control. The universities originally celebrated their newly won authority. They now understand that it was actually based on a political philosophy: “let the user pay.” In other words, shift the investment from the taxpayer to the student, the user, and let the market control the price. This also happened in Texas about 10 years ago when university tuition was
decontrolled. Now, I believe, everyone in this room understands that the call for a $10,000 degree and performance funding, now called Student Success Points, are further strategies to reduce the taxpayer’s obligation and pressure higher education to perform better. But here’s the interesting, yet not understood truth. Technology, and the advent of the educational entrepreneur are driving down prices on their own, anyway, and our governors and legislatures’ policies to force us to become more effective and efficient may actually have given us a boost to remain competitive in this new marketplace and new funding reality.

“Student Success Points,” will be adopted in this upcoming session and, over a very short period of time, fully replace the current enrollment based funding model. Tennessee initiated this model ten years ago and is now at 100% performance funding. Chairman Branch, a strong proponent, has recently changed his support for a 10% to a 25% implementation rate. Is 100% far behind?

Third, entrepreneurs are not a new force in higher education but the new money, energy and political support are allowing them to engage head to head with traditional post-secondary colleges/universities, typically using technology to achieve better student learning at less cost. A recent article in the Chronicle of Higher Education suggested that education will be generally free in 10 years, this predicated on the dramatic increase in existing universities offering MOOCS, massive open online courses, for free to hundreds of thousands of students across the globe. UT Austin just announced its investment of $5 million to join this movement to the laud applause of the governor. I’m pleased that the Alamo Colleges, in conjunction with A&MSA, was the first in Texas to announce that we have achieved his goal of a $10,000 baccalaureate degree. It’s predicated, of course, on us doing all the heavy lifting! The governors of Florida and Wisconsin have now followed Mr. Perry’s lead. Now, do you think legislators won’t continue to reduce funding to press for lower cost degrees?!
New companies, enthusiastic entrepreneurs with large investments behind them and even not-for-profit universities, are asserting their place in this competitive space. We can blame ourselves for much of this new activity. The for-profit sector sees opportunities because we have been underperforming. Private money flows where there are opportunities. And technology now allows companies to reach a global audience at substantially less cost than a traditional brick and mortar college with increasingly better results.

**Students Are Behaving Like Customers**

- They demand the same service experience they receive from amazon.com
- They want to use technology
Fourth, another crucial variable is the desire of students today to use technology and distance learning. And, because entrepreneurs focus more effectively than we on the convenience and advantages to the students as customers, students are responding.

- Curriculum design is being radically redefined
- As is the role of faculty

Fifth, is the redesign of the curriculum model, using the advantages of technology to “flip” the classroom and change the very nature of the teacher. Western Governors University was created on this model. Their “faculty” are really coaches. Proven curriculum is procured from other suppliers, and utilized universally. There are no individually developed courses. The students study the materials and the faculty help bridge the gaps in understanding.

The impact is that legislators and governors are asking: “Why are we paying for the same course to be different not only at each of our colleges and universities but with each of the thousands of faculty we have teaching the same courses?” We can argue all we want that this approach with all its traditions is the best way. But this model is rapidly being replaced by the entrepreneurs because it is not economically competitive or as effective as the models built by Western Governors, XED or the University of Phoenix, which have already replaced our model with one curricular design, taught by multiple instructors, or one great course reaching hundreds of thousands of students and often for free!
Through increasingly aggressive competition, we could see both a greater challenge to our traditional approach of instructional design and delivery and a loss of market share as customers, under the same pressure to find the lowest cost, most effective delivery/design, make different choices. I recently learned that the University of Southern New Hampshire has announced a $5,000, on-line, competency based associate degree, accredited by the New England Association of Colleges and Schools, and they already have corporate and municipal partners across the country. Why? Because their price beats the tuition at the local community college. More important, like Western Governors University, the degree provides a “flipped,” competency-based model that has proven to be more successful for both students and employers in affirming the students’ performance capabilities compared to the current model. And $5,000, which includes electronic resources (text books), is less expensive than our Alamo Colleges degree when you add the cost of books. So this private university, with no public support, is more competitive than we on price as well as on design and delivery. We risk losing a quality position but also performance funding if we don’t aggressively change all of our curricula to a competency based, stackable certification model. Frankly, we’ve been talking about the benefits of this approach for my entire 36-year career! This is not new stuff, and we’ve known for years that it works. What has stymied us is that we’ve not had the political will and, I suppose, the economic imperative, until now, that is forcing us to make the change. The question is: what happens if we don’t change?

