



Campus Compact

News

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For Immediate Release

October 22, 2010

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October 25, 2010

Campus Compact Summit of College Presidents Links Civic Engagement to College Access and Success

In a first-of-its-kind Presidential Leadership Summit convened Campus Compact, nearly 100 college presidents and Campus Compact state directors gathered to focus on a single, compelling thesis: that college students who participate in civic engagement and service-learning as part of the curriculum, earn higher grade point averages and have a better chance of staying in college and earning degrees. They made their case to Dr. Martha J. Kanter, Under Secretary of Education, in response to President Obama's challenge that by the year 2020, the U.S. must have the highest number of college graduates of any nation in the world.

Boston, MA — At Georgetown University recently, nearly 100 college/university presidents and Campus Compact state directors from across the country were focused on making a single, compelling argument: that college students who participate in civic engagement and service-learning earn higher grade point averages and have a better chance of staying in college and earning degrees.

In an audience of presidents from public, private, two- and four-year institutions across the spectrum of higher education, they made their case to Dr. Martha J. Kanter, Under Secretary of Education, in response to President Obama's challenge that by the year 2020, the U.S. must have the highest number of college graduates of any nation in the world.

The first-of-its-kind Presidential Leadership Summit was convened in Washington, D.C. by the Boston-based non-profit organization Campus Compact, whose member college presidents from across the country share the conviction that civic engagement offers a promising avenue for increasing access to and success in college, especially among first-generation college attendees, students of color, and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

The audience was supported in their belief by a new Campus Compact white paper—*"A Promising Connection: Increasing College Access and Success through Civic Engagement"*—released at the Summit. Its authors have surveyed the research that currently exists for

drawing a link between civic engagement as a strategy to improve college access and success. During the Summit, attendees also explored where additional research might be needed to learn even more about this connection.

The Summit was hosted by Georgetown University, and Georgetown President John J. DeGioia—chair of the National Board of Campus Compact. Dr. DeGioia explained that the President’s challenge means we must increase the percentage of Americans completing an Associates Degree or higher by 4.2% annually by 2020.

“This will require a growth of over 8.2 million new degrees in this time frame. To do this we will need to ensure more students are on their way towards a degree, and that more are successful in completing studies necessary for a degree.”

“This is a distinctly American story,” he continued, “...one that connects democracy and education with the flourishing of each community. By connecting the livelihood of American communities and colleges, the utilitarian drive to produce the most competitive workforce becomes an issue of civic responsibility, of giving back to the community and to our country...”

The Summit was funded through a seed grant from Lumina Foundation for Education and KnowHow2GO—the nation’s largest foundation dedicated exclusively to increasing students’ access to and success in postsecondary education. Lumina’s own goal is to increase the percentage of Americans who hold high-quality degrees and credentials to 60% by 2025.

Generous support was also received from Georgetown University, USA Funds, Jenzabar, Inc., Community College of Allegheny County, Montana Campus Compact, the National Student Loan Program, Natixis Global Associates, and Widener University. The American Council on Education (A.C.E.) was also a partner.

To read and download “A Promising Connection: Increasing College Access and Success through Civic Engagement” or learn more of the proceedings of the Summit, visit Campus Compact’s website: <http://www.compact.org>

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Campus Compact is a national coalition of nearly 1,200 college and university presidents—representing some 6 million students—who are committed to fulfilling the civic purposes of higher education. As the only national education association dedicated solely to campus-based civic engagement, Campus Compact promotes public and community service that develops students’ citizenship skills, helps campuses forge effective community partnerships, and provides resources and training for faculty seeking to integrate civic and community-based learning into the curriculum.

For more information or to arrange an interview with Campus Compact President Maureen Curley, please contact Sue C. Kelman, Director of Communications: skelman@compact.org or 617-357-1881, x207. Photographs of the event are also available by request.