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Governors State University Announces Commitment to Expand College Access at White House Event

Washington D.C. - Today, Governors State University President Elaine P. Maimon joins President Obama, the First Lady, and Vice President Biden along with hundreds of college presidents and other higher education leaders to announce new actions to help more students prepare for and graduate from college.

The White House College Opportunity Day of Action helps to support the President’s commitment to partner with colleges and universities, business leaders, and nonprofits to support students across the country to help our nation reach its goal of leading the world in college attainment.

Governors State University, along with five partner community colleges, commits to collectively producing an additional 10,295 graduates by 2025. To meet this goal, GSU has developed a three-pronged strategy which includes: 1) the Dual Degree Program (DDP), a collaboration with seventeen community college partners to increase the number of students who attain an associate degree, transfer, and complete a bachelor’s degree; 2) providing students in the region with a highly-structured, four-year program to achieve the baccalaureate degree; 3) and, through collaboration with the Lumina Foundation, an emerging consortium of universities committed to returning adult students.

“I am honored to represent Governors State University at this Day of Action. GSU employs a comprehensive approach to increase the number of students obtaining a college degree. Traditional age freshmen, transfer students from our excellent local community colleges, and returning adult students are all provided with the advising and support they need to complete their degrees in a timely manner.” said GSU President Elaine P. Maimon.

Today’s participants were asked to commit to new action in one of four areas: building networks of colleges around promoting completion, creating K-16 partnerships around college readiness, investing in high school counselors as part of the First Lady’s Reach Higher initiative, and increasing the number of college graduates in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

The President will announce new steps on how his Administration is helping to support these actions, including announcing $10 million to help promote college completion and a $30 million AmeriCorps program that will improve low-income students’ access to college.

Today’s event is the second College Opportunity Day of Action, and will include a progress report on the commitments made at the first day of action on January 14, 2014.
Expanding opportunity for more students to enroll and succeed in college, especially low-income and underrepresented students, is vital to building a strong economy and a strong middle class. Today, only 9 percent of those born in the lowest family income quartile attain a bachelor’s degree by age 25, compared to 54 percent in the top quartile. In an effort to expand college access, the Obama Administration has increased Pell scholarships by $1,000 a year, created the new American Opportunity Tax Credit worth up to $10,000 over four years of college, limited student loan payments to 10 percent of income, and laid out an ambitious agenda to reduce college costs and promote innovation and competition.

GSU continues and expands its long-term commitment to bringing the highest quality university experience to low-income and first-generation college students.

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