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U.S. Department of State
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Thank you, Allan.

Good morning! It's a real honor to speak to all of you today about international education and its role in foreign affairs.

I've been in my job for nineteen months. In that time, I've met with presidents and deans from many of your institutions, as well as admissions officers and study abroad administrators. I've met even more students from all over the world who attend our outstanding colleges, community colleges, and universities.

Everywhere I go, I see the profound and lasting impact of international education. The topic is immense in its scope and critical in its importance. International education can be nothing less than a top priority.

Before I delve into specifics, I think it is essential to note that underlying all of our academic programs is the tremendous "attractive" power of the American higher education system. "Attractive" in the most literal sense. Young men and women from around the world continue to be drawn to our campuses for their quality, scope, and the near limitless opportunity to pursue their dreams. But there is another critical feature to our system—its openness, its flexibility and, what I like to call, its forgiving nature.

There is a place for everyone in our system. You can start and stop. You can change your mind and change your goals. You can fail and try again. You can enroll at any age. In America, there is never—never—a time when the door to learning is closed. This is not true in many other countries, and it is another powerful testament to the value and importance of education in America. The topic before us today is both vast and diverse. To focus my remarks, I'd like to discuss three things with you this morning:

- Why international study is so important to 21st century diplomacy;
- How the State Department, through our partnerships, creates educational opportunities; and,
- How you can best make use of these resources on your campuses.

I.

So, first, let's ask the simple question: Why is international education so important to the United States government?

The answer is equally straightforward. As Secretary Clinton has said, “There is nothing that is more effective than having people break down barriers between themselves.”

There is no substitute for living in a foreign country, communicating in another language, and understanding other cultures, institutions, and traditions. In this globalized economy, it’s an imperative.

Today, the United States’ relationship to foreign publics—not just foreign governments—is more critical than ever to our security. People-to-people connections are, without question, our most effective tool for implementing Secretary Clinton’s vision of smart power—the simple but commanding idea that every strength of American society, including education, be brought to bear on the challenges that face our nation and the world. The Secretary has called study abroad “spring training for the 21st century.” For decades, the State Department has sponsored international education programs. And, now more than ever, we want to make sure these resources benefit your colleges and universities.

In today’s globalized world, American students need more international experience, not less.

When Americans study abroad, they come back more aware of the world and more confident. They acquire critical language skills and enhance our nation’s ability to compete globally. In turn, foreign students enrich our campuses and our culture, and they return home with new ideas and ways to strengthen the relationship between our two countries.

And, every student returns home with the knowledge to lead.

It’s encouraging to know that more students are choosing non-traditional study abroad destinations, such as Africa and Asia. Fourteen of the top 25 destinations are outside of Europe. And it’s even more encouraging that Canada, China, India, Japan, Mexico, Turkey, and other important international partners send so many of their students here – more than 723,000 last year.

Plus, international students bring over \$20 billion a year to the American economy. The state-by-state breakdown, in your registration packet, is impressive, too. In just one academic year, international students brought over \$150 million to Rhode Island, a billion to Texas, \$2.8 billion to California, and half a billion dollars to Indiana, my home state.

A quick anecdote. I learned just this week of a fascinating study by an American university. The study showed that international students bring more money to the economy of their region each year (\$100 million) than does the local professional football team (\$80 million).

Out of 21 million American college students, only 1% of them study abroad. And, less than four percent of their peers are foreign students, although that number is inching up.

We need many more. With 60 percent of the world's population under 30, it makes sense to build strong relationships with a younger and more diverse audience.

The United States can, and must, do better. Now is the time for all of us to redouble our efforts to increase international study.

II.

This brings me to my second point—how education is a vital part of 21st century diplomacy.

Dozens of our programs bring foreign students and scholars to the U.S. and send Americans abroad. We help foreign candidates learn English and provide educational advising, so that they can study here. And we help American students learn foreign languages.

We send undergraduates, graduate students, administrators, faculty, and researchers on short- and long-term programs in the U.S. and abroad. We run institutes for foreign student leaders on our campuses, and provide grants to U.S. colleges and universities who want to develop study abroad programs.

I know you're familiar with our flagship Fulbright Program, which each year supports more than 7,500 U.S. and foreign participants, and now boasts over 300,000 alumni from 150 countries around the world. The Fulbright Program has a long and proud history. This year we will mark the 60th anniversary of the program in Japan, Germany, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Sweden and Zimbabwe. And yet Fulbright is just as meaningful, just as relevant today as at any time in its history.

In short, the State Department has created programs for every type of participant, from almost anywhere in the world. And that's the reason we want to work closely with you to expand study abroad opportunities for every American.

Foreign governments are more interested than ever in sending their students here, and our government is doing all we can to help them.

President Obama has led that effort with "100,000 Strong," a private sector partnership to increase the number of American students studying in China, and the diversity of students studying abroad. The State Department already sends more students to China than to any other country in the world. And China is the leading destination for our Gilman Scholars. This undergraduate study abroad initiative focuses on students from non-traditional backgrounds. The minority representation in the program is two to three times that of study abroad programs overall. Moreover, half of them are the first in their families to go to college.

