



## NO WORKER LEFT BEHIND

### **No Worker Left Behind News**

July 16, 2009

#### **President Obama Announces Largest Investment for Community Colleges in Decades**

*President applauds "No Worker Left Behind" in major policy announcement Tuesday in Warren*

WARREN – Tuesday afternoon, under a brilliant sun shining down on an enthusiastic crowd at Macomb Community College's South Campus, President Barack Obama outlined his plan to reform our nation's community colleges, calling for an additional five million community college graduates by 2020 and new initiatives to teach Americans the skills necessary to compete with workers from other nations.

It was a great honor that the President chose Michigan as the location to announce his ground breaking American Graduation Initiative (AGI), which would represent the largest investment in community colleges since President Truman.

"What we face is far more than a passing crisis. This is a transformative moment. And in this moment we must do what other generations have done. It's not the time to shrink from the challenges we face or put off tough decisions," said President Obama. "We've got to prepare our people with the skills they need to compete in this global economy. Time and again, when we placed our bet for the future on education, we have prospered as a result -- by tapping the incredible innovative and generative potential of a skilled American workforce."

"It was incredibly wonderful that President Obama launched the American Graduation Initiative in his first visit to Michigan as President," said Tenda Rusher, executive director of Washtenaw County Michigan Works.

President Obama outlined new initiatives to increase the effectiveness and impact of community colleges, raise graduation rates, modernize facilities, and create new online learning opportunities. The President is proposing this \$12 billion plan to help rebuild the capacity and competitiveness of America's workforce.

"President Obama's new initiative is an important commitment to enhancing the capacity of community colleges. It represents vital funding to increase high-demand job training offerings and additionally provides resources so that we can design much-needed programs that combine adult education with occupational training," said Jim Jacobs, president of Macomb Community College. "This type of support is pivotal to helping greater numbers of our residents successfully transition to the jobs and economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century."

"This is the community colleges' time," said Dan Phelan, president of Jackson Community College. "We will be able to make full use of every one of the tenets the President outlined."

In his address President Obama celebrated Governor Granholm's No Worker Left Behind initiative, which he called a model for the nation.

"I want to applaud Governor Granholm for the No Worker Left Behind program," he said. "It's providing up to two years' worth of free tuition at community colleges and universities across the state. The rest of the country should learn from this effort."

Community colleges have been an integral partner in NWLB from the beginning. Several community college presidents helped create No Worker Left Behind and every community college president helped launch the program with the Governor in August, 2007.

“President Obama’s announcement of two new initiatives for the expansion of community college capacity to prepare American workers for 21<sup>st</sup> century jobs is on target,” said Macomb-St. Clair Michigan Works executive director John Bierbusse. “Competing in a global economy takes skills beyond those learned in high school.”

No Worker Left Behind recognizes the proven link between post-secondary education and employment. NWLB is helping thousands of Michiganders earn associate’s degrees and even funds bachelor’s and master’s degree completion.

“The President stated that this initiative helps build the foundation to make our education system compete with India and China, and the fact that he would launch this fantastic initiative in the rustbelt, in Warren, in our Michigan, with **us**, was incredible,” said Rusher. “What a statement! It really supports No Worker Left Behind.”

#### *The White House’s Breakdown of the American Graduation Initiative*

The American Graduation Initiative will build on the strengths of community colleges and usher in new innovations and reforms for the 21st century economy. According to the White House, the initiative will:

- **Call for Five Million Additional Community College Graduates:** In February, President Obama called for America to once again lead the world in college degrees by 2020. Affordable, open-enrollment community colleges will play a critical role in meeting that goal. Tuesday, he set a complementary goal: an additional 5 million community college graduates by 2020, including students who earn certificates and associate degrees or who continue on to graduate from four-year colleges and universities.
- **Create the Community College Challenge Fund:** Under President Obama’s plan, new competitive grants would enable community colleges and states to innovate and expand proven reforms. These efforts will be evaluated carefully, and the approaches that demonstrate improved educational and employment outcomes will receive continued federal support and become models for widespread adoption. Colleges could:
  - Build partnerships with businesses and the workforce investment system to create career pathways where workers can earn new credentials and promotions step-by-step, worksite education programs to build basic skills, and curriculum coordinated with internship and job placements.
  - Expand course offerings and offer dual enrollment at high schools and universities, promote the transfer of credit among colleges, and align graduation and entrance requirements of high schools, community colleges, and four-year colleges and universities.
  - Improve remedial and adult education programs, accelerating students’ progress and integrating developmental classes into academic and vocational classes.
  - Offer their students more than just a course catalog, through comprehensive, personalized services to help them plan their careers and stay in school.

In addition, the initiative will support a new research center with a mission to develop and implement new measures of community colleges’ success so prospective students and businesses could get a clear sense of how effective schools are in helping students -- including the most disadvantaged -- learn, graduate, and secure good jobs.

- **Fund Innovative Strategies to Promote College Completion:** Nearly half of students who enter community college intending to earn a degree or transfer to a four-year college fail to reach their goal within six years. The College Access and Completion Fund will finance the innovation, evaluation, and expansion of efforts to increase college graduation rates and close achievement gaps, including those at community colleges. Promising approaches include performance-based scholarships, learning communities of students, professors and counselors, colleges tailored to promote the success of working adults, and funding formulas based on student progress and success as well as initial enrollment. Resources would also be provided to improve states' efforts to track student progress, completion, and success in the workplace.
- **Modernize Community College Facilities:** Many colleges face large needs due to deferred maintenance or lack the modern facilities and equipment needed to train students in technical and other growing fields. Insufficient classroom space can force students to delay needed courses and reduce completion rates. President Obama is proposing a new \$2.5 billion fund to catalyze \$10 billion in community college facility investments that will expand the colleges' ability to meet employer and student needs. The resources could be used to pay the interest on bonds or other debt, seed capital campaigns, or create state revolving loan funds.
- **Create a New Online Skills Laboratory:** Online educational software has the potential to help students learn more in less time than they would with traditional classroom instruction alone. Interactive software can tailor instruction to individual students like human tutors do, while simulations and multimedia software offer experiential learning. Online instruction can also be a powerful tool for extending learning opportunities to rural areas or working adults who need to fit their coursework around families and jobs. New open online courses will create new routes for students to gain knowledge, skills and credentials. They will be developed by teams of experts in content knowledge, pedagogy, and technology and made available for modification, adaptation and sharing. The Departments of Defense, Education, and Labor will work together to make the courses freely available through one or more community colleges and the Defense Department's distributed learning network, explore ways to award academic credit based upon achievement rather than class hours, and rigorously evaluate the results.