For Immediate Release

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Higher education leaders send letters to President Obama with commitment to expand innovation and entrepreneurship offerings

(August 4, 2015) — In letters of commitment shared with President Barack Obama on the first-ever White House Demo Day, 29 institutions committed to actions that will expand innovation and entrepreneurship education offerings in order to enhance the economic potential of colleges and universities and better prepare students to create products that benefit humankind.

The White House Demo Day showcased talented innovators from across the country to demonstrate the value of giving all Americans the opportunity to pursue their bold, game-changing ideas. The event was hosted by President Obama and took place at the White House.

To support this effort, the National Center for Engineering Pathways to Innovation (Epicenter) gathered institutional commitments to expand innovation and entrepreneurship education by means of a signed letter shared with President Obama on Demo Day. Epicenter is funded by the National Science Foundation and directed by Stanford University and VentureWell.

The letter collected signatures from leaders, faculty and students at 29 institutions. These supporters committed to one or more of eight key actions aimed at providing students of all majors on campus access to innovation and entrepreneurship learning opportunities. These commitments include advancing team-based learning that tackles real world problems, integrating underserved populations into the innovation ecosystem, celebrating faculty and student entrepreneurial outcomes, and supporting innovative faculty teaching practices.

Schools included in the initiative to date are:

Bucknell University
California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo
Case Western Reserve University
Clark Atlanta University
Clark University
Clemson University
Georgetown University
Illinois Institute of Technology
New Mexico State University
New York Institute of Technology
New York University Polytechnic School of Engineering
North Dakota State University
Olin College of Engineering
Temple University
Tennessee Technological University
University of Alabama
University of Maryland
University of Michigan
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
University of New Haven
University of North Carolina at Greensboro
University of Oregon
University of Pittsburgh
University of Portland
University of Texas Arlington
University of Wisconsin Milwaukee
William Jewell College
Wingate University
Albemarle County Public Schools (K12)

Five individuals representing Epicenter's University Innovation Fellows program attended the White House Demo Day in support of the letter. There, they shared the initiatives they are collaborating on with their school's leaders to address the goals put forth in the letter.

This letter was supported by organizations including the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, the United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (USASBE), Engineers Without Borders and Engineering Projects in Community Service (EPICS).

About Epicenter:
The National Center for Engineering Pathways to Innovation (Epicenter) is funded by the National Science Foundation and directed by Stanford University and VentureWell. Epicenter's mission is to empower U.S. undergraduate engineering students to bring their ideas to life for the benefit of our economy and society. To do this, Epicenter helps students combine their technical skills, their ability to develop innovative technologies that solve important problems, and an entrepreneurial mindset and skillset. Epicenter's three core initiatives are the University Innovation Fellows program for undergraduate engineering students and their peers; the Pathways to Innovation Program for institutional teams of faculty and university leaders; and the Fostering Innovative Generations Studies research program that informs activities and contributes to national knowledge on entrepreneurship and engineering education. Learn more and get involved at epicenter.stanford.edu.

About Stanford University:
At Stanford University, the Epicenter collaboration is managed by the Stanford Technology Ventures Program (STVP), the entrepreneurship center in Stanford's School of Engineering. STVP delivers courses and extracurricular programs to Stanford students, creates scholarly research on high-impact technology ventures, and produces a large and growing collection of online content and experiences for people around the world. Visit us online at stvp.stanford.edu.

About VentureWell:
VentureWell was founded in 1995 as the National Collegiate Inventors and Innovators Alliance (NCIIA) and rebranded in 2014 to underscore its impact as an education network that cultivates revolutionary ideas and promising inventions. A not-for-profit organization reaching more than 200 universities, VentureWell is the leader in funding, training, coaching and early investment that brings student innovations to market. Inventions created by VentureWell grantees are reaching millions of people in more than 50 countries and helping to solve some of our greatest 21st century challenges. Visit www.venturewell.org to learn how we inspire students, faculty and investors to transform game-changing ideas into solutions for people and the planet.