The President also announced a similar goal to promote exchanges in both directions with Latin America. That goal complements the effort our Brazilian partners are making. President Dilma Rousseff recently announced "Science Without Borders," an initiative to send 75,000 Brazilian

science students and researchers abroad. Half of those students will come to the U.S. This semester, we welcomed the first class of 650 students to the United States. By the way, President Rouseff is a State Department exchange program alumna.

In fact, more than 340 of our exchange participants have gone on to be heads of state or government in their home country. More than 50 are now Nobel Laureates.

People-to-people connections also strengthen our profile in “frontline” states. Our Pakistani Fulbright Program brings students and scholars to the U.S. It’s our largest in the world. We also have an active Fulbright program and other exchanges with Afghanistan.

In Iraq, our educational engagement is growing rapidly. Two weeks ago, I met with the Minister of Higher Education and other leaders at a Washington conference of U.S. and Iraq universities. Our goal is to build a stronger Iraqi education system and to increase our educational connections.

The Iraqi government is funding two major scholarship programs to send 20,000 students abroad. We’re working to make sure plenty of those students come here. Last year, we had a 45% increase in the number of Iraqis studying in the U.S.—that’s over 600 students!

The Iraq Fulbright Program is one of our biggest successes. Reestablished in 2003, it has grown into the region’s largest Program—and one of the largest in the world. 77 Fulbrighters are in the U.S. right now, and we’re expecting 70 more later this year.

Our EducationUSA advising network is another key program bringing students here. Last fall, we hosted a conference in Erbil for 1,500 students and representatives from 21 American colleges. Students learned how to navigate the American college admissions process, and college officials saw firsthand what Iraqi students could mean for their campuses.

Education exchanges are also an opportunity to introduce ourselves to a new generation of foreign leaders. Nowhere is this more apparent than in post-Arab Awakening countries, like Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya.

Take Libya, where youth have been vital change agents. Recently, Secretary Clinton announced the reinstatement of Libya’s Fulbright Program. Within a month, 1,700 Libyans had applied - ten times the amount of applications as before - with more than half of them from outside Tripoli. And, the Libyan government wants this program to grow.

We’re also engaged in strategic education dialogues with India, Indonesia, Russia, and other partners. Together, through exchanges, English teaching, and private sector activities, we’re increasing educational programming and cooperation.

Let’s look at India. In the last three years, the Fulbright-Nehru Program has tripled in size. In 2009, President Obama and Prime Minister Singh announced the Obama-Singh 21st Century

Knowledge Initiative for higher education partnerships in priority fields—like energy, agriculture, and public health. Each of our countries has pledged \$5 million for this effort.

In October, Secretary Clinton and Kapil Sibal, the Indian Minister of Human Resource Development, hosted a Higher Education Summit here. Three hundred senior government, higher education and private sector leaders from both countries sought new areas for partnership and innovation.

Alongside these efforts, President Obama and President Yudhoyono of Indonesia agreed to an ongoing higher education partnership. The U.S. government has committed \$165 million over five years to this effort. Already, record numbers of Americans and Indonesians are on these exchanges.

The U.S.-Indonesia Fulbright Program, the largest in Asia, has three hundred participants. More good news ahead: 25 university-to-university linkages will be up and running in the next five years. At U.S. community colleges, Indonesian students, teachers, and administrators are pursuing certificates in key development areas. And through intensive summer programs, American students are studying Indonesian. We've also doubled our English language programs to create opportunities for Indonesians to study in the U.S.

I've been to Indonesia twice in the last year, and I can tell you—it's working.

In short, we have arrived at a point where it is almost impossible to conceive of a major bilateral initiative that does not include a higher educational component.

III.

On the whole, the State Department's array of educational programs has a particularly long reach, geographically and otherwise. We help students navigate unfamiliar systems and new languages. We work with foreign governments to shape mutually beneficial outcomes. And, we partner with educational institutions and nonprofits to see all of our goals become reality.

We've formed strong, strategic relationships with countries in every corner of the world so that they can turn around and partner with you. In other cases, you have been in the lead and we have benefited from the pioneering efforts of your institutions.

We can't reach any of these goals without your help. As leaders and administrators of this country's academic institutions, we are looking to you to help to get the word out and set an example for others.

Education is a cornerstone of the United States' international engagement, now and for generations to come. Continue to make these exchanges—and the overall internationalization of your campus—a priority.

These programs matter because they work. They're the best in the world. So please, use them. Talk with your students and make sure they know to take advantage of everything an international education can offer—and everything we at the State Department can do to help them.

And now, here comes the plug. Through EducationUSA, we have the resources to concretely help you bring more foreign students to your campus. You can start by sending representatives to our Forum in June. This is a fantastic opportunity for your admissions officers. More than 50 education advisors from our world-wide network will be in Washington that week. For international education professionals, this event is not to be missed.

In closing, let me say that the U.S. government is here in a variety of roles. We are a supporter, a convener, and a facilitator of international education.

We must continue to leverage our resources to give your campuses and student bodies an international boost. We want to cultivate a new generation of students who understand what it means to be a citizen of the world.

Even when conditions are challenging and relationships between governments are tense, our citizens can and do build mutual understanding and friendship. World leaders understand this—which is the reason foreign governments always ask us for education and exchange programs. And, our connections to our higher education community are critical to helping us meet these goals.

So please, engage with us! This is above all a team effort, and the State Department is ready and willing to be your partner.

Thank you.

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