

January 22, 2011

To the Editor,

Parkland College is one of 40 community colleges nationwide selected to pilot an effort to broaden the view and measurement of "success" for two-year institutions. The effort is called the Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA).

VFA will give community colleges an opportunity to define success. Besides providing operational transparency and accurate data of student learning outcomes, the VFA will allow colleges to benchmark student progress and completion data against peer institutions, using measures appropriate to the unique two-year college mission. This data will allow community college leaders to focus more on strengths as well as areas of improvement.

This is a multi-year project. When I became Chair of the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) in the fall of 2009, getting the VFA off and running was high on my priority list. I am pleased with the progress so far. The VFA is being developed by the American Association of Community Colleges in collaboration with ACCT and the College Board and is funded through the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Lumina Foundation for Education. Parkland College President Dr. Thomas Ramage served on a subgroup to help develop the initial framework.

District 505 residents can be assured that through its work on the VFA, service on national boards, and similar efforts, Parkland College is working hard to bring positive national exposure of this great institution, to improve the quality of programs, and to increase access to higher education, both locally and across the country.

Sincerely,
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