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## **October Conference for Minority-Serving Institutions at Richland College**

Richland College (Dallas, Texas), in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Education's Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving-Institution Program, is hosting a two-day conference for institutions of higher education interested in improving minority student success. This convening allows representatives from minority-serving institutions (MSIs) to gather and discuss methods for the collection and use of quantitative data to design, modify and improve programs, initiatives and innovations that contribute to the success of minority students. **This conference will be held from Friday, Oct. 20, to Saturday, Oct. 21, 2017 in Dallas, Texas.**

This year's convening features a keynote address from **Mike Flores**, president of Palo Alto College, one of the Alamo Colleges in San Antonio. Following the keynote, panelists, **Collette Pierce Burnette**, president of Huston-Tillotson College, and **Vincent Solis**, senior vice president of Laredo Community College, will share their experiences and challenges with collecting and utilizing data effectively to improve student success at their colleges.

For more information on the breakout sessions, roundtable and program discussions, view the convening schedule at <http://richlandcollege.edu/msi-convening/>.

There is no registration fee. Participation is also free to representatives of MSIs and organizations devoted to studying and improving the academic success of minority students. **Please [register](#) online by Friday, Oct. 6.**

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## **New PIAAC Prison Study Infographics Released**

The Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) is a "large-scale international household study that assesses the key cognitive and workplace skills that adults need to participate successfully in 21st-century society and the global economy." One component of this study focuses on incarcerated individuals' cognitive and workplace skills. Recently, two new [infographics](#) were released that use PIAAC data to present findings "related to the cognitive

skills and backgrounds of the U.S. prison population” and to compare the skills of U.S. incarcerated adults with the U.S. household population.

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## MDRC Releases Update on Detroit Promise Program

Education and social policy research organization [MDRC](#) recently released an update on their partnership with the [Detroit Promise Program](#) designed to improve college access for more students. While the U.S. has made great strides in increasing access to higher education, college graduation rates remain low—with only a fifth of community college students graduating within three years. The Detroit Promise was created to improve students’ college experience, as well as to help more students persist and graduate. It is administered by the Detroit Regional Chamber and allows the city’s high school graduates to attend local colleges tuition-free. This community college scholarship program covers any difference between financial aid and tuition for up to three years at five area community colleges. The Detroit Regional Chamber partnered with MDRC to create the Detroit Promise Path, adding four proven student support services onto the existing scholarship. They are

1. campus coaches to help students navigate academic and personal issues;
2. monthly financial support, contingent on meeting with coaches;
3. enhanced summer engagement; and,
4. monitoring, by a management information system created by MDRC.

MDRC is currently evaluating the Detroit Promise Path, with [early findings](#) from the evaluation showing that the program is helping students enroll full-time and stay enrolled. A second cohort enrolled in fall 2017.

To learn more about the program, interested parties are encouraged to access the full focus [brief](#), which provides more detailed findings.

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## U.S. Department of Labor Announces Disability Awareness Month Theme

The U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy ([ODEP](#)) recently announced its 2017 National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) theme, “Inclusion Drives Innovation.” Each year in October, NDEAM celebrates individuals with disabilities and their contributions and achievements to the American workforce. According to the DOL news release, ODEP created this year’s theme with input from a wide range of its partner organizations. Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta stated, “Smart employers know that including different perspectives in problem-solving situations leads to better solutions. Hiring employees with diverse abilities strengthens their business, increases competition, and drives innovation.”

To learn more about the event, and for additional information and resources, please visit ODEP’s NDEAM [webpage](#)

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