



LOCAL COMMITMENTS TO EXPAND COLLEGE ACCESS

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PHOTOS PROVIDED

Not everyone has access to, can afford, is prepared for higher education or graduates from college.

What can we do collectively to create an environment to give young people, especially low-income and underrepresented students, access to higher education and prepare them to be successful when higher education opportunity knocks?

“at the heart of the American ideal is this sense that we’re in it together, that nobody is guaranteed success” President Barack Obama remarked at the recent College Opportunity Day of Action, “but everybody has got access to the possibilities of success...”

Building upon the success of the first College Opportunity Day of Action summit held in January 2014, hundreds of college presidents and other higher education leaders from across the country convened in Washington, D.C. on December 4, 2014, to further discuss, share strategies, and make commitments to expand opportunity for more students to enroll and succeed in college.

With a focus on what colleges and universities have committed to expand college access, over 600 new initiatives aimed to help more students prepare for and graduate from college were introduced. In an effort to expand college access, it was also



President Barack Obama delivers remarks during the White House College Opportunity Day of Action summit at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center in Washington, D.C., Dec. 4, 2014.

(Official White House Photo by Lawrence Jackson)

announced at the event that the Obama Administration 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.

Cincinnati State President O’dell M. Owens and University of Cincinnati President Santa J. Ono were among attendees joining President Obama, First Lady Obama, and Vice President

Biden at the second College Opportunity Day of Action, a call to action on college opportunity, convened by The White House.

“Our higher education system is one of the things that makes America exceptional.” said U. S. President Barack Obama.

As outlined in a White House press release, summit participants were challenged to commit to a new action in one of four areas: building networks of colleges focused on promoting completion, creating K-16 partnerships around college readiness,

Continued on Page 2

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LOCAL COMMITMENTS TO EXPAND COLLEGE ACCESS (CONT'D)

investing in high school counselors as part of the First Lady's Reach Higher initiative, and increasing the number of college graduates in STEM fields.

"Each [Cincinnati State and University of Cincinnati] of us have made a commitment to transform the pipeline of k-16 education." Santa Ono, University of Cincinnati President, said in a WLWT report.

Cincinnati State is committing to triple the number of students who transition from its' STEM Academy to the college each year.

With plans to expand dual enrollment among students at STEM Academy - a state sponsored, community charter school which operates on Cincinnati State's Clifton campus - and achieving a college graduation rate for this group that is at least double the normal rate for this student population, Cincinnati State plans not only to expand the high school, but to develop a pipeline of students who are prepared and interested in math and science, particularly drawing low-income students onto college tracks and into careers in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics).

The program, which will enable students to start a pathway leading to completion of 15 college credits during their high school years, aims to grow from the 17 high school graduates that matriculated to Cincinnati State in 2014 to 50 per year,



University of Cincinnati President Santa J. Ono and Cincinnati President O'dell M. Owens were among the hundreds making commitments at the second College Day of Action, a call to action on college opportunity.

Photo from @PrezOno on Twitter

and achieve a college graduation rate that is at least double the normal rate for this population. Current Academy enrollment is limited to 200 students.

"Cincinnati State is extremely pleased the White House and Department of Education have chosen to recognize the Cincinnati State Stem Academy as an outstanding example of how to prepare and graduate more students from college," said Cincinnati State President O'dell M. Owens in a release.

The University of Cincinnati is partnering with Hughes STEM High School, a Cincinnati Public School, to engage students attending Hughes STEM High School in a new summer

bridge program – the UC-Hughes STEM Summer Academy.

The UC program, which begins Summer 2015, will provide year-round support, in addition to the summer program, to encourage Hughes students' interest in and readiness for STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) careers and to help ensure success both in the classroom and in industry internships.

The partnership will begin with 25 Hughes students, who will be rising seniors at that time, attending a summer bridge program at UC, participating in internships, and then attending enrichment classes and programs at UC throughout the subsequent academic year. The first year will serve as a pilot. In subsequent years, the program will scale up to include not only rising seniors but younger students as well.

"I am looking forward to showcasing our UC efforts to partner with our neighboring high school, where many students face financial and other challenges, to encourage students to see that college and a science or technology career are true possibilities for them." said President Ono.

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