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## **Dr. Jill Biden Calls for Continued Support of Community Colleges at 20th Anniversary of Community College Research Center**

***Dr. Biden's speech at Teachers College, Columbia University, was followed by distinguished panel on the future of community colleges***

(New York, NY)—In one of her final public speeches as the Second Lady of the United States, Dr. Jill Biden called for the continuation of efforts to improve and expand access, graduation rates, and job placements of community college students.

At an event celebrating the 20th anniversary of the [Community College Research Center](#) (CCRC) on November 17 at [Teachers College, Columbia University](#), in Manhattan, Dr. Biden, a full-time community college professor and the wife of Vice President Joe Biden, said that research-based programs such as those at the CCRC, a national authority on community colleges, must continue if community colleges are to maintain their critical role in offering quality education and workforce preparation for all students.

“While our administration has strived to make community colleges more affordable and more attractive for more students to attend college, there’s still so much more we can and must do,” Dr. Biden said. “At the end of the day, it’s all about the outcomes. It’s about completion for purpose. It’s about getting our students on the right pathway with links to a good-paying job so they can provide for themselves and their families.”

In 2010, in one of the administration’s many efforts to renew focus on community colleges, President Obama signed legislation to expand college access through an overhaul of the student loan program and invest \$2 billion in community college job training programs.

Dr. Biden said that community colleges will need to continue to research and pilot best practices; create and grow financial aid, social service, and counseling services for community college students—many of whom have jobs and families—to help them enroll and stay in college; and improve the quality of instruction, especially in math. Nearly half of all the nation’s college students are enrolled at community colleges.

Dr. Biden is a longtime friend and ally of CCRC, which was started in 1996 by Thomas Bailey, the George & Abby O’Neill Professor of Economics and Education at Teachers College, to conduct research on new strategies and innovations to improve community colleges and help shape the efforts of colleges and states as they strive to provide an excellent education to all students and prepare the workforce of tomorrow.

“We’re honored to have such a strong advocate for community colleges participating in our 20th anniversary celebration,” said Bailey, introducing her to a crowd of 600 at the Joyce B. Cowin Auditorium at Teachers

College. “Dr. Biden has been extremely effective in using her platform as a seasoned educator and as Second Lady to call attention to the value and promise of two-year public colleges, both in helping students achieve their goals and in strengthening our economy and society.”

Dr. Biden thanked Bailey and CCRC for championing community colleges: “Because of your groundbreaking research, we can identify the challenges community college students face and paths to overcoming them. Because of you, individual colleges and policy makers can make better investments in what works and what doesn’t.”

As Second Lady, Dr. Biden has been a leader of the White House’s efforts to improve college access and affordability. She hosted the first White House Summit on Community Colleges in 2010, and she talks about community colleges as she travels around the country, at venues as diverse as late-night talk shows and the Democratic National Convention.

President Susan Fuhrman of Teachers College opened the evening by saying, “For more than 125 years, Teachers College scholars have been at the forefront of every major movement, issue, and conflict in American education. For the past 20 years, the college’s Community College Research Center has been the leading independent authority on two-year colleges in the U.S., making community colleges an essential subject of research, policy-making, and effective practice.”

“We thank Dr. Jill Biden for joining us as we celebrate CCRC, and for her committed advocacy and leadership around educational access, as well as around women’s health, economic empowerment and services for veterans and their families.”

CCRC’s anniversary celebration brought together thought leaders who have shaped policy around community colleges and now look forward to the next 20 years of continuing to expand access and quality. Dr. Biden’s keynote was followed by a panel discussion on the future of community colleges. Panel participants included City University of New York Chancellor James B. Milliken; Spencer Foundation President Michael McPherson, who is co-chair of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences’ Commission on the Future of Undergraduate Education; and Johanna Duncan-Poitier, Senior Vice Chancellor for Community Colleges and the Education Pipeline, State University of New York (SUNY). The panel was moderated by Dr. Bailey.

A recording of the event may be viewed at <http://livestream.com/teacherscollegecolumbiauniversity/CCRC20>. For more information on CCRC or to make a donation, go to [ccrc.tc.columbia.edu](http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu).

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*The [Community College Research Center](http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu) (CCRC), Teachers College, Columbia University, conducts research on the major issues affecting community colleges in the United States and contributes to the development of practice and policy that expands access to higher education and promotes success for all students.*

*Founded in 1887, [Teachers College, Columbia University](http://teacherscollege.columbia.edu), is the first and largest graduate school of education in the United States and is perennially ranked among the nation’s best. Through its three main areas of expertise—education, health and psychology—the College is committed to disciplinary and interdisciplinary research, the preparation of dedicated public service professionals, engagement with local, national and global communities, and informing public policy to create a smarter, healthier, and more equitable and peaceful world.*