

**MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

INFORMATION ITEM
White House Summit on Community Colleges

BACKGROUND

On October 5, 2010, the first-ever White House Summit on Community Colleges was held in Washington DC. The goal of the summit was to highlight the critical role that community colleges play in developing America's workforce and reaching the nation's educational goals. The summit brought together community colleges, business, philanthropy, federal and state policy leaders, and students to discuss how community colleges can help meet the job training and education needs of the nation's evolving workforce, as well as the critical role these institutions play in achieving the President's goal to lead the world with the highest proportion of college graduates by 2020.

Several new national initiatives to improve community colleges and expand their programs were announced at the summit, including a public-private partnership linking major companies with community colleges to improve job training; a \$35-million competitive grant program, financed by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, to increase the graduation rates of community-college students; and a \$1-million annual Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence to reward colleges that demonstrate outstanding results in their academic and work-force-training roles.

Participants in the summit took part in six sessions for deeper discussion into specific issues facing community colleges. Participants examined issues around making college affordable, increasing graduation rates, affordability and financial aid, and supporting military veterans.