



CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

March 23, 2015

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

Clark Atlanta University is excited to participate in the **#uifresh initiative**, spearheaded by the University Innovation Fellows (Fellows) as a means to expand the participation of incoming first-year students into STEM disciplines. The program will help young students see problems as opportunities that should be approached with fresh eyes and an entrepreneurial mindset. As part of the initiative, University Innovation Fellows will work with [Orientation Week] organizers to hold design thinking, creativity and innovation workshops that connect first-year students to peer communities of makers and innovators in STEM, reaching an estimated total of 1300 students.

The initiative was developed in response to findings published in the report "Engage to Excel: Producing One Million Additional College Graduates With Degrees in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics." The report, published by the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology, indicates that 40% of freshmen who arrived to college intending to major in STEM change majors to non-STEM disciplines over time. The report cites the importance of the student experience that is connected to a community of STEM professionals and meaningful relationships with both peers and instructors, as a key factor in reducing departures from STEM fields.

Orientation week organizers will work with University Innovation Fellows to implement short, fun and engaging experiential learning opportunities that expose 100% of our incoming Freshmen class to Clark Atlanta University's community of innovators, with the goal of reducing the percentage of STEM attrition by half in five years.

We believe students can have a powerful impact in driving student engagement in STEM and we are excited to work with the University Innovation Fellows (a program of the NSF-funded National Center for Engineering Pathways to Innovation, or Epicenter) to enhance STEM attraction and retention to ultimately meet U.S. workforce needs and strengthen our national competitiveness.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carlton E. Brown".

Carlton E. Brown
President