I am a strong proponent that our best defense is a strong offence. Therefore, we must not assume that our traditional turf will be protected or that our cost advantage, which has always been predicated on public funding, will continue to be ours alone. We must expect that the rapidly increasing availability and capability of technology will impact us as it has bookstores, general retail and libraries. Look
what’s happened to the retail DVD rental market (and music) and how fast it was created and then replaced. The same is about to happen to the electronics game and laptop industries. Why wouldn’t this happen to education? It is!

- Understand and acknowledge the radical shifts occurring in post-secondary education
- To act deliberately and just as radically and rapidly
- To participate fully in developing cost efficient models
- Aggressively expand our reach

Thus, today’s discussion is a specific call for us, collectively, to understand and acknowledge the radical shifts occurring in post-secondary education and to act deliberately, just as radically and rapidly, to participate fully in the new, cost efficient models proving successful and, to aggressively expand our reach (access is still our primary purpose), or submit to the host of competitors that see San Antonio, the nation’s seventh largest city and one of the most undereducated, as ripe for their expansion.
Despite the large numbers of post-secondary institutions based in our region, San Antonio has a relatively low percent of its population with a baccalaureate degree, about 25%. To his credit, Mayor Castro, with much local support, is aggressively promoting a college going culture as both a way to greater economic development for our residents and for the region at large. This sets the stage for welcoming all comers to help increase the degrees earned and opens the door for those prepared to benefit from this encouraging environment. We have a critical opportunity to ensure the pathway is clear for our community. But, if our students continue in such large numbers to be unsuccessful with us, if employers continue to have vacant jobs and are unable to expand because we can’t produce the numbers with the skills required, then others willing and able to do better will replace us using technology, being responsive and applying better learning strategies. The point is that we can’t spend the next five years arguing over structure and control, over courses rather than curriculum, over individual department textbook choice rather than collective strategies that are better academically and less expensive for our students. The most cost efficient model must be applied; the best instructional strategies must be implemented. We must either be an assertive leader in quickly implementing change strategies that work to reduce costs, improve efficiencies and dramatically increase student success or risk losing the confidence of our stakeholders.
Five Competitive Challenges

1. Distance learning
2. Expansion of private competitors
3. Our students are changing
4. The nature of degrees is changing
5. The way we have traditionally operated

There are five specific competitive challenges to us:

**Distance learning** is a rapidly increasing sector of the post-secondary structure and, because of its lower cost, is politically favored. Alamo Colleges’ students are increasing their use of DL. PAC has over 30% of its students using distance learning. But our current model is underdeveloped and uncompetitive. As I’ve said often, we will be a player or be forced out of this business.

A second force is the **expansion of private competitors**. Community colleges, like our secondary school counterparts, are easily categorized as “all the same and too expensive”. Certainly, the current political environment leans toward the private university and for-profit enterprise for the promise of offering high quality and competitive prices, without the necessity of public investment. Therefore, we must deliberatively strive to be competitive in this domain and actively adjust to the long-term reduction in state investment. The proposed elimination of four community colleges in Texas and the real potential closing of San Francisco City College, similar in size to the Alamo Colleges, should be a wake-up call to us. The increasing number of private and public post-secondary institutions and for-profit organizations entering higher education must be seen as direct competitors to the Alamo Colleges. In short, we must develop our own niche, our legitimate advantage, and our claim for dominance in our region. This is one of the reasons I have proposed adding “leadership” as one of our learning outcomes, differentiating us from everyone else. Read the Texas Monthly reports of the goings-on at A&M and UT, and the sooner we accept and act on demands for change, the better our ability to persevere.

Third, our students are changing dramatically and expect a different educational environment than the one we currently provide. At the recent Higher Education
Coordinating Board workshop for new trustees, Dr. Art Levine, former President of Columbia Teachers College, Harvard Professor and now with the Carnegie Foundation, reported on the results of a just completed student study that reveals the dramatic change in student learning preferences and expectations. Because they have grown-up as digital consumers, today’s students want 24/7 accesses across a wide variety of delivery systems; with the same support systems they are familiar with in their commercial dealings, and with fewer frills than any previous generation. Standing in lines, facing multiple barriers to completing their interactions and the institutional-centric rather than customer-centric systems are anathema to them.

