

THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERNATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION AT THE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

AMERICAN LEADERSHIP IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Our nation's standing abroad, its economic competitiveness, and its ability to confront global challenges hinge on our ability to engage with diverse cultures at home and around the globe.

- *Economic Competitiveness:* Exports represent a great and growing share of our economy, with trade accounting for one in five American jobs today.¹ From 2009-2014, exports of U.S. firms drove 8% of U.S. job growth and 30% of all U.S. GDP growth.² U.S. business leaders, especially in small and medium sized firms, recognize that going global pays off. A 2014 survey of 850 U.S. corporations found that 85% believe that with more international expertise on staff their business would increase.³ Ensuring that graduates are prepared to meet this need is critical to strengthening America's position globally, expanding job growth at home, and turning trade deficits into surpluses.
- *Confronting Global Challenges:* Many of our most pressing challenges at home and abroad are global in nature: from pandemics, to food security and threats to communications, transportation, and financial systems. These challenges to our national interests require a workforce with international, cultural and language skills in science, agriculture, medicine, nursing, engineering, law, cyber security, aviation administration and more.⁴
- *Effective Military and Diplomatic Engagement:* In recent years, new and complex challenges from a series of unexpected upheavals and armed conflicts around the world revealed our shortfalls in required regional and language expertise.⁵ Congressional hearings have documented these shortages as hampering U.S. readiness.⁶ The U.S. Department of Defense reported in one hearing that only 28% of military positions with language requirements were filled with personnel at the required proficiency level.⁷

To ensure that Americans are better prepared to lead globally, we urge the Trump Administration to invest in the Department of Education's Title VI and Fulbright-Hays programs.

BACKGROUND TITLE VI AND FULBRIGHT-HAYS

A key component of the Department of Education's mission is to "promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness." The Department of Education's Title VI and Fulbright-Hays programs support and partner with our educational institutions to ensure that we are fully prepared to engage in our globalized world. They are our nation's foundational and most comprehensive programs for fulfilling our varied and critical global missions. Other federal language programs in the Departments of Defense, State, and Commerce, which have more targeted priorities, depend on the infrastructure and resources created by these programs.

Title VI is currently providing funding for:

- **National Resource Centers** at U.S. universities to teach and study the languages and cultures of regions
- **Foreign Language and Area Studies** fellowships to enable study of lesser taught languages and regions
- **Language Resource Centers** which improve national capacity for teaching languages through teacher training and pedagogy research and development
- **Centers for International Business Education and Research** which improve international business education and research and serve as resources for businesses and educational institutions seeking to internationalize

- **American Overseas Research Centers**, which promote international scholarly exchange, primarily through sponsorship of fellowship programs, foreign language study, and collaborative research projects
- The **Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language Program**, which funds efforts to establish and strengthen undergraduate programs in international and area studies and foreign languages

Fulbright-Hays is the overseas component, currently offering grants in three programs:

- **Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad** which supports doctoral students in foreign language and area studies in overseas research
- **Group Projects Abroad** which supports overseas projects in training, research, and curriculum development in foreign languages and area studies for teachers, students and faculty
- **Seminars Abroad** which funds 4-6 week study and travel seminars abroad for U.S. educators (including K-12) to improve their understanding and knowledge of the peoples and cultures of other world regions

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS EFFECTIVELY ADDRESS NATIONAL NEEDS

Produce Deep Expertise – Title VI and Fulbright-Hays strengthen and ensure our nation’s educational capacity and deep knowledge about all world regions, international business, and over 200 foreign languages, and at all levels of education. For example, studies have shown that Title VI National Resource Centers account for 59% of undergraduate and 81% of graduate enrollments in the least commonly taught languages of strategic interest.⁸

Fill high-skill positions – 90% of Fulbright-Hays DDRA recipients and 71% of FLAS recipients work in careers that directly utilize their foreign language and area studies expertise.⁹ Many graduates, such as former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, go on to careers in the government including at the Department of Defense, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of State, NASA, NSA, Commerce and USAID, among others.¹⁰

