



Executive Briefing

Rationale

Ensuring widespread access to a college degree is critical to ensuring individual economic opportunity, maintaining national competitiveness, and strengthening democracy through educated citizens. This requires leaders across higher education to address disparities in bachelor's attainment for students from low- and moderate-income households.

There are 341 colleges and universities with six-year graduation rates of at least 70%; students from low- and moderate-income backgrounds are persistently underrepresented in this group.

Evidence demonstrates that tens of thousands of lower-income students are poised to thrive at these leading institutions, but ultimately do not enroll in or graduate. At the heart of this disparity: challenges in recruitment, admissions, providing sufficient financial aid,

and efforts to support inclusion and success both in and outside of the classroom.

Across the high graduation rate institutions—sector, wealth, size, and geography—leaders have demonstrated they can make substantial advancements in opportunity for lower-income students.

The American Talent Initiative (ATI) brings together a diverse set of these public and private institutions to address inequities in access and success for lower-income students by:

- Enhancing institutional efforts to recruit, enroll, and graduate lower-income students;
- Learning from each other about how best to support lower-income students;
- Sharing lessons of success to expand higher education.

Who we are

ATI is a Bloomberg Philanthropies-supported collaboration between the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program, Ithaka S+R, and an alliance of top colleges and universities committed to expanding access and opportunity for lower-income students.

As of August 1, 2022, 128 institutions, including state flagships, the Ivy League, private universities and liberal arts colleges, have joined. This incredibly diverse group represents 31 states, 7 Carnegie Classes, and a wide range of institution sizes.

A Shared Goal

OPPORTUNITY FOR 50,000 MORE
LOWER-INCOME STUDENTS BY 2025

ATI was founded with one central, ambitious goal: by the year 2025, to attract, enroll, and graduate 50,000 additional high-achieving, low- and moderate-income students at the nation's 334 colleges and universities with six-year graduation rates of at least 70%.

The Path to 50,000

To reach the goal of an additional 50,000 lower-income students, the American Talent Initiative focuses on three major activities:

A. Committing to Visible Goals

Members commit to stepping up their own efforts to recruit and enroll lower-income students and ensure that they thrive on campus, graduate, and are positioned to succeed after college.

Members will pledge to a public, aspirational goal and commit to making measurable progress toward that goal by Fall 2023.

2. Members with a lower-income enrollment share below 15 percent: aim for an ambitious goal between 15 and 20 percent by 2025, or an equally ambitious increase in the number of lower-income students by 2025.
3. Members with a lower-income student enrollment share between 15 and 20 percent: make measurable progress toward a 20 percent share of lower-income student enrollment or an equally ambitious increase in the number of lower-income students by 2025.
4. Members with a lower-income student enrollment share above 20 percent: aim to at least maintain opportunity for lower-income students at current levels, if not expand enrollment by 2025.
5. All members aim to minimize equity-based graduation gaps by 2025.

B. Facilitating Research and Knowledge Sharing

Members will share what they learn with one another and with the broader higher education community and the public. Members also will report data on lower-income student enrollment and success, so that ATI can measure aggregate progress (not an individual institution's progress) annually.

C. A Sustained National Communications Campaign

ATI members will contribute to a national campaign that reinforces the importance of socioeconomic diversity on college campuses and elevates promising practices to increase access, success, and equity.

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

Access to annual aggregate and institution-specific data reports, confidential and customized to compare your institution to the sector and peers on Pell enrollment, graduation, retention, first-generation, and income data.

Consultation with leading higher education experts and exclusive opportunities to engage with other ATI presidents and chancellors

Participation in focused, topic-based presidential communities on issues like community college transfer, student success, and support for presidents new to the role

Elevation of your institution's success stories through the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program, Ithaka S+R, and Bloomberg Philanthropies' platforms.