This is a critical competitive advantage for the many private, for-profit organizations that do very well attracting students. This is why I have charged a new task force to literally redesign, not just fine-tune, our entire admissions, registration, testing and bursar system.

We better be more like amazon.com or Western Governors University or lose students to those who are. There are continued arguments that students aren’t customers. In assessing student performance this is correct. However, in every other way, increasingly, students have many choices and demand a different environment and will express their disaffection by choosing to go elsewhere. And, for those who expect to attend the Alamo Colleges, increasingly, they are expecting better service and more effective learning.

But students are not our only customers and trying to separate students from school districts, universities, community based organizations, political entities and employers and treat them differently is demeaning to our students and stakeholders and a waste of our energy and resources. Our future success will be treating all of our partners, including students, as our customers.

The very nature of the degree is changing. Increasingly, employers want national certifications, performance based “badges” that affirm the skills graduates can perform. Stackable certifications and degrees is the emerging concept that builds skill sets upon each other over time and allows individuals to continue to grow and prove their capabilities in a world where constant learning and recertification are becoming the norm. The Carnegie Foundation is rethinking the Credit Hour, which they established as the fundamental measure of “learning,” to include competency-based elements. How do we implement a competency-based system into our certificates and degrees?

We have to change the way we operate. First, we have to be more collaborative and supportive of each other. It troubles me to hear that certain folks, especially among the leadership, are “not on board,” “are not team players” or “are being resistant.” Much of this is still rooted in placing a higher priority on the local college than the institutional vision. By Board policy, both must be the same. There is every reason for each of us to propose better solutions, to document the advantages and to seek
to persuade the team to support a better design. Healthy debate up front will make us better. That’s our Value of Academic Freedom - for every employee. But we have to move quickly, so once a decision is made, everyone must get on board and contribute to make the implementation as effective as possible. That’s everyone’s job.

Second, we need to implement new strategies more effectively and quickly and be rabid about ensuring the strategies achieve their full potential. This requires that everyone contribute to the ongoing assessment and continuous improvement of our strategies and systems. Improving everything is everyone’s job!

Third, we need to celebrate risk taking when the purpose is to improve student success. We need to rally around those who failed while engaged in the right intent, learn from our failures and become better because of them. But we must also abandon what doesn’t work and act quickly to implement better solutions. We can’t allow students to fail because we have failed to ensure the best possible performance of the Alamo Colleges.

Recently, I was invited to the White House Conference entitled “Driving Productivity in Post-Secondary Education.” I sat at a table dominated by eastern, private, elite colleges including Sweetbriar College in Pennsylvania, whose president argued that as long as there were students who wanted to bring their horses to college, there will always be a place for Sweetbriar! She was not threatened by the entrepreneur at our table who is rapidly driving new products/strategies into higher education that are forcing the dramatic changes. But we do not have a unique niche like Sweetbriar College, unless, unbeknownst to us, SAC is still using the stables at the Koehler House to attract students!

Our place has been traditionally protected by our state and local funding, by the geography of our community college district with few competitors: and frankly, we have been able to avoid any accountability for efficiency as we simply spent what was given to us or raised tuition or local taxes if more was internally demanded. These budget fundamentals have been replaced and it must be our ability to compete, not just against the few, small for-profits that have been located in San Antonio for years or our local, much more expensive universities, but against the political demand for self-sufficiency and the competitive demand by new entrepreneurs to attract those who have been our traditional students.
Critical strategies to compete:

To Flourish

PRINCIPLE: Everyone committed to positive collaboration to develop the best solution for students

This “New Era” is not all doom and gloom. Rather, it is a time when those who seize the opportunity to be amongst the most effective will grow their student and customer loyalty, will not just survive but will flourish. I believe that all of us would prefer that we flourish. So the fundamental question before us is:

How do we ensure that the entire Alamo Colleges family, especially all of us in this room, are collaborative and effective in carrying out our stewardship to our students and community and ensure not only that we develop the Alamo Colleges into the best in the nation but that we continue to improve from there? Everything else is dependent on our answer to this!
Fundamental solutions:

5 Fundamentals

1. Clear academic pathways and great teachers
2. Radically change developmental education
3. Change the access approach & redesign the advising system
4. Implement a competitive distance learning model or can’t play
5. Create efficient, innovative, customer proficient, collaborative organization

I suggest that there are five fundamental objectives we must aggressively pursue:

Student Success:

Students must have a clear pathway to success in their chosen program. Fundamentally, we do this in our workforce programs but they only serve 1/3 of our students. But we take an entirely different approach in our general education programs, which serve 2/3 of our students. Workforce students graduate at a greater rate than general education students. Therefore, we must redesign our general education programs.

