

We were four of approximately 150 public/private sector participants at the White House Summit on Community Colleges held on October 5, 2010. One of the overlying themes for the day was the need to identify and share best practices between America's 1,200 community colleges, four-year colleges/universities, K-12 systems, business and industry, local/state/federal government, and the military. Today, most community college students have full-time jobs and families. They average five years to earn an associate's degree and have non-traditional needs. Military veterans have their own special circumstances and need assistance in getting started. Solutions include student-diversity training for faculty and administrators, increased and/or dual-credit interaction with high school students and greater use of Information Technology. There needs to be a stronger link between curriculum and jobs to improve student success and employer satisfaction.

Three new exciting commitments were announced and included: the \$1 million "Aspen (Institute) Prize" for community college excellence, "Skills for America's Future" to build CC partnerships with industry and labor unions in all 50 states, and "Completion by Design," a \$35 million Gates Foundation investment over five years.

While this Summit didn't provide any quick fixes, it did shine a national spotlight on the growing need to support America's community college system and reaffirmed that community colleges provide high value for students in today's challenging world. This Summit is part of an ongoing discussion on how we can and must find ways to better serve our students and our country. More details can be found at www.whitehouse.gov/communitycollege...

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