

Resolution of the Board of Directors in Support of the Houston Community College Foundation's Opportunity 14 Scholarship Program

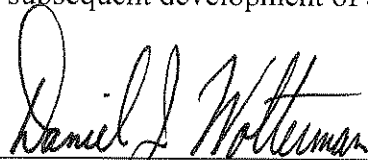
The Greater Houston Partnership continues to support community efforts that will improve the quality of and increase the access to higher education for all residents of the greater Houston region.

The Partnership supports the Houston Community College (HCC) Foundation's Opportunity 14 Scholarship Program as it impacts the region in the following specific ways:

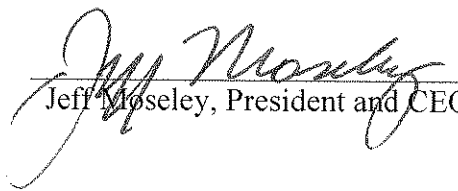
- **Improves Access to Higher Education:** Makes the promise to every quality Houston high school graduate that the community will support his/her higher education with scholarship funds for study at HCC;
- **Improves Minority Participation in Higher Education:** Builds upon HCC's 27 years of success in recruiting and retaining students from Houston's growing minority communities to improve rates of higher education enrollment and completion by students from these communities; and
- **Increases Houston's Overall Educational Level:** Propels Houston into its rightful position as not only one of the country's five largest but its five most-educated cities.

Opportunity 14 is a needs-based scholarship that targets Houston's "working poor"—the children of families who qualify for some financial aid; but not enough to cover tuition, fees and books. Recipients attending HCC may receive up to \$3,000 per year from Opportunity 14—a maximum of \$1,500 per long semester and \$1,000 for summer classes—for a maximum total of \$6,000 over three years. The amount of scholarship awarded will vary with the amount of federal and state grants received, with the goal being to supplement any partial federal or state grants to an amount equaling \$3,000 per year. This amount is usually enough to pay for a student's entire full-time annual tuition, fees and textbooks at HCC. Students who do not qualify for federal assistance or who receive government grants exceeding \$3,000 will not be eligible for Opportunity 14.

Expanding access to quality higher education at HCC will help the most at-risk Houston children have the opportunity to acquire the advanced knowledge necessary for the subsequent development of an educated work force.



Daniel J. Wolterman, Chair



Jeff Moseley, President and CEO



Daniel G. Bellow, Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 20, 2008

FROM: Lori Veters, Chairman, Education and Work force Advisory Committee

SUBJECT: Resolution in Support of the Houston Community College Foundation's Opportunity 14 Scholarship Program

RECOMMENDATION:

The Greater Houston Partnership continues to support community efforts that will improve the quality of and increase the access to higher education for all residents of the greater Houston region.

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- **Improves Access to Higher Education:** Makes the promise to every quality Houston high school graduate that the community will support his/her higher education with scholarship funds for study at HCC;
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BACKGROUND:

Obtaining a two-year college education makes a transformational difference in a person's life. People who earn an associate's degree from HCC earn more than \$400,000 more during their working lives than those who have only a high school diploma.¹ They also pay higher taxes, require fewer social services and enjoy better health. Increased rates of higher education also greatly benefit communities. In aggregate, HCC students generate about \$269.9 million annually in higher earnings due to their HCC education. Each year HCC graduates are in the work force, Texans save \$32.9 million through decreased health care costs and reduced costs associated with welfare, unemployment and crime. For every \$1 of support received from state and local governments in support of HCC, taxpayers see a cumulative return of \$5.10 in the form of higher tax receipts and avoided social costs over the course of students' working careers.²

Despite this convincing evidence on behalf of increasing Houston's educational level, we are not affording our young people the resources they need to succeed. Only 55% of HISD students receive their diploma within four years, giving Houston a high school graduation rate 15% below that of the country as a whole.³ This disparity is particularly evident in the minority populations. According to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's *Closing the Gaps: The Texas Higher Education Plan*, the majority of Texans aged 15 to 34 are African-American or Latino, yet African-Americans and Latinos comprise only 36% of the students in the state's colleges and universities.⁴ That same Board predicts that 70% of student enrollments in higher education will be at Texas community colleges by 2015.⁵ Community colleges offer access to higher education unparalleled in today's society.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The HCC Foundation began its Opportunity 14 campaign in September 2007. Data from HCC's Institutional Research department predict an initial cohort of 1,500 - 2,000 Opportunity 14 recipients in the 2008/2009 academic year. Analysis of funds necessary to fulfill the Opportunity 14 commitment indicates complete underwriting with gifts totaling \$1,000,000 - \$2,000,000 for each subsequent year.

KNOWN OPPOSITION:

We know of no opposition to the Opportunity 14 initiative.

IMPLEMENTATION:

Implementation of Opportunity 14 is already underway. The first awards of this scholarship will be made to qualifying students entering HCC in the fall 2008 semester. The

¹ The College Board, "Education Pays," 2004.

² Economic Modeling Specialists Inc. (EMSI), Dr. M. Henry Robison & Dr. Kjell A. Christophersen, "The Economic Contribution of Houston Community College," May, 2008.

³ *Houston Chronicle*, June 13, 2007.

⁴ The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, "Closing the Gaps by 2015: 2006 Progress Report," 2006.

⁵ The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, "Higher Education Enrollments on Track for 2015 Participation Goal," October 25, 2007.

Opportunity 14 Scholarship is available to all newly graduated high school students or GED recipients who have lived in the HCC service area for at least one year. The HCC service area encompasses the Alief, Fort Bend, Houston, Katy, North Forest and Spring Branch Independent School Districts and the Stafford Municipal School District. There is no formal application for Opportunity 14. All a student must do to be considered for Opportunity 14 funding is complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and enroll in 12 or more hours at HCC. There are no initial academic requirements, but to continue receiving the scholarship over the three-year period, students must maintain a 2.0 grade point average and continue taking courses full-time. Students are required to attend full-time because research shows that full-time students are more likely to complete their degree or certificate, and we want to encourage Houston's young people to pursue the most successful paths. Students also must participate in one service project during the time that they are benefitting from the scholarship. Awards are administered through HCC's financial aid department.

RESOURCES REQUIRED:

The most significant resource required to implement this program is visionary contribution from Houston's corporate and philanthropic communities. These businesses, foundations and individuals have already shown initial support for the effort with gifts in excess of \$1,100,000 toward the 2008/2009 academic year of award.

COOPERATION WITH ALLIED ORGANIZATIONS:

HCC works closely with College Access Coordinators, counselors and other educational providers within each of its service area school districts in order to increase knowledge of and participation in Opportunity 14. In addition, we have secured and are in the process of securing endorsements from the Houston area chambers of commerce.