(YOUR HEADLINE HERE)

(NAME OF CITY) -- The national spotlight that has been focused on community colleges in recent weeks is not the norm, but it is timely for families and the nation. As the current economic recession drags on and unemployment remains frustratingly high, the issue of jobs tops everyone’s worry list. Economic malaise has also driven an ongoing enrollment surge at the nation’s community colleges—an increase of almost 17% nationally and (STATS FOR YOUR COLLEGE).

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has said that we must “educate our way to recovery,” and he, like many business, policy and philanthropic leaders, sees community colleges as the affordable and workable solution to get more people ready for the workplace—now and into the future.

Good-paying jobs do exist. What is lacking are workers with the right skills. In a recent study, workplace expert Anthony Carnevale looked at worker trends over the next eight years and found that the majority of jobs in high-growth industries will require some training beyond high school. This is the kind of education community colleges excel in delivering—everything from nursing to plumbing to biotechnology to construction management.

Here at (NAME OF INSTITUTION; ADD KEY FACTS/STATS).

Several weeks ago, Dr. Jill Biden, the wife of the vice president and an instructor at a D.C.–area community college, convened the first-ever White House Summit on Community Colleges. Joining Dr. Biden in addition to Secretary Duncan were President Obama, Melinda Gates and a who’s who of business, education and philanthropic leaders. They came to examine a challenge that the president has given to (NAME OF INSTITUTION) and other community colleges around the nation. That challenge is to double the number of students completing degrees or certificates within the next decade.

We at (NAME OF COLLEGE) take enormous pride in the confidence that has been expressed in our work and our mission. But we also know we have a steep hill to climb.

Nationally, community colleges already educate almost half of all undergraduates. And they educate higher proportions of minority, low-income and adult learners—groups experts say will make up the bulk of our future workforce. Hard economic times have brought thousands of new students to our campuses—deserving and sometimes desperate learners who see education as the lifeline to a better future. Yet, state funding for community colleges continues to stagnate or decline (INSERT STATS FOR YOUR STATE). Overall, the colleges are the least resourced of all segments of higher education—receiving just 27% of total state, local and federal funding.

Despite the challenge of doing more with less, (NAME OF INSTITUTION) and other community colleges are accepting the president’s challenge. Around the country, college leaders and governing boards are
signing pledges of commitment to meet the nation’s need—to help more students enter and complete college.

But it will take unified action to reach the president’s goal. At the federal level, we need more and consistent Pell Grant funding, grants that help more than 2 million students attend community colleges each year. At the state level, we need (INSERT YOUR LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY). Within the business community, we need the partnerships and innovative thinking that the White House Summit emphasized and that (NAME OF INSTITUTION) is known for in our community. As the Completion Commitment our board of directors signed (DATE OF SIGNING) states, “We need every one of us.”

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(ADD COLLEGE BOILERPLATE HERE.)