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NEWS RELEASE

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CAN SOCIAL MEDIA HELP STUDENTS EARN A COLLEGE DEGREE?

That's the Goal of Achieving the Dream and ISKME's Student 3-Minute Video Contest

Silver Spring, MD (January 18, 2012) – Two organizations dedicated to helping students complete their post high-school education – Achieving the Dream and ISKME's CompletionMatters.org -- have joined forces to announce a 3-minute video competition open to all community college students enrolled in the 150 Achieving the Dream institutions nationwide to share their stories about "What keeps your dream of graduating college alive?" Finalist videos will be screened at D.R.E.A.M., Achieving the Dream's 2012 Annual Meeting on Student Success held February 28-March 2, 2012 in Dallas, Texas. Winners will receive prizes, including iPads, tuition scholarships, school supplies, and Amazon gift cards.

"Almost half of all undergraduate students in our country go to community college and the nation needs to hear what they have to say about what is working on their campuses and keeping them on track for graduation so that we can learn from their experiences," explains Lauren Lewis, Assistant Director of Communications at Achieving the Dream (www.achievingthedream.org). "This competition is giving these students a voice, and the Achieving the Dream Network will make sure the most creative and

compelling videos will be distributed widely to motivate and guide others through the college experience.”

“ISKME is excited to elevate student voices as part of our work with CompletionMatters.org, which serves to highlight champions of college completion,” says Ameer Godwin, Director of Strategic Initiatives at ISKME (www.iskme.org), a research institute for education innovation and knowledge sharing.

Interested students should go to www.facebook.com/achievingthedream for contest rules, eligibility guidelines, and submission instructions. **Submission Deadline is Midnight PST, Monday, February 20, 2012. The first 15 students to enter qualifying videos will be awarded a \$75 Amazon Gift Card for their participation.**

For sample video still from students attending Los Angeles, City College, see the stills below.

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DREAM Big for College, Call for Student Video Entries is part of a larger Achieving the Dream student-centered campaign that includes an inaugural video contest and T-shirt contest in early 2012, followed by other exciting student-oriented calls for action. DREAM Big for College Video Competition is a property of Achieving the Dream.

Achieving the Dream (www.achievingthedream.org) is a national nonprofit that is dedicated to helping more community college students, particularly low-income students and students of color, stay in school and earn a college certificate or degree. Evidence-based, student-centered, and built on the values of equity and excellence, Achieving the Dream is closing achievement gaps and accelerating student success nationwide by: 1) guiding evidence-based institutional improvement, 2) influencing public policy, 3) generating knowledge, and 4) engaging the public. Conceived as an initiative in 2004 by Lumina Foundation and seven founding partner organizations, today, Achieving the Dream is the most comprehensive non-governmental reform movement for student success in higher education history. With over 150 community colleges and institutions, more than 100 coaches and advisors, and 15 state policy teams - working throughout 30 states and the District of Columbia - Achieving the Dream helps 3.5 million community college students have a better chance of realizing greater economic opportunity and achieving their dreams.

CompletionMatters.org (www.completionmatters.org), a project of ISKME, is a comprehensive, publicly accessible commons that provides information, tools, and other resources on how to best enable students, educators and policymakers to increase the number of students who earn postsecondary certificates and degrees. The **Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education** (www.iskme.org), an independent non-profit research institute established in 2002, is a pioneer in knowledge sharing and educational innovation. Dedicated to the study, spread, and strategic use of knowledge management in education, ISKME helps schools, colleges, universities, and the organizations that support them expand their capacity to collect and share information, apply it to well-defined problems, and create open knowledge-driven environments focused on learning and success. In assisting the K-20 education sector, ISKME also helps philanthropic organizations and government agencies examine and improve their own and their grantees' processes for continuous improvement, evaluation, and learning.

StudentMentor.org's mission is to increase college completion and enhance student career readiness thereby enabling a robust 21st century workforce and community. StudentMentor.org is achieving this goal through its innovative technology platform at the core of its national mentoring program. College students can conveniently find and collaborate with mentors from diverse industries and professions to achieve their academic and career goals (www.studentmentor.org).

Video stills from students attending Los Angeles City College, an Achieving the Dream College



“Without a bachelor’s degree, it is really hard to make it out there in the 21st Century World.” - Ibrahim Migadde, Los Angeles City College



“I didn’t really think about college at first, but I had a child and I wanted to try something new, something better. I want to make myself proud, her proud, my family proud, everybody. So I decided to come to college.” - Mary Garcia, Los Angeles City College



“I had no idea the opportunities that I’d have from going back to school. When you’re in school, you can allow yourself an opportunity to learn. When you’re in school, it gives you a safe place to have mentors, to have a whole community, to learn.” - Kayt Borgen, Los Angeles City College

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