

## REPORT SAYS, COMMUNITY COLLEGES ARE OVER-GLORIFIED INSTITUTIONS THAT NEED TO SHAPE-UP



A Report titled, "Reclaiming the American Dream: Community Colleges and the Nation's Future," has raised doubts about the future of community college and strongly censured the two year institutions for "student success rates that are unacceptably low, employment preparation that is inadequately connected to job-market needs and disconnects in transitions between high schools, community college and baccalaureate institutions." The report was released Saturday in Orlando, Fla., at the convention of the American Association of Community Colleges, which organized the commission. There are 1,100 community colleges in the US and they account for approximately 44 percent of all US undergraduates. They have always been highly acclaimed and their praises have been sung for years, by Presidents, from George Bush to Obama. They all believe that Community colleges are a solid bridge for the undergraduates to tread on their way to a four-year college degree. However, community Colleges have not been able to live upto all the hype and high expectations. Years of efforts by foundations to eradicate weaknesses, strengthen the colleges and ensure that they adopt better working practices have come to naught. Community colleges are an indispensable component of the country's higher education system. The colleges provide affordable education at low cost-tuition. But of late their low rate of student retention and only a meagre portion going on to degree programs has raised questions about their utility. Educationists are raising questions and asking how they can be improved and what should be done to revitalize them. Walter Bumphus, president of the association said, "We've had our time in the sun. We've had a lot of recognition. With that has come more scrutiny and accountability." The commission, co-chaired by three community-college veterans, disappointingly said, "The evidence on student success in community colleges is distressing. Six years after entering college, most students haven't earned a degree or other credential." The commission noted that in the last three years only 25 to 39 percent have transferred to four-year colleges, others have simply dropped out. Majority of the students enroll in courses for which very few jobs are available and very few enter the "high-demand fields paying a family-supporting wage. Developmental, or remedial, education is all too often a burial ground for student aspirations." The commission said that the community colleges were structured and financed in such a way as to increase enrollment and show flattering enrollment numbers. However, the growth in enrollment did not translate to student success. The commission recommended that the college implement plans to increase by at least 50 percent by the year 2020, the rate at which students earn credentials. It also advised reducing by half the number of students requiring remedial classes for such students, never complete college level work. The commission recommended doubling the number of students who join remedial programs, complete them and then successfully complete freshman-level courses. Mr. Bumphus said, he would appoint a committee to put into practice the commission's recommendations.

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