

For Immediate Release
February 12, 2013

Contacts: Kevin Lawlor, 301-686-8025

**Private Sector Colleges and Universities; Answering the President's Call to Rebuild
the Middle Class through Education and Skills Training**

Washington, DC: In his State of the Union Speech, President Obama spoke about his commitment to strengthening the middle class by making America a magnet for jobs and manufacturing and by equipping every American with the skills they need to do those jobs.

"Today there are 12 million unemployed and 2.5 million under-employed men and women in America. We are told by workforce experts that 85% of new jobs and 65% of all jobs will require postsecondary education. Private sector colleges and universities (PSCUs), by combining postsecondary education with career skills, stand ready to work with the Obama Administration and the Congress to provide students the tools and skills they need to compete," said Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities (APSCU) President and CEO, Steve Gunderson.

During the length of the recent recession, between 2008 and 2012, PSCUs conferred 1.5 million degrees and 1.85 million certificates, helping to fill the nearly 3 million jobs left vacant due to lack of skills. This "skills gap," has been keeping middle class Americans from finding work, and preventing business owners from hiring the workers they need here in the US.

"Private sector colleges and universities have made closing this gap our mission," said Gunderson. "Our schools are the leading innovators in skills-based, career-focused training in high-demand industries. This is why employers rely so heavily on our graduates."

Today, 92% of our students meet one or more standards as non-traditional students. 64% of PSCU students are Pell Grant recipients, 67% are 25 years of age or older, 31% are single parents, and 76% are independent of their parents. "Our students are the men and women that President Obama is counting on to make the middle class stronger, we need to work with one another to not only help these students, but open doors for all Americans looking for access and opportunity."

###