



News

University News & Information



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 4, 2014

Contact: Matt Lazier
805-756-7109; mlazier@calpoly.edu

Cal Poly Announces Commitment to Help Expand College Access at White House Event
University President Jeffrey D. Armstrong Attends Washington, D.C., Summit

SAN LUIS OBISPO — Cal Poly President Jeffrey D. Armstrong joined President Obama, the First Lady, Vice President Biden and hundreds of other university presidents and higher education leaders today to announce new actions to help more students prepare for and graduate from college.

The White House College Opportunity Day of Action helps to support President Obama's commitment to partner with colleges and universities, business leaders, and nonprofits to support students across the country to help our nation reach its goal of leading the world in college attainment.

Participants were asked to commit to new actions relating to: building networks of colleges focused on promoting completion; creating K-16 partnerships around college readiness; investing in high school counselors as part of the First Lady's Reach Higher initiative; and increasing the number of college graduates in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

"We appreciate the invitation to be at the table for this important conversation," Armstrong said. "Investing in higher education is key to California's and the nation's future."

Cal Poly announced two specific commitments at today's event:

— The university has committed to increasing its four-year and five-year graduation rates to better meet the need for highly skilled professions. Over the next 10 years, Cal Poly aims to increase its four-year rate to more than 80 percent from its current level of about 40 percent and to push five-year rates (currently at 70 percent) to more than 90 percent.

— Cal Poly also aims to expand and enhance its Earn by Doing program. Students in Earn by Doing positions work within their discipline, alongside other students, staff and faculty. Closely tied to the university's acclaimed Learn by Doing educational model, Earn by Doing provides meaningful on-campus work that is applicable to degree disciplines and hones new skill sets while providing income for education expenses. The program was initiated in the College of Engineering. The universitywide Earn by Doing effort will seek to create opportunities for students to earn funds in support of their education. There will be two potential tracks: Industry and Community. The Industry track is envisioned to enhance partnerships with corporations through assistantships, internships, mentoring, and recruitment programs, and placement. The Community track is intended to focus on campus priorities tied to sustainability, alumni outreach, international work or study experiences or emphasize service with nonprofits or government.

President Obama will announce new steps on how his administration is helping to support the commitments from Cal Poly and other participating universities. These include announcing \$10 million to help promote college completion and a \$30 million

AmeriCorps program that will improve low-income students’ access to college.

Today’s event is the second College Opportunity Day of Action and will include a progress report on the commitments made at the first day of action on Jan. 14 of this year.

For more on the White House College Opportunity Day of Action, visit <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2014/12/03/watch-anywhere-white-house-college-opportunity-summit>.

