



**NEWS RELEASE:**  
The American Council on Education

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**EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE:**  
Noon EST, Tuesday, March 14, 2006

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**AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION LAUNCHES FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND  
CAMPAIGN ON BENEFITS OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO SOCIETY**

*“Solutions for Our Future” Initiative to Open Dialogue with Local Communities*

**Washington, DC (March 14, 2006)** – The American Council on Education (ACE), along with nearly 400 colleges and universities across the country and through generous support from corporate partners, today launched a national public outreach campaign designed to raise awareness about higher education’s critical role in the future of our country.

*Solutions for Our Future* is a multi-year effort aimed at establishing a dialogue with local communities and policy makers about the broad societal benefits of higher education. The campaign will utilize national television, radio and newspaper advertisements, an interactive web site ([www.solutionsforourfuture.org](http://www.solutionsforourfuture.org)), and the grassroots participation of member campuses and local stakeholders to convey how America’s colleges and universities teach the people who solve our problems and change our world.

**Campaign Goals**

*Solutions for Our Future* has three primary goals: (1) increase awareness of the public benefits of higher education; (2) enable every campus to do its part in meeting the nation’s needs for higher education; and (3) make higher education a public policy priority.

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The campaign will center around four core messages:

- Well-educated citizens are crucial to America’s ability to confront the challenges of the future.
- Our colleges and universities contribute to the economy, well-being, and quality of life in our country.
- Our country must continue to expand college access and achievement to build the human capital necessary to succeed in the international knowledge economy.
- America must sustain public investment in higher education to meet the needs of the future.

“Our country continues to reap concrete benefits from public investments in higher education and in research made 40 and 50 years ago,” said ACE President David Ward. “We have an obligation to future generations to make similar investments today to ensure that colleges and universities continue to generate new ideas and new technologies and educate the people who will have the know-how and the insight to solve problems and improve the quality of our lives.”

Research conducted for the *Solutions* campaign shows that 92 percent of respondents agree that actions taken today on higher education policy will be critical to U.S. competitive leadership in the world 25 years from now. However, only 33 percent of respondents realize colleges and universities are a primary source of ideas for innovations and solutions in America. The *Solutions* campaign is intended to highlight evidence of higher education’s contributions to society today and make it a public priority so colleges and universities can continue to meet the needs of our communities and nation tomorrow.

### **A Unique Public Outreach Effort**

The *Solutions* campaign is unique in that it relies on individual colleges and universities to engage in a give-and-take dialogue with the communities where they are located. This dialogue will focus on specific contributions the local college or university makes to society, and what they can do to better serve their community.

“I know that my institution, like many other institutions, is located on a hilltop—and I think the public too often thinks about colleges and universities as being on figurative hilltops and not involved in their local communities,” said Syracuse University Chancellor Nancy Cantor, chair of the ACE Board of Directors. “We in higher education have to come down off our collective hilltops and work with the public, work with business and community leaders, and proactively demonstrate our value to the larger society using methods and language that are easily understood.”

“Imagine for just a moment the impact we could have on the public at large if all of higher education—two-year, four-year, public and private institutions—would unleash its considerable communication efforts around a few well-developed messages on the central role higher education plays in advancing our communities,” said University System of Maryland Chancellor William Kirwan. “