

Remarks by Assistant Secretary Ann Stock
“Advancing Internationalization:
Communities and Campuses Working Together”
American Council on Education’s
Internationalization Collaborative Annual Meeting
February 3, 2011 at 1:15 p.m.
The Westin Washington City Center
1400 M Street, NW

Thank you for the generous introduction, Shirley. Good afternoon. I am so pleased to speak at this important meeting of the Internationalization Collaborative. I especially want to thank your President, Molly Corbett Broad, for her leadership. She works tirelessly to convey the value of U.S. higher education to audiences here and abroad, and I appreciate her efforts.

A-C-E is a valuable partner for the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. In light of today’s challenging economic conditions and constrained resources, thank you for the work you do to advance and sustain international education. A-C-E members are an important voice in our national conversation on how education and international engagement contributes to America’s leadership both here and abroad. I also want to thank you for the assistance that you and your institutions provide to our State Department academic exchange programs – Fulbright, Gilman, Humphrey, Community College Initiative and so many more. Without your support, these programs could not take place.

I know I speak for President Obama and Secretary Clinton who strongly support and value our partnerships with organizations like A-C-E as a cornerstone of our public diplomacy efforts. They know that people-to-people exchanges are a transformative experience. These programs transcend daily politics and daily headlines. They open minds and change lives forever. At the State Department, we are committed to increasing the number and the diversity of students who study in this country-- as well as our American students who study abroad. We need and welcome your partnership in this effort.

In 2009, at her New York University commencement speech, Secretary of State Clinton said, and I want to read this because I want to get it exactly right, “...study abroad is like spring training for this century: it helps you develop the fundamentals, the teamwork, and the determination to succeed. And we want more American students to have that opportunity.”

Your mission has never been more relevant than it is today. It is instructive to consider how it has evolved over time. Born out of the demands of World War I for certain technical skills, A-C-E has for more than 90 years been an invaluable force in the advancement of education and understanding. A-C-E regularly hosts foreign education leaders in the United States, helping them understand our higher education system and to work with our institutions. We appreciate your willingness to engage higher education leaders overseas, as Molly did when she joined Dr. Jill Biden’s U.S. delegation to UNESCO’s World Conference on Higher Education last year.

When I received your invitation, I was struck by how the conference topics track with trends we are pursuing at the Department. Let me cite just a few: engaging the private sector – which we need to do more and more, leveraging technology, focusing on service learning, and creating global

citizens. These topics are all of profound and immediate concern for us both. We know that many colleges and universities have adopted internationalization in bits and pieces... recruiting international students or encouraging their students to study abroad. But internationalization is most effective when all the parts fit together, complementing one another and building synergies that will benefit your entire campus and also your community.

So I am here today to salute our common cause – the advancement of international education – and to share with you the ways that we can continue to partner in this great cause. America’s educational system is decidedly unique. It is not only the high quality of our education and advanced research; it is the openness, the diversity and the vitality of our entire education system. The great variety of our institutions’ size, focus, and philosophy means that there is a proper place for every student—a place where they can grow and succeed, where character and values are as important as knowledge and skills. International students provide important economic benefits to the U.S. economy, including nearly \$20 billion a year in the form of direct spending on tuition, housing and other expenses, as well as the development of future economic partners for the U.S.

Our higher education institutions receive the world’s best and brightest students, many of whom become future leaders in their home countries. Their experience here fosters collaboration and long-term relationships with Americans in all fields of study. Maintaining the U.S. as the top destination for the world’s students and scholars is a vital national priority, and if Secretary Clinton were here today, she would say it is an essential component of our nation’s public diplomacy.

I was pleased to see in our most recent Open Doors report that:

- 262,000 American students studied abroad.
- More and more American students are choosing to study in non-traditional destinations.
- More students are seeking career-relevant skills, including the study of the ten or twelve most critical world languages.
- And students from fields such as business and the hard sciences, traditionally underrepresented in international exchanges, are increasingly looking for career-relevant opportunities to study abroad.