Research continues to affirm that achieving dramatic improvement will be dependent on having great teaching. Therefore, we must develop and employ great teachers, full and part-time, as the best way to dramatically improve student success. BUT, what is teaching in the New Era?

Developmental Education:

There is a universal agreement that developmental education doesn’t work well for most students;

We must radically change, not just fine tune, how we prepare students to be college ready;
We need to “start from scratch” and determine new, more successful strategies. The last thing we want is for our students to get stuck, to drop out, and to miss their calling.

Student Access:

Restructure how we engage, admit, test, register, enroll, collect payment and reenroll each student from the student’s first contact through the student’s graduation, employment or transfer. Why do we require students to reregister every semester?! Why do we persist to punish ourselves so?

Establish a strong, assertive advising system, with discrete roles for advisors and faculty that enhance student progress to completion. This should be one system, not employment-based for one cohort and transfer for another. Each student’s ultimate goal is employment in a career, whether certification requires one, two, four years or more.

Distance Education:

We will be a competitive force in distance education or we won’t be able to play. I’ve already said this!

Create an efficient, innovative, customer service proficient, collaborative organization that efficiently supports every student’s academic success. The traditional educational organization is being challenged as never before.

- Embrace each student as our personal responsibility
Leadership

Organically, operationally and strategically, each of us has the responsibility to exert collaborative leadership. Each student is precious and each of us must embrace each student as our personal responsibility. “We don’t do things that way,” must be replaced with “It’s all of our job and we are going to develop a better way.” When Ramon Cantu, a unique student at NLC, was devastated by the shooting death of Mr. Devon Zimmerman, a librarian, by his colleague, it wasn’t just the counselor who kept Ramon in college; it was the entire NLC family. This was possible because Ramon’s unique personality was known by almost everyone at the college. Normally, our students aren’t so well known and sadly, they slip between the cracks. We can never have enough counselors or advisors to ensure a personal relationship with every student if we assign that job to a particular job group. But, with all of us taking responsibility, we can ensure, as the NLC family did, that no student falls between the cracks. I was thrilled recently when one of our bursar staff told me that she asks each student she meets whether he/she is on track to complete. She didn’t see her job as ‘just collecting money.” Rather, she sees it as helping each student succeed. That’s the role each of us must accept for we must each take responsibility for each of our students to succeed.

So, what have you done today to ensure a student is successful?

Educational Agitators

- Act swiftly, surely and effectively
- We can no longer permit our students to fail
- Redesign ourselves and learn better tools
- Positively contribute to our continuous improvement at lower cost. Don’t hold us back
- Become entrepreneurs – create new revenues to offset traditional sources

Our call to action, the five themes:
Our moral imperative, our professional, stewardship responsibility, is to act swiftly, surely and effectively. We can no longer permit our students to fail;
Therefore, we must, all of us, take a proactive, structured approach to redesigning ourselves. No longer can we allow ourselves, or any other one of us, to hold on to past structures and cultures and constrain our necessary progress; The world is being redesigned around us. We will either seize control of our destiny or allow others to do so. This is the time for all productive voices to contribute positively, to offer better approaches based on proven strategies and insights that can make us great. But, don’t hold us back.

We must extend our efficiency/sustainability efforts in order to achieve annual cost reductions. This isn’t a temporary, but rather, a permanent condition; We must become entrepreneurs and create new ways to generate new revenue, as the three traditional sources are increasingly restricted. Maricopa CC’s operating budget contains only 1% from the state of Arizona. Shouldn’t we expect the same from Texas? What new sources of funding can we pursue? Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, SAIT, in Calgary Canada, has developed a global workforce delivery system, especially in petroleum fields of study, that allowed it to offset Canada’s disinvestment 15 years ago. Should we restrict ourselves from doing the same?

Our largest budget investment is in academic/workforce programs. Thus, as we redesign our pathways, core offerings, curricula and support systems, as we infuse more technology into our delivery of instruction, as we realign our focus on STEM and high demand workforce programs, and as we redesign support services, we must also have a keen eye to cost reductions. The more efficient we are, the more we have to invest in being better. This will be the only infusion of “new” money. In other words, we have to create our own funds!

