



White House Summit on Community Colleges

Event Toolkit

Thank you for your interest in building an event around the live webcast of the first-ever White House Summit on Community Colleges on October 5, 2010. This toolkit will provide you with information about the content and the structure of the Summit, as well as background materials on the subject matter to be discussed at the breakout sessions. We hope this information will be helpful to you as you plan your event and we look forward to hearing about your discussions and ideas.



Dear Colleague:

I am delighted to host the first-ever White House Summit on Community Colleges, and I am especially pleased by your interest in participating in this summit through our webcast and online dialogue.

I am proud to say I have been an educator for over 29 years and a community college instructor for the past 17 years. I have always said that community colleges are “one of America’s best-kept secrets” — but today’s summit shows that is no longer the case. Today, community colleges are the largest and fastest-growing segment of higher education in America. These schools enroll 43 percent of all college students, and are increasingly recognized for their critical role in preparing the American workforce of the future.

Today’s summit is an important next step in our efforts to meet the President’s goal of having the best-educated, most competitive workforce in the world by the end of the year 2020. Over the next decade, nearly eight in ten new jobs will require higher education or workforce training.

This Administration has committed unprecedented investments to support the important work community colleges are doing in preparing for the 21st century economy. In the coming months, we will announce the first \$500 million of a \$2 billion, four-year investment in community colleges authorized by Congress and signed into law on March 30th. This federal investment will support new state-of-the-art education, training and skills development programs to help Americans re-enter the job market. Since taking office, we have also made historic investments in financial aid, by tripling investments in tax credits for college expenses, increasing the maximum Pell grant by over \$800, and making the financial aid process easier and faster to navigate.

Since becoming Second Lady, I have visited community colleges across the country. At these schools, I have seen innovative programs, committed faculty and administrators, enterprising business partners, and students determined to make a better life for themselves and their families. I hope this summit shines a light on the millions of students, educators, employers, philanthropists, and other stakeholders who are working together to support community colleges and their students.

Thank you for joining me, and I look forward to our discussion.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jill Biden". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "B".

Dr. Jill Biden



5 Ideas for Hosting Your Own Community College Summit

1. Have An Opening Session

Invite your community college president, local or state government officials, faculty members, staff, and students to gather in an auditorium, conference room, or large classroom on campus to kick off the day. You can watch the opening summit at the White House online at www.WhiteHouse.gov/live, or you can create your own unique way to begin your summit.

2. Create Breakout Sessions With Different Topics Relating to Community Colleges

Invite the participants in your summit to break into groups to discuss issues pertaining to community colleges. Pre-select a moderator, or moderators, to lead the discussions. You can create sessions focused on issues faced by your particular community college, or you can use the included Discussion Topics, which will be discussed at the White House.

3. Consider inviting local press to cover your virtual summit - Invite summit participants to submit stories, photos, videos about their community college experience

Invite participants who may not be able to attend, or stay for the entire summit, to share their stories, pictures, or videos explain how community colleges have affected their lives.

4. Have a Closing Session

Bring your summit participants back together at the end of the event to recap the discussions, share stories, concerns and the highlights of the day. Give debriefs of the breakout sessions, or have a panel of students, professors, administrators, and local officials from your area engage in a question and answer session. You can also watch the Closing Session of the White House Summit on Community Colleges live on www.WhiteHouse.gov/live.

5. Share Your Community College Summit With Dr. Biden

If you host your own summit, share your summit with Dr. Biden and the White House. We would love to hear your ideas and about the success of your event! You can submit your Summit Stories to: communitycollegesummit@ovp.eop.gov



Agenda for The White House Summit on Community Colleges

12:00 PM EDT – Opening Session of the White House Summit on Community Colleges with President Obama and Dr. Jill Biden. You can watch it live: www.WhiteHouse.gov/live

1:00 PM EDT – Breakout Sessions:

- Pathway to Baccalaureate
- Increasing Community College Completion
- Affordability: Financial Aid to Community College Students
- Community Colleges in the 21st Century
- The Importance of Community Colleges to Veterans and Military Families
- Industry-Community College -Partnerships

3:00 PM EDT – Closing Session of the White House Summit on Community Colleges, featuring Dr. Jill Biden, Secretary Arne Duncan, and Secretary Hilda Solis. Moderators will debrief on the breakout sessions, and invite participant to share their stories and experiences relating to community college. You can watch it live: www.WhiteHouse.gov/live

4:00 PM EDT – Summit Ends



White House Summit on Community Colleges Discussion Questions

Below you will find more information on the Summit's breakouts and some questions to help generate discussion and idea generation.

