

Obama team unveils program to increase US graduation numbers

By William James
U. Texas via UWIRE

The Obama administration rolled out an new program Tuesday that it hopes will help the United States boast the best college graduation rate in the world by 2020.

During a summit in Washington, D.C., Vice President Joe Biden introduced a "College Completion Tool Kit," a program that will offer governors ideas on how to enhance college graduation rates through strategies that are "low-cost" or "no-cost" to the state.

"Right now, we've got an education system that works like a funnel when we need it to work like a pipeline," Biden said in a press release. "We have to make the same commitment to getting folks across the graduation stage that we did to getting them into the registrar's office."

The plan has seven key strategies including aligning high school standards with college entrance and placement standards, making it easier for students to transfer and targeting adults with some college completion but no degree.

In order for the U.S. to increase the number of college graduates by the goal of 50 percent, the Department of Education claims each state will need to have a 60 percent completion rate by 2020. Currently, about 42 percent of U.S. citizens ages 25-34 have college degrees,

according to information at the summit.

Thomas Palaima, a classics professor, said the problem with the country's graduation rate is the structure of higher education itself, and that unless the core structure is fixed, the Obama and Biden remedies will not ultimately fix this problem.

"It's a good goal to have the highest graduation rate in the world, but unless you address the underlying structural problems, this is not going to improve life very much for the people who are going to be literally tricked by this system," Palaima said.

America once led the world in the number of college graduates it produces, but the country has fallen to ninth, said U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, who delivered opening remarks at the Summit on Monday evening.

According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Korea currently holds the No. 1 college graduation rate, with 58 percent of its population finishing college.

"While our educational advancement stalled, other countries have passed us by. We need to educate our way to a better economy, and governors must help lead the way," Duncan said.

To meet the 2020 goal of regaining the No. 1 spot, the U.S. will have to turn out at least 8 million additional graduates by the end of the decade.

WANTED

Staff members to write, report, photograph, draw, edit, and sell advertisements for the student newspaper.

The Clarion needs your help! As a volunteer staff member, you can

- Earn academic credit in COM 106
- Get a cool T-shirt for a job well done
- Looks good on a resume or grad school application (ahem, Brian)
- Get berated by the editors
- Get access to the office in MG
- Jim Carey impersonator wanted
- Reap financial rewards for serving Brevard College

Staff meetings are open to all
Fridays at 11:30 a.m.
in M-G 102

Volunteers Needed!

SAFE's Motorcycle Poker Ride
Saturday, April 2.

Shifts:

- 7 a.m. - 11 a.m. (set-up, registration)
- 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. (serving BBQ, collecting cards)
- 3 p.m. - 6 p.m. (serving BBQ, clean-up)

This is SAFE's biggest fundraiser of the year and they have asked BC students to help! There are three shifts to choose from. You can sign-up outside Jessica Blanford's office in the AEC or e-mail blanfj@brevard.edu

Brevard College hosted a public reading by Gary Fincke last night in the Reserve Dining Room.

Fincke read three poems to approximately 60 attendees including, "Sorrows," "The Horns of Guy Lombardo," and "History Bites" from his poetry collection "The Fire Landscape."

Fincke also read a short story entitled "The Lightning Tongues," from the collection "Sorry I Worried You," which won the 2003 Flannery O'Connor Prize for Short Fiction.

Fincke has published 22 books of poetry, short fiction and nonfiction. He most recently published "The Canals of Mars," "The Fire Landscape," and "Amp'd: A Father's Backstage Pass," a nonfiction account of his son's life as a rock guitarist in the band Breaking Benjamin.