This is good news, but we’re not finished enhancing the reach of our programs. At ECA, we are committed to increasing these numbers and expanding study abroad opportunities. To ensure that we continue to support the next generation of global leaders, the State Department supports more than 400 Education USA Advising Centers in nearly every country in the world.

Each year, thanks to our partnership with A-C-E, we reach several million international students who are eager to study in the U.S. and need help to navigate through our higher education system and its application process. We provide these students with comprehensive information about study opportunities and guide them through this process, including their visa applications.

EducationUSA has grown rapidly over the past year, taking action to reach students where they already are, rather than waiting for them to find us. In the six months ending last December, we reached over 800,000 students through mobile advising...and that is just the beginning. We expanded our marketing materials, providing 150 different marketing products designed for specific country needs to over 700,000 students.

Today, nearly half of the world's population (almost 3 billion people) is under the age of 25. Finding new ways to communicate with and engage these young citizens of the world is critical. We must strengthen our bonds with them—reaching them wherever they are around the globe, by using every tool at our command, including new media. To do this, we have established over 90 Facebook sites both globally and on local networks. In Sudan, one education adviser is reaching hundreds of students regularly through SMS, while our EducationUSA advising staff in China has established an important presence on national social media networks. In the last six months EducationUSA has reached nearly 700,000 people world-wide through social media –and that is only going to grow.

In fact, last summer I took a leap into the 21st century by joining Twitter. Follow me @AnnatState so that we can stay connected after this conference ends. For American students studying overseas, the Benjamin Gilman Program is an important vehicle that helps undergraduates of limited financial means to spend their junior year abroad.

Our strong partnership with the U.S. higher education community is a key element in the Gilman Program's success. I want to thank you for your contribution to its achievements. Since it started in 2001, 8,800 Gilman Scholarships have been awarded to undergraduate students. They represent nearly 900 colleges and universities from all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico – and study in 116 countries around the world. This year, we increased the number of Gilman scholarships to more than 2,000- more than double the number from three years ago. Minority participation from the African-American, Latino, and Asian communities is two to three times the rate of participation by these groups in U.S. study abroad overall. Nearly half of all Gilman students are first-generation college students.

And believe me, I know how important this is; I was the first person in my family to go to college. Two weeks ago, at Howard University, I had the privilege of joining First Lady Michele Obama for an event highlighting the importance of study abroad. The event was organized to celebrate the China State Visit of President Hu Jintao. Mrs. Obama's broader message was about the value of global engagement through learning. Over a thousand students from public and private schools, colleges and universities in Washington and across the nation filled the room. More than 2,000 people tuned into a live webcast of the event.

I moderated a panel with four young scholars who had recently studied in China. Each student shared stories of their life-changing experiences abroad. On the panel, and in the audience, were Fulbrighters, Gilman Scholars, and participants in the Department's critical language programs. Having the First Lady's personal support is a tremendous boost for these superb international education programs. But the stories from the students of their paths to study abroad were equally inspiring.

In closing, I want to underscore that what really drives and inspires each of us here today is the human dimension—the faces that make the data a reality. I think all of us would agree that this fact was brought home to all of us this week as we watched history unfold in the streets and squares of cities throughout Egypt. The events in Egypt have galvanized many parts of our society and our government. Over the past several days, ECA staff has been consumed by the effort to contact each of our exchange participants in Egypt. There are Fulbright scholars, Fulbright students, Gilman Fellows, English Language specialists, and even seven teenagers, high school students on ECA's National Security Language Initiative.

Many of your institutions you represent have played a vital role in helping your students and faculty depart Egypt or stay, if that was their choice, in safe surroundings. Our colleagues in Egypt have worked tirelessly to bring these students and scholars from their homes and dorms to airports in Cairo and Alexandria. Department officers stationed at the airports helped them board and our Embassies in Europe met them when they arrived in cities such as Athens, Istanbul and Nicosia.

Nothing could so vividly impress on our minds and hearts that education is not about classes and textbooks, not about laboratories and laptops—it is about people, and the cause of learning, and freedom of inquiry.

Thank you again for the invitation to speak with you today, and for your contributions to our shared mission. I'm looking forward to working together with you as we move forward.