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Dominican's commitment at White House event

Dominican University of California President Mary B. Marcy on December 4 joined President Barack Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama, and Vice President Joe Biden along with hundreds of college presidents and other higher education leaders to announce new actions to help more students prepare for and graduate from college.

The White House College Opportunity Day of Action helped to support President Obama's commitment to partner with colleges and universities, business leaders, and nonprofits to support students across the country to help our nation reach its goal of leading the world in college attainment. Marcy announced plans to double the number of students who graduate with degrees in [STEM](#) (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) fields and triple the number of students who graduate with a STEM minor by 2020.

"I am tremendously honored to have this opportunity to engage in meaningful discussion with national leaders about increasing the number of STEM graduates and making a high-quality college education accessible to students from diverse backgrounds," Marcy said. "I am also delighted to share with this group Dominican's work creating an educational model that will be beneficial to all students, in particular our first-generation students."

[CLICK HERE TO HEAR PRESIDENT MARCY'S INTERVIEW WITH KGO RADIO IN SAN FRANCISCO](#)

In 2013, Dominican initiated a campus planning process to create a new educational model, known as the Dominican Experience. The Dominican Experience integrates the University's curriculum with a fully coordinated system of academic advising, career and internship services, global learning opportunities, community service projects, and faculty-guided research. Each student will have a mentor who will guide the student from admission through graduation.

Almost one-third of Dominican's 1,600 undergraduates are the first in their family to attend college and more than half are students of color.

"As California's demographics shift – and as the nation's demographics follow – Dominican is positioning itself for a new era," Marcy said.

"Dominican is designing an education for the future and has a profound commitment to our diverse student body."

The Dominican Experience will expand and scale mentoring to STEM students in the [School of Health and Natural Sciences](#). Currently, approximately 20 percent of Dominican's STEM students participate in a mentoring program, while 100 percent of the University's science students participate in undergraduate research. As a recent national study found, mentors have a profound effect on student success, completion, and satisfaction. Peer mentors will help students make the transition to college. Alumni, faculty, staff, and friends of the University will mentor students as they move through college to the workplace.

Participants in the College Opportunity Day of Action were asked to commit to new action in one of four areas: building networks of colleges around promoting completion, creating K-16 partnerships around college readiness, investing in high school counselors as part of the First Lady's Reach Higher initiative, and increasing the number of college graduates in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

President Obama announced new steps on how his Administration is helping to support these actions, including announcing \$10 million to help promote college completion and a \$30 million AmeriCorps program that will improve low-income students' access to college. The event was the second College

Opportunity Day of Action, and included a progress report on the commitments made at the first day of action on January 14, 2014. Dominican will increase the number of students who graduate each year with a STEM degree from 50 to 100 by 2020. The University also will increase the number of students graduating with a STEM minor to 50 per year by 2020.

Dominican currently offers bachelor's degrees in biological sciences and chemistry/biochemistry, as well as minors in biological sciences, chemistry/biochemistry, ecology/environmental sciences, and mathematics.