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# College students cheer volunteer credit

## Obama proposal would offer \$4K for 100 hours of community service

By Brittany Anas  
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BOULDER, Colo. — In the blustery months, Nick Breitnauer rides to Winter Park on a weekend ski bus packed with kids.

Breitnauer is a volunteer snowboard instructor, and his student is an eager-to-learn 9-year-old with gait problems. Breitnauer, a University of Colorado senior, said volunteering has enriched his college career, as he's taken on positions at a nursing home, food bank and with sports programs.

That's the kind of spirit that President-elect Barack Obama envisions being at the core of a higher-education proposal that would give students a massive tuition break if they volunteer. The proposed tax credit would provide \$4,000 for college students who perform 100 hours of community service.

Higher-education leaders say they're anxious to see how details of the program are ironed out, but that the extra federal aid could help relieve financial pressures for college students.

Breitnauer — who is enrolled in CU's President's Leadership Class, which grooms young leaders — said he thinks Obama's proposal draws from the best programs in socialist European countries. He said the tax credit could provide relief for some middle-class students whose parents make too much to qualify for financial aid but still struggle to pay tuition.

Barbara Volpe, executive director of the leadership class, which enrolls about 200 students, said the plan seems fitting for this generation of civically engaged students.

"These kids are very service-oriented," she said. "If they see a problem, they don't walk away from it. They walk right into it."

Mike Kupcho, interim president of Front Range Community College, said the tax credit could easily cover an entire year of school, including tuition, fees and books. Tuition for a full-time, in-state Front Range student is about \$2,400.

"I would think it would be a good deal for a community college student," Kupcho said.

Bronson Hilliard, spokesman for CU, said the university has several programs to launch students into volunteer jobs. Last year, the White House recognized CU as one of three universities nationwide

selected to receive a presidential award for community service.

Andra Wilkinson, a student in the President's Leadership Class, said she thinks the tax credit would work best if student-volunteers are grouped up to share their projects, and passions, with one another.

"There's a lot of scholarship opportunities, but this is kind of like a financial reward for student-volunteers," Wilkinson said.



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