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COLLEGE CONNECTION RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD

The Community College Futures Assembly recently announced that the Austin Community College District (ACC) was among only three community colleges in the nation to be this year’s winners of the prestigious Bellwether Awards. The Bellwether Awards were established to recognize outstanding and innovative programs that are leading colleges in the 21st Century.

The ACC District won in the Planning, Governance and Finance category, which recognizes programs or activities that improve efficiency and effectiveness in the community college, for its College Connection. This unique and nationally recognized program takes admission and enrollment services onto high school campuses, increasing postsecondary enrollment rates, particularly among minority and low-income students. All participating seniors receive an ACC District acceptance letter with their high school diplomas, resulting in increased college-going rates: 38% at ACC District and 9.8% during the first two years in overall Texas higher education enrollment.

The Community College Futures Assembly issued a call for Bellwether Award nominations in the fall of 2006, and 30 finalist colleges nationwide were competitively chosen from the applicants. Ten finalists were selected in each category: Instructional Programs and Services, cosponsored by the National Council of Instructional Administrators; Planning, Governance and Finance, cosponsored by the Council for Resource Development; and Workforce Development, cosponsored by the National Council for Continuing Education and Training. All finalists presented at the Assembly and one winner was then selected in each category.

The Community College Futures Assembly, now in its 13th year, convenes annually as an independent national policy forum both 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 about the Bellwether Awards or Futures Assembly, consult the Community College Futures Assembly Web site at www.coe.ufl.edu/futures.

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