



### ***Making Opportunity Affordable:***

Cost-effective higher education that works for students and the American economy

#### **Our Challenge/Our Opportunity**

America is facing unprecedented economic decline and insecurity. Unemployment is approaching levels unseen in a quarter century. The world's credit markets have collapsed. The auto and banking industries are in financial jeopardy. This crisis demands a turnaround plan that boldly marshals American talent.

***Making Opportunity Affordable* is an unprecedented effort to increase the number of graduates within available resources while preserving instructional quality.** Together we can – and we must – ensure these graduates are ready to contribute to the nation's political and social health and to succeed in a global knowledge economy.

#### **Call to Action**

The need for transformational change is obvious to anyone who follows global trends. President Obama has called for a restoration of U.S. leadership in degree attainment. To succeed, we must reverse a trend that has put the nation in a four-way tie for 10<sup>th</sup> for the percentage of its population between ages 25 and 34 with a college degree. Through *Making Opportunity Affordable*, like-minded organizations work within states to recalibrate higher education spending to graduate many more students than the nation is on track to educate. The initiative relies on three mutually reinforcing pathways to provide greater opportunity and mobility for students:

- 1) ***Increase and Reward Completion.*** States should begin setting aside significant portions of their higher education budgets to reward institutions for students who complete courses and graduate in greater numbers at lower per-unit expense. States also should pay colleges and universities more for serving students who will comprise a growing share of the American labor force, including students of color, first-generation students, students from low-income families and working or unemployed adults.
- 2) ***Generate and Reinvest Savings.*** Spread widely, efficient and cost-effective academic and administrative approaches can free resources for serving many more undergraduates. Fewer wasted credits, better use of tuition policy, campus space, fewer building projects, and outsourcing operations – all of this and more is needed to make the best use of available dollars.
- 3) ***Educate and Train in Affordable Ways.*** Higher education is a prime candidate for innovation, such as entirely new ways of cost-effectively delivering degree programs. High-quality education could be delivered through in a variety of ways using a variety of channels that would free resources to offer non-traditional students new opportunities. Whether public or private, nonprofit or for-profit, two-or four-year, higher education institutions must become more nimble, efficient and responsive to the needs of students and American society.