

**HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
TOWNHALL MEETING
MINUTES**

November 20, 2025 – Hybrid



Dr. Chris Reber

At our last town hall meeting we discussed efforts to identify one or two pioneering programs that can be offered in their entirety on a seven-week basis in order to assess the opportunities and outcomes of full program offerings in a seven-week format. And we had a lengthy discussion at our town hall several weeks ago following the professional development program offered on campus by achieving the dream. And as I mentioned then, I'm going to just repeat a couple of basic concepts. There's clear and compelling evidence that short term programs, and this is the key, that can be completed in their entirety in a short-term framework, are very strongly correlated with student persistence and completion. And why is this? It's because students can focus on just one or two courses at a time. They're doing just one or two courses at a time and then complete those courses in half the time of a traditional course. Students actually, are doing the same amount of work across their program and faculty are teaching the same content, unless they choose not to, but the difference is students and faculty are focusing on the only one or two courses at a time for seven weeks rather than the traditional four or five courses in 15-week formats. Same outcome, same period of time. Students can complete full programs in the same amount of time as I said, but the research and experience in other institutions suggest that students are more likely to complete courses and programs offered in the seven-week format. As we're all aware, time is a great enemy for most of our students. Life often gets in the way of completion for our students and with the shorter-term format, students are more likely to complete a given course without it getting in the way. They also can see completion of each course more clearly at the end of the tunnel, which helps further incentivize their continued enrollment and retention in the next and subsequent courses. But this only works again if students can complete an entire program using this format and if and when we get to the point of offering an entire program in this format, it also has to be surrounded by appropriate counseling and guidance and advisement. We don't want to combine short term programs with traditional programs and we don't want to encourage students to do both 15

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week and shortened and more intensive seven week at one time. It can actually have the unintended consequence of creating an excessive load for students rather than a more

manageable one. I worry this may already happen since we offer like some online shorter course opportunities. So, this is a college wide discussion going forward. I would like to include the sort of discussion about our progress in considering seven-week program pilots during each town hall meeting so that we can keep this conversation going. I'd like to ask, and I hadn't done this in, you know, in advance, so, they may not be prepared to, but I wanted to ask if any of our academic deans would like to share anything that might be happening in their schools with regard to explanation and discussion around this topic since we last discussed it at the town hall. Do any deans or others wish to share any updates or progress?

Dr. Ara Karakashian

Dr. Chris Reber

Thank you, Ara, but again, I just want to emphasize though it's about the whole program being offered that way. But that's great. We are recognizing that we actually have more examples than we even maybe realize or I did, of basically full programs that already have all the courses offered in a seven-week format, so we may be able to really get a head starts on offering something in earnest with all the supports around it so that we can then evaluate it, evaluate the outcomes to inform whether this is something we want to do on a larger basis. Any other comments?

Michael Ferlise

Dr. Chris Reber

So, thank you appreciate those comments. So yeah, you know, it's like the faculty mentors project that we came up with together that I think is really working well, by all accounts that I

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hear, as an institution that's committed to removing barriers, whole life and other barriers that keep our students from finishing. We want to have as many arrows. What is it? Arrows in our quiver, is that right? As possible. So, we want to try different things and then evaluate and determine whether they have efficacy for scale up. And this is just another example that I in the conversation so far, and I don't even know who said this, but someone said along the way because achieving the dream did this full day professional development, well, hasn't HCCC already achieved the dream? Haven't we achieved the dream? And I want to give my perspective on that because it can be brought back to this. So, we have a lot to be proud of over the last seven years, I think our three-year impex 150 % completion rate for Associate Degrees students, has gone from 13 % to 29 %, and among the now 5000 students that have been served in Hudson scholars, it's actually 40 %. Those are phenomenal increases. But let's keep in perspective, that means that at this moment. I'm doing my math, 71 % of our students aren't finishing their associate degree in three years, 71 %. We made a lot of progress, but have we achieved the dream? No, so we want to, this is going to be continuous, this effort to use data and best practice to get more students to completion, which is actually life changing or not, is something as a college community I think we're committed to. I don't think the work will ever stop. I think it will be a constant journey to continuous improvement based on data and best practice, that's more than you need to hear from me.

Michael Ferlise

Dr. Chris Reber

I couldn't have agreed with you more, absolutely 100 %, lots of activity happening around this, so I think I've also charged Dr. Jones too, with, you know, we want to bring in outside speakers and folks that have experience on a regular basis to have engagement around this. More on this to come. I hope it is an ongoing conversation.