



JFYNetWorks Announces Commitment to Expand College Access at White House Event

Today, JFYNetWorks and Middlesex Community College will join 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.

JFYNetWorks, a non-profit education innovator, and Middlesex Community College and Lowell High School are partnering to increase college admission at the credit-earning level for students at Lowell High School, the second largest high School in Massachusetts. This partnership aims to seed a statewide strategy to increase postsecondary opportunity among under-represented groups and a template that can be replicated nationwide.

"Massachusetts is facing a severe shortage of college graduates to staff its high tech industries," says JFYNetWorks executive director, Gary Kaplan. "Reducing the drop-out toll of remedial courses will enable more students to persist in college through graduation. We call upon Massachusetts school administrators, teachers, parents, students and employers to join us in taking up the President's challenge by closing the college readiness gap."

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.