



## ***News Release***

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### **Century Speaker Challenges Colleges to Promote “Deep Learning”**

Most colleges have become “enrollment-generating machines” that have forgotten what they are really about, Dr. John Tagg, author of *The Learning Paradigm College*” told Century College faculty and staff at a back-to-school event Aug. 21. Fall classes at Century began Monday, Aug. 24.

“Colleges should not be organized around instruction,” said Tagg, who has sparked a nationwide discussion of higher education’s mission. “They should be organized around learning.”

Tagg challenged faculty and staff to move students beyond the surface approach to learning - memorizing and remembering facts - to the deep approach to learning, which is all about inspiring students to search for meaning.

“A student assigns meaning to something when it links up to something that they already know,” said Tagg. “When a student makes connections, there is meaning. Some students just study for the test and others look beneath the surface of the material and really extend themselves. Which approach leads to a person remembering what she has learned six months later?”

Tagg said research shows that the sustainability of what most students have learned is not good. Six months after an exam, for example, a student who earned a B is likely to earn a D if she were to retake the test. “And the higher they score, the more they forget,” said Tagg.

Sustainability of learning is much better when students take the deep approach to learning because the material being taught has meaning for them. “When you really get into a subject, learning is fun,” said Tagg. “The experience of getting better at something all the time is the experience of learning.”

Deep learning takes effort, attention and time, said Tagg. A “learning college” values understanding over grades, student academic choices, authentic academic activities, meaningful feedback, making connections between courses, and providing opportunities for students to develop networks and a sense of community.

“Putting students in rows in five groups of strangers (classes) so that they can stare at the backs of the strangers’ heads does not lead to a sense of community,” said Tagg. Small group activities in which students discuss academic questions and problems can help build community so that students find meaning in their work and retain what they learn.

Century President Larry Litecky told the group that facilitating deep learning is Century’s primary purpose. He said college faculty, staff and students this year would have the opportunity to participate in work groups to improve students’ first-year experience and connection to college. College work groups also will be looking at the academic misalignment between high school and college.



Photo: President Larry Litecky and Dr. John Tagg