

Aug. 23, 2013

Commissioner of Higher Education David Russell's Statement on President Obama's Plans for Higher Education

This week, President Obama is on a "back to school" bus tour to present his ideas for making college more affordable and efficient. The [president's plan](#) aligns well with work already under way in Missouri.

Contain cost of tuition and fees – Missouri has enjoyed one of the lowest rates of tuition increases in the nation, thanks to a two-year tuition freeze at public universities from 2009 – 2011, and passage of the Higher Education Student Funding Act, which ties future tuition increases to the rate of inflation.

Performance funding – The Coordinating Board for Higher Education, Gov. Nixon and the Missouri General Assembly have embraced greater accountability through the adoption of performance goals. New revenue is tied to success in achieving progress toward these measures:

- Student success and progress (e.g. retention and completion)
- Increased degree attainment (number of degrees or graduation rates)
- Quality of student learning (improvements in assessments / licensure tests)
- Financial responsibility and efficiency (percent of revenue expended on core mission, measures to improve efficiency)

Performance funding applies to the \$25 million increase in funding for higher education in the Fiscal Year 2014 Missouri state budget.

Accelerated learning opportunities – Last year Missouri awarded nine innovation grants around the state. The grants support learning projects that allow high school students to earn credit for college level courses while participating in learning environments structured in partnership with local business and industries. The innovation campus gives students skills, knowledge and experience in real-world work situations and speeds their time to a degree. The nine innovation grants were awarded to:

- Jefferson City -- Lincoln University, State Technical College of Missouri (formerly Linn State Technical College), Jefferson City Area Chamber of Commerce
- Greene County – Ozarks Technical Community College, Missouri State University, Springfield Public Schools, CoxHealth, Mercy Health Systems
- St. Louis – University of Missouri-St. Louis, St. Louis Community College, Appistry, Spry Digital, Unisys and Equifax
- St. Charles County -- Economic Development Council of St. Charles County, Sinclair School of Nursing at the University of Missouri, St. Charles Community College, healthcare industry partners
- St. Joseph – Missouri Western State University, Metropolitan Community College, St. Joseph Metro Chamber of Commerce
- Joplin – Missouri Southern State University, Crowder College, Franklin Technology Center, Joplin Area Chamber of Commerce
- Johnson County – University of Central Missouri, Metropolitan Community College, Cerner Corporation, DST Systems, Burns & McDonnell
- Cape Girardeau – Southeast Missouri State University, Cape Girardeau Career and Technology Center, Cape Girardeau Development Foundation
- Rolla – Missouri University of Science and Technology, Rolla Public Schools, Rolla Technical Center

Dual enrollment and dual credit – Thirty-three Missouri colleges and universities offer courses for college credit to high school students. More than 35,000 students earned 188,000 credit hours through dual credit courses in 2011, and more than 1,100 courses were offered for college credit at high schools statewide.

Improved completion rates – Missouri will hold its first Completion Academy in September, when nine institution teams will work with national experts to devise plans that will use “game changing” strategies to improve completion rates for their students. Examples of the strategies include:

- Remediation as a co-requisite, not a pre-requisite to credit-bearing courses
- Time and intensity / 15 to finish (encourages students to take a full load of 15 hours each semester)

- Block scheduling
- Guided Pathways to Success (GPS) ([click here](#) for brochure)
- Aligned resources to promote student success

Smoother alignment between high school and college – Missouri has adopted Common Core State Standards, which are benchmarks toward which all high school students must work in order to be judged college- and career-ready. For students who are not academically prepared to do college-level work, Missouri institutions are implementing best practices in remediation to assist students in acquiring the extra academic skills they need to successfully take credit-bearing courses.

Smoother transfers among Missouri colleges and universities – Missouri is developing a core transfer library of at least 25 courses which will be accepted for credit at all public institutions of higher education in the state. The state is also launching a reverse transfer program which will award an associate degree to students who have completed enough credits for the degree but who have transferred to a four-year institution or stopped out of college altogether.

Award credits based on learning, not seat time – [Western Governors University](#) has established a branch university in Missouri to award competency-based degrees in education, business, technology and health care. Western Governors University-Missouri is already accepting Missouri students.

Extend accessibility to low income, first generation and minority students – Missouri will launch a pilot College Application Week to help students currently underrepresented in higher education take the necessary steps to apply for college. Volunteers will work one-on-one with students to complete college application forms. The event is open to all students. The pilot program will take place the week of Oct. 21, 2013, in 26 high schools throughout Missouri. If judged a success, Missouri College Application Week will be expanded to more Missouri high schools next year. It complements FAFSA Frenzy events, which helps students maneuver through the financial assistance maze. This year, more than 600 FAFSA Frenzy volunteers at 55

sites helped 1,470 students fill out the FAFSA, the first step in securing student financial aid.

Use technology to redesign courses – All of Missouri’s 13 public four-year institutions are collaborating on a course redesign initiative called the [Missouri Learning Commons](#) that uses technology to efficiently deliver customized learning modules in gateway courses. Thirteen high-enrollment introductory courses were redesigned to improve learning outcomes and reduce costs. Universities share the teaching methodology and course materials. The redesigned courses encourage active learning and provide students with individualized assistance.