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Clinton Uses a Commencement Address to Stress the Value of Attending College

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IN HIS LAST commencement address as chief executive, President Clinton praised his own higher-education record and urged steps to give every American child an opportunity to attend a college or university.

"Our country cannot afford to leave any student behind, simply because they can't afford to pay for college," said Mr. Clinton, who made his remarks this month to 423 graduates of Carleton College, in Minnesota. "Every American needs more than a high-school education. . . . A college education is not a luxury."

MORE HELP FOR STUDENTS

To enable all Americans to attend college, the nation must pursue reforms in elementary and secondary education, the president said. His preferences include getting extra help for students through after-school, summer-school, and mentor programs. The president said he also supports "new efforts to attract talented teachers, reduce class size, modernize classrooms, and connect all of them to the Internet."

Mr. Clinton said the doors of higher edu-

cation have been opened wider to all Americans during his two terms in office. He said his administration had helped:

- Create in 1993 the direct-lending program for college students, which he said has lowered the cost of all borrowing and all student-loan programs, and has saved borrowers \$9-billion in interest charges over seven years.

- Expand Pell Grants more than 40 percent and increase the College Work-Study Program so that "now a million young college students are in work-study."

- Create the \$1,500 Hope tax credit, "to make the first two years of college as universal as high school and to help families afford the last two years, as well as graduate school and job training."

He said that in the past seven years, the nation had more than doubled the amount of college aid given to students, the greatest expansion in 50 years. He also said that today an all-time high of two-thirds of all high-school graduates "go straight to college," and that for the first time ever, a majority of America's black high-school students are going on to college.

—ERIK LORDS