



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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A NATIONAL DIALOGUE: THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION'S COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

THE CHALLENGE

America has the best system of higher education in the world. And we have a responsibility to make sure that system continues to meet our nation's needs for an educated and competitive workforce in the 21st century.

- Over 80 percent of the fastest-growing jobs require at least some postsecondary education.
- In today's global economy, the best jobs go to the most skilled and most motivated workers.

As a result, a college education is more important today than ever before. We need a coordinated approach to meet these changing economic demands and rising enrollment numbers.

We need national leadership on this issue. The federal government is a big investor in higher education. But we do not ask many questions about what we want from this investment. It is time to have a national discussion on how we can ensure our system of higher education remains the best in the world and provides more opportunity for all Americans.

A NATIONAL DIALOGUE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

The Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education will lead this national debate. We must develop a comprehensive national strategy for postsecondary education. The commission will answer vital questions such as:

- How can we ensure that college is affordable and accessible?
- How well are institutions of higher education preparing our students to compete in the new global economy?

The commission will submit a final report by August 1, 2006 with specific findings and recommendations. The final report will serve as a blueprint for a 21st century higher education system.

Everyone has a stake in our higher education system and the outcome of this debate. The commission will include policymakers, members of the business community, researchers, and leaders of the academic community.

President Bush often remarks that we are in a period of historic economic change: an economy where technology is transforming nearly every job. Our system of higher education must change as well to meet these new demands. Throughout our history, America has answered the call to extend the promise of higher education to more Americans. Now it is our turn to act. We must address these issues. Our nation's future depends on it.