- 1. Pathway to Baccalaureate:** The ease of transfer between community colleges and four-year institutions is critical. Minority and low-income students are concentrated in community colleges and depend on effective transfer to achieve their baccalaureate degree. Given the rapidly increasing costs of public and private four-year institutions, many middle class families are turning to community colleges to provide the first two years of higher education, which can result in tens of thousands of dollars saved. Yet many students spend valuable time in courses at community college only to find that the courses do not transfer to a four-year institution, and they must repeat courses or take additional courses.

Question: What can be done to ease the transfer from two-year to four-year schools and ensure that students who start at community college earn their baccalaureate degrees?

- 2. Increasing Community College Completion:** Completion rates at community colleges are far too low. Fewer than three in ten full-time students pursuing a two-year degree graduate in three years - and part-time students graduate at even lower rates. Less than half of community college students who enroll with the intention of getting a degree or transferring to a four-year school reach this goal in six years. There are many reasons for low completion rates in community colleges; students may not have the ability to navigate the financial aid process, select appropriate courses, or get academic and social support at their schools.

Question: What can be done to ensure that those who go to community college finish and either transfer into a four-year institution or transition into a career?

- 3. Affordability: Financial Aid to Community College Students:** While community colleges' tuition and fees are significantly less than those of four-year colleges, total costs are significant – particularly for low-income students. Community college students are much less likely, despite being disproportionately low-income, to apply for financial aid compared to students at four-year institutions. For those who do apply for aid, community college students are much more likely to have unmet needs after financial aid is awarded. Several studies have shown that most dropouts leave college because they have trouble going to school while working to support themselves.

Question: What can be done to reduce barriers to affordability for community college students?

- 4. Community Colleges in the 21st Century:** Community colleges meet students exactly “where they are,” and today, with close to half of all undergraduate students in the United States enrolled in one of these institutions, they are serving the most diverse student body in history. Community colleges will need to innovate to meet the needs of the broad range of students in the 21st century: young and old, urban and rural, working learners, first-generation college students, students raising families, students hoping to transfer to a four-year school, and students seeking training to reenter the workforce.

The range of students is matched by the range of needs in their communities. New businesses, like emerging green technologies, will require workers trained in new ways. Technology is key to much of this change. On-line learning opens new possibilities for many students who might not otherwise be able to attend a community college.

Question: How are community colleges innovating to meet the needs of 21st century students and employers?

- 5. The Importance of Community Colleges to Veterans and Military Families:**

Securing an education and job training are top priorities for active duty service members, veterans, and their families. Community colleges are an attractive option for military families and veterans because of their affordability, program choices, convenience, and the flexibility of class offerings. Military families have unique educational needs and challenges; highly mobile military spouses need portable career training and transferable, in-demand skills to ease the transition into a new community.

Question: How are community colleges innovating to support military families and veterans and how can these innovations be brought to scale?

- 6. Industry –Community College Partnerships:** Over the next decade, nearly eight in ten new jobs will require higher education and workforce training. To ensure students are prepared for 21st century jobs, community colleges must collaborate with local businesses, industry, labor unions and other regional employers to leverage their combined knowledge of labor markets to develop flexible, affordable, and relevant training program that meet business and regional economic needs. By partnering with local industries, local businesses can maximize workforce development strategies, job training programs, and ultimately, job placement.

Question: What are the key factors of a successful community college-industry partnership and how can this model best educate students and get them into jobs upon completion?



Additional Information

What do I need to watch the opening and closing sessions online?

You only need your computer and internet access to watch both sessions online.

Should my school or organization contact the White House if we decide to host a summit?

Yes! Please send an e-mail to communitycollegesummit@eop.ovp.gov if you decide to host your own summit. We want to make sure that we have an accurate list of all of the participation around the country on October 5th.

What if I can't host a summit on October 5th? Can I host one on another date?

Of course. We hope that this summit will only be a springboard and many other community colleges across the nation will host summits and the conversation surrounding community colleges will continue long after October 5th.