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CONTACT:

Bridget DeSimone (301-280-5735, bdesimone@burness.com)

Rebecca Carriero (212-205-0182, rebeccac@bloomberg.org)

AMERICAN TALENT INITIATIVE MORE THAN DOUBLES MEMBERSHIP OF COLLEGES DEDICATED TO EXPANDING ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY FOR 50,000 TALENTED LOW- AND MODERATE-INCOME STUDENTS

Supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies, growing alliance now includes 68 top-performing public and private colleges and universities; all are committed to attract, enroll, and graduate talented students “from every neighborhood” regardless of family income

WASHINGTON, D.C. AND NEW YORK, N.Y. (April 25, 2017)—The [American Talent Initiative \(ATI\)](#) today announced that thirty-eight more colleges and universities have joined its ranks. The addition of these new members has more than doubled the number of top-performing institutions dedicated to substantially expanding the number of talented low- and moderate-income students at America’s undergraduate institutions with the highest graduation rates. (see below full list with new and founding ATI member institutions).

"Too many students from low-income families are missing out on opportunities to attend top colleges because they think those colleges aren't affordable – when most often, they are. This growing coalition is helping to fix that. College leaders recognize how important this is to the future of our country – and they want to attract more of the best and brightest from all backgrounds to their schools." said Michael R. Bloomberg, founder of Bloomberg Philanthropies and three-term Mayor of New York City.

Launched in December 2016, the American Talent Initiative is supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies and was founded with a national goal of educating 50,000 additional high-achieving, lower-income students at the 270 colleges and universities with the highest graduation rates by 2025. Based on the most recent federal data available, there are approximately 430,000 lower-income students enrolled at these 270 institutions. ATI’s goal is to increase and sustain the total number of lower-income students attending these top-performing colleges to about 480,000 by 2025. The addition of these new members and others in the coming months and years, will help ATI reach its ambitious goal.

“We’ve obviously tapped into a real vein of enthusiasm,” said Josh Wyner, executive director of the Aspen Institute’s College Excellence Program which is co-coordinating the initiative with Ithaca S+R.

“The outpouring of interest by so many college and university presidents to join ATI reflects an urgency to expand opportunity for talented lower-income students. After a recent meeting with presidents of most of the ATI members at Bloomberg Philanthropies in New York, I am incredibly hopeful that this interest will translate into progress on the one ATI goal that matters most: tens of thousands of additional students gaining valuable higher education opportunity every year.”

Recent research suggests that at least 12,500 high school seniors per year have SAT scores in the top 10 percent with 3.7 grade point averages or higher – and still do not attend the colleges where they have the greatest likelihood of graduating. These students have earned the opportunity these schools offer, but for a variety of reasons—including a lack of information about their options, confusion about costs, and inadequate financial aid offers—many of them simply lack access. The American Talent Initiative supports institutions with the highest graduation rates and best track records for post-graduate success in their efforts to attract, enroll, and graduate those “missing” students. A companion effort to the American Talent Initiative, Bloomberg Philanthropies’ CollegePoint advising initiative launched in 2014, focuses on high-quality college and financial advising to help talented lower-income students find and pursue a path to and through colleges where they are most likely to succeed.

“We know that when these high-achieving, lower-income students attend these colleges and universities, they graduate at higher rates and have a much greater opportunity throughout their lives,” said Martin Kurzweil, Director of Educational Transformation Program at Ithaca S+R. “We’re aiming to help all ATI members enhance their own efforts to recruit, enroll, and support lower-income students, learn from each other, and contribute to research that will help other top colleges and universities expand opportunity.”

ATI members are sharing lessons learned as well as institutional data, and through the coming years, will annually publish aggregate progress toward meeting the national goal of 50,000 additional lower-income students by 2025. Colleges and universities participating in the American Talent Initiative will further the national goal of developing more talent from every American neighborhood by:

- Recruiting students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds through robust outreach;
- Ensuring that admitted lower-income students enroll and are retained through proven effective practices;
- Prioritizing need-based financial aid; and
- Minimizing or eliminating gaps in progression and graduation rates between students from low-, moderate- and high-income families.

While ATI continues to welcome new members, the work toward the goal has already begun. In February, ATI hosted its first Presidential Roundtable. More than 40 presidents from founding and new member institutions discussed the research and data sharing framework needed to set the groundwork for achieving ATI’s goal of expanding opportunity to thousands of students, hundreds of campuses, and innumerable communities nationwide.

Moving forward, the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program and Ithaca S+R, the two non-profit

organizations coordinating the initiative, will study the practices that lead to measurable progress and share findings with the field through regular publications. The first of these publications was published in February on the [ATI website](#). It focused on the strategies employed by the five institutions that have demonstrated success in raising or reallocating funds to bolster low-income student enrollment and success on their campuses.

American Talent Initiative Participating Institutions (<i>*members joining in January–April 2017</i>)	
Allegheny College*	Rice University
Amherst College	Rutgers University*
Bard College*	Saint Michael’s College*
Bates College	Smith College*
Baylor University*	Spelman College
Brown University*	Stanford University
Bucknell University*	Swarthmore College*
California Institute of Technology*	The Ohio State University
Carleton College*	University of California, Berkeley
Claremont McKenna College*	University of California, Davis*
Colby College*	University of California, Irvine*
Columbia University*	University of California, Los Angeles
Cornell University*	University of Denver*
Dartmouth College	University of Maryland, College Park
Davidson College	University of Massachusetts, Amherst*
Dickinson College*	University of Miami*
Duke University	University of Michigan - Ann Arbor
Elizabethtown College*	University of Minnesota*
Fordham University*	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Franklin & Marshall College	University of Pennsylvania*
Georgetown University	University of Richmond

Georgia Institute of Technology	University of South Carolina*
Gettysburg College*	University of Southern California*
Harvard University	University of Texas at Austin
Johns Hopkins University	University of Virginia*
Kenyon College*	University of Washington
Lafayette College*	Vanderbilt University
Lawrence University*	Vassar College
Lebanon Valley College*	Wake Forest University*
Lehigh University	Washington University in St. Louis
Marist College*	Wesleyan University*
New York University*	Williams College
Pomona College	Wofford College*
Princeton University	Yale University

The Aspen Institute's College Excellence Program (www.aspeninstitute.org/college-excellence) aims to advance higher education practices, policies, and leadership that significantly improve student outcomes. The Program is part of The Aspen Institute www.aspeninstitute.org, with a mission to foster leadership based on enduring values and to provide a nonpartisan venue for dealing with critical issues.

Ithaka S+R (www.sr.ithaka.org) is a not-for-profit service that helps the academic community navigate economic and technological change. Its aim is to broaden access to higher education by reducing costs while also improving student outcomes. Ithaka S+R is part of ITHAKA (www.ithaka.org).