

9-7-2017

# American Talent Initiative

University of Dayton

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## Recommended Citation

University of Dayton, "American Talent Initiative" (2017). *News Releases*. 11041.  
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Thursday September 7, 2017

## American Talent Initiative

The University of Dayton has joined 68 of the nation's top-performing colleges and universities in an alliance to substantially expand the number of talented low- and moderate-income students at America's undergraduate institutions with the highest graduation rates.

The American Talent Initiative (ATI) brings together a diverse set of public and private institutions united in a shared goal of educating 50,000 additional high-achieving, lower-income students across the country.

Each ATI member institution will enhance its own efforts to recruit, enroll and support lower-income students, learn from each other, and contribute to research that will help other colleges and universities effectively serve lower-income students.

"We are proud to make a deeper commitment to ensuring a University of Dayton education is within reach for middle- and low-income students," said President Eric F. Spina. "Improving affordability and accessibility is at the heart of our strategic vision and has been the

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focus of some of our most important initiatives, including our transparent tuition pricing and the new UD Sinclair Academy. We look forward to sharing these program successes and learning from the nation's other top colleges as we work together to offer greater opportunities to these students."

Launched in December 2016, the American Talent Initiative is supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies and was founded with a national goal of educating 50,000 additional high-achieving, lower-income students at the 270 colleges and universities with the highest graduation rates by 2025.

Based on the most recent federal data available, there are approximately 430,000 lower-income students enrolled at these 270 institutions. ATI aims to increase and sustain the total number of lower-income students attending these top-performing colleges to about 480,000 by 2025. To reach this ambitious goal, ATI will support its members' work while adding more top-performing colleges to the alliance in the coming months and years.

The University of Dayton recognizes that America's top-performing colleges have an important role to play in this effort. Research shows that when high-achieving, lower-income students attend high-performing institutions such as the University of Dayton, they graduate at higher rates, and have a greater chance of attaining leadership positions and other opportunities throughout their lives. Yet in each graduating high school class, there are at least 12,500 lower-income young people with outstanding academic credentials who do not enroll at institutions where they have the greatest likelihood of graduating.

The member institutions of American Talent Initiative seek to ensure that these "missing" students have a path to attend and thrive at the institutions with the highest-graduation rates and best track records for post-graduate success. Each college and university participating in the American Talent Initiative will further the national goal of developing more talent through its own strategies, which include:

- Recruiting students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds through robust outreach;

## UD in the News June 9-15

A national publication covering the wind power engineering industry and several local outlets featured the University of Dayton Research Institute's new wind turbine to boost alternative-energy research and educational opportunities. Also, Caroline Waldron Merithew was the subject of a American Historical Association member spotlight and Law.com blog Ahead of the Curve and an op-ed in Inside Higher Ed discussed the School of Law's entry into online education.

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- Ensuring that admitted lower-income students enroll and are retained through practices that have been shown to be effective;
- Prioritizing need-based financial aid; and
- Minimizing or eliminating gaps in progression and graduation rates between and among students from low-, moderate- and high-income families.

While many ATI member institutions have existing efforts to support lower-income students on their campuses, what sets the University of Dayton and other members' ATI-related work apart is the commitment to working collectively toward a shared national goal and creating a "community of practice" where members convene regularly to share insights and lessons learned. Member institutions of the American Talent Initiative are also committing substantial resources to increase opportunity for lower-income students, as well as collecting institutional data which will be annually published to assess their aggregate progress toward meeting the 50,000-by-2025 national goal.

This initiative is co-managed by the Aspen Institute's College Excellence Program and Ithaka S+R and funded with an initial \$1.7 million, multi-year grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies. Grant funding will be used for best-practice research and dissemination, convenings of college presidents and staff, and data analysis and reporting. A publication focusing on financial strategies to bolster lower-income student success was made available in February 2017 on the [ATI website](#). New ATI research on increasing opportunity for the incredible talent found across our nation's community colleges will be published later this year.

For more information, contact Meagan Pant, assistant director of news and communications, at 937-229-3256 or [mpant1@udayton.edu](mailto:mpant1@udayton.edu).

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