Promote broad global competencies – Title VI grantees regularly conduct outreach activities to educational institutions, business, government, the media, and underrepresented populations. For example, they ensure that a wide range of faculty and teachers have the capacity and curricular resources to teach foreign languages and the history, cultures, and business practices of all world regions to K-16 students. Title VI supported the development of more than half the textbooks now in use in teaching “less commonly taught” languages.¹¹

Stimulate economic growth and job creation – Title VI spearheads nationwide internationalization of business education to train students and business managers for success in the global marketplace. From 1987 - 2009, more than 7,000 international business courses were created by CIBERs and nearly 250,000 students graduated from a CIBER university with a concentration in international business.¹² CIBERs also assist small and medium sized firms in internationalizing their business. During this timeframe, nearly 300,000 executives have been trained by CIBERs, and over 9000 business conferences and workshops have been held for over 800,000 business participants.¹³

FUNDING REQUEST

To continue and expand this strong record of achievement and meet the growing need for international expertise across all fields, we urge the Trump Administration to recognize the importance of international education in the Administration’s strategic vision for the Department of Education. President Trump’s first Presidential Budget Request (FY 2018) will fund the next competition for 4-year grants to the major Title VI programs. We urge the Administration to support a robust increase in funding for these programs beginning in FY 2018.

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- ¹ [The Language and Benefits of Trade](#), Business Roundtable, 2013
- ² [Going Global to Boost Local Economies](#), Global Metropolitan Initiative, Brookings Institution, 2014; [The Role of Exports in the U.S. Economy](#), U.S. Department of Commerce, 2014.
- ³ [2014 U.S. Business Needs for Employees with International Expertise](#), Shirley K. Daniel and Ben Kedia, for [Internationalization of U.S. Education in the 21st Century Conference](#), 2014.
- ⁴ [National Security in the Global Era](#), Thomas Fingar, former Deputy Director of National Intelligence for Analysis and Chairman of the National Intelligence Council, Stanford University, for [Internationalization of U.S. Education in the 21st Century Conference](#), 2014; ⁴ [The internationalization of Professional Education: Lessons from the Law School and China](#), Jacques deLisle, University of Pennsylvania, for [Internationalization of U.S. Education in the 21st Century Conference](#), 2014; [The University of Rhode Island Engineering Program: A Model for Internationalizing the STEM Disciplines](#), John Grandin and Sigrid Berka, University of Rhode Island, for [Internationalization of U.S. Education in the 21st Century Conference](#), 2014.
- ⁵ [Government has foreign language deficit](#), Joe Davidson, The Washington Post, May 21, 2012
- ⁶ [Comprehensive Plan Needed to Address Persistent Language Shortfalls](#), GAO, September 2009.
- ⁷ [Consultation with Federal Agencies on Areas of National Need](#), U.S. Department of Education; [A National Security Crisis: Foreign Language Capabilities in the Federal Government](#), Committee on Homeland Security, May 21, 2012.
- ⁸ Language and National Security: The Federal Role in Building Language Capacity in the United States, Richard D. Brecht and William P. Rivers, The National Foreign Language Center at the University of Maryland, 2001.
- ⁹ [FLAS Tracking Survey Results](#), U.S. Department of Education, 2015.
- ¹⁰ "U.S. Global Competence: The Role of International and Foreign Language Education," A Capitol Hill Briefing, Coalition for International Education, 2015.
- ¹¹ Language and National Security: The Federal Role in Building Language Capacity in the United States, Richard D. Brecht and William P. Rivers, The National Foreign Language Center at the University of Maryland, 2001.
- ¹² [Increasing US Global Competitiveness through International Business Education](#), U.S. Department of Education.
- ¹³ [Increasing US Global Competitiveness through International Business Education](#), U.S. Department of Education.