**EMBARGOED: HOLD FOR RELEASE AT 12:01 AM EASTERN TIME ON SEPTEMBER 7, 2017**

**[INSERT YOUR INSTITUTION] JOINS GROWING ALLIANCE OF COLLEGES WORKING NATIONALLY TO EXPAND ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY FOR 50,000 TALENTED LOW- AND MODERATE-INCOME STUDENTS**

***American Talent Initiative brings together 69 of nation’s most respected colleges and universities committed to attracting, enrolling, and graduating more high-achieving, lower-income students***

**WASHINGTON, D.C. AND NEW YORK, N.Y.** -- (***For release at 12:01 a.m., September 7, 2017***) -- **[INSERT YOUR INSTITUTION]** joined sixty-eight of the nation’s top-performing colleges and universities in an alliance to substantially expand the number of talented low- and moderate-income students at America’s undergraduate institutions with the highest graduation rates. This growing alliance, called t[he American Talent Initiative](http://www.americantalentinitiative.org/) (ATI) brings together a diverse set of public and private institutions united in a shared goal of educating 50,000 additional high-achieving, lower-income students across the country. Each ATI member institution will enhance its own efforts to recruit, enroll, and support lower-income students, learn from each other, and contribute to research that will help other colleges and universities effectively serve lower-income students. (See below for a list of ATI members.)

**[INSERT QUOTE FROM YOUR INSTITUTION’S PRESIDENT]**

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 aims to increase and sustain the total number of lower-income students attending these top-performing colleges to about 480,000 by 2025. To reach this ambitious goal, ATI will work to support its members’ work while adding more top-performing colleges to its membership in the coming months and years.

**[INSERT YOUR INSTITUTION]** recognizes that America’s top-performing colleges have an important role to play in this effort. Research shows that when high-achieving, lower-income students attend high-performing institutions such as **[INSERT YOUR INSTITUTION],** they graduate at higher rates, and have a greater chance of attaining leadership positions and other opportunities throughout their lives. Yet in each graduating high school class, there are at least 12,500 lower-income young people with outstanding academic credentials who do not enroll at institutions where they have the greatest likelihood of graduating.

These students have earned the opportunity these institutions offer. The member institutions of American Talent Initiative seek to ensure that these “missing” students have a path to attend and thrive at the institutions with the highest-graduation rates and best track records for post-graduate success. Each college and university participating in theAmerican Talent Initiative will further the national goal of developing more talent through its own strategies, which include:

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

While many ATI member institutions have existing efforts to support lower-income students on their campuses, what sets **[INSERT YOUR INSTITUTION]** and other members’ ATI-related work apart is the commitment to working collectively towards a shared national goal and creating a “community of practice” where members convene regularly to share insights and lessons learned. Member institutions of the American Talent Initiative are also committing substantial resources to increase opportunity for lower-income students, as well as collecting institutional data which will be annually published to assess their aggregate progress toward meeting the 50,000-by-2025 national goal.

This initiative is co-managed by the Aspen Institute’s College Excellence Program ([www.aspeninstitute.org/college-excellence](http://www.aspeninstitute.org/college-excellence)) and Ithaka S+R ([www.sr.ithaka.org](http://www.sr.ithaka.org/)) and funded with an initial $1.7 million, multi-year grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies. Grant funding will be used for best-practice research and dissemination, convenings of college presidents and staff, and data analysis and reporting. A publication focusing on financial strategies to bolster lower-income student success was made available in February 2017 on the [ATI website](https://americantalentinitiative.org/research-publications/). New ATI research on increasing opportunity for the incredible talent found across our nation’s community colleges will be published later this year.

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| **American Talent Initiative Participating Institutions as of September 7, 2017** | |
| ***[INSERT YOUR INSTITUTION HERE]*** | |
| 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 |