

Complete College America's Largest Convening to Date Spotlights Higher Education's Role in Expanding Access to Students' American Dreams

By: Kate Vaulter, Director of Communications, Complete College America

NEW ORLEANS – This week, more than 700 higher education leaders and advocates from around the country will descend upon New Orleans, Louisiana, for Complete College America's *2017 Annual Convening: Access to Their American Dreams*.

The event, which marks the organization's largest convening to date, will be the preeminent gathering of nationally-renowned architects of college completion efforts, teams from CCA's now 44-member Alliance, and participants such as legislators, system and institutional leaders, faculty, advisors, higher education software providers and other organizations and individuals focused on significantly increasing college completion rates and closing achievement gaps.

"This is an exciting time for education leaders to discover effective measures to help produce a workforce that will meet the growing economic needs of the future, which is why it's imperative that we increase the number of students who graduate from college," said Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards. "Whether through traditional four-year colleges or the community college system, there are many ways to prepare our students for a successful future, and we must ensure that they are able to take advantage of every opportunity."

The 2017 Annual Convening will focus on the important role higher education plays in providing access to students' American Dreams and will include presentations from higher education leaders from coast to coast who are removing barriers to student success and implementing proven strategies to increase the number of students who successfully complete their degrees or other credentials of value.

"More than 700 advocates and impatient reformers representing our rapidly growing Alliance will gather this week not just to talk about strategies for boosting college completion, but to take ownership of the important role higher education plays in expanding students' access to their American Dreams," said Complete College America President Tom Sugar. "We've set ambitious goals across this country, and we know the strategies that work for our students. Now is the time to act with greater urgency than ever before to ensure many more students have the opportunity to achieve their full potential, especially those most often left behind."

As part of the event, Complete College America will officially launch the CCA Fellows and unveil a new, state-of-the-art implementation and networking portal. The organization will also welcome the newest members of the Alliance, Alabama, the Arizona Consortium, and the City University of New York (CUNY), and recognize winners of the 2017 Technology Seal of Approval – an award that spotlights software tools that most

effectively promote college completion and student success through alignment with CCA's Game Changer strategies. This year's winners are **EAB Navigate** and **Starfish by Hobsons**.

The event takes place Wednesday, November 29 to Friday, December 1 at the New Orleans Marriott Hotel. Plenary sessions can be viewed live on November 30th starting at 9:00AM CST and December 1st at 8:45AM CST at www.completecollege.org/live.