We must learn how to be personally more efficient and better time managers. Recently, both the staff and faculty leadership at our respective meetings said essentially the same thing: that everyone realized that we are doing the right things, but that the amount of work seems overwhelming. I don’t disagree. But no one had any suggestions to address their concern. Certainly, we have an extensive agenda and unfortunately, unlike many of our peers, we had to fix our organization before implementing improvements. Now, suddenly, there is a new imperative that requires us to expand our change agenda even further.

The solution is not to slow our pace, to defer changes or to “settle back for a spell.” The solution is to act differently. Disneyland was built from start to finish in 366 days. A new 220-story, tallest building in the world in china is on track to be constructed in 90 days. We can’t keep taking years to address this agenda. So, I suggest that we rethink our traditional approaches to problem solving and management. Rather than large committees, with multiple representatives from each college and the district, spending a year or longer discussing, negotiating and seeking consensus before we even implement, and then taking additional years, we must act like those who are adapting quickly in this New Era. My suggestion: small task groups, acting quickly, using technology, developing strategies that are fully
prepared for implementation, adapting models that allow us to decide and implement quickly.

Each of us must learn tools to accomplish more in less time. This is the only solution I can suggest, but other approaches are welcomed. We no longer have a lot of time to act; we can’t spend another 8 years, as we have with Achieving the Dream, achieving gradual, incremental improvements. We must achieve dramatic improvements. Student Success Points begin now!

Conclusion:

I’ve provided you an overview of the imperatives that are dramatically changing higher education and that will continue to rapidly evolve. I’ve shared with you a broad overview of the changes we must aggressively pursue in order to reduce costs while increasing student performance. I’ve indicated a series of deliberate actions we must take in order to make demonstrable improvements in the numbers of our students who complete and graduate/transfer and are employed.

We are already pursuing many of these imperatives or are on the verge of doing so. But we must ensure they work as intended and do it rapidly. I’ve emphasized the need to redesign our curricula and our academic organization so that it reinforces student achievement. I’ve emphasized the necessity of restructuring advising, admissions, and bursar systems and in fact, most of our systems. I’ve outlined the necessity to redesign distance learning, and I’ve pointed out the impending competition from technology, entrepreneurs and distance education organizations that view San Antonio as a ripe target for their growth. I’m not proposing that distance learning will replace college campuses. But it is already attracting an increasing share of our students.

Most importantly, I’ve asked that each of us take personal and collective responsibility for every Alamo Colleges’ student, whether in a class or on-line, and not merely perform our jobs in isolation from this primary imperative. I’ve also asked that each of us take personal responsibility to positively and productively support the journey we are on and the determination of our unique niche. The board has provided clear direction and charges and we have a strong vision and mission. That’s what our work is about, directing ourselves forward, not looking back.

I have presented the case for dramatic change in how we approach developmental learning. I agree with Shirley Reed, President of South Texas College, that we should do everything we can to avoid referring students to developmental education, because for most students it is a formula for failure.

I have presented the case for learning to be more efficient, with greater attention to eliminating wasted time and energy and that we emphasize the development of great teachers.
Finally, I am advocating that we learn and use change models and individual time management techniques and utilize small, fast acting teams, to frame and implement new strategies and solutions quickly and efficiently. We are no longer different than any other organization across the globe asserting itself in a highly competitive environment. Thus, we leaders face the same challenges and must exhibit the same skills and organizational sophistication.

This is a call not just to action but to arms, a journey for us to collectively reshape our approach to teaching and learning and individually and collectively contributing to create and make dramatic changes in how we adjust to the fiscal and student success imperatives we now call the Alamo Way. This is a call for us to become “educational agitators,” to shake-up everything for the good of our students and community. From this point forward, this is a call for all of us to become productive contributors to our strategic agenda, to positively help shape strategies in order to improve outcomes, to shed old ways and ideas and frame productive solutions to new, 21st century challenges, to be a positive contributor not just to your individual campus, but to “the Alamo Colleges.” The future is on our shoulders. We will create the foundation for the Alamo Colleges to prosper in this New Era - or not.

Because this is a journey, I would now like us begin by dividing into groups as organized by the provided lists and discuss the following two questions:

**Group Discussion**

1. Do you agree with the call to action?
   1. Why?
   2. Why not?
   2. How do we initiate dramatic changes?

1. Do you agree with this call to action? Explain.
2. If so, how do we initiate the **dramatic changes** necessary to assert our on-going competitive place in this new era?
We will summarize your ideas at the end of this session and publish this presentation and your recommendations for all employees to consider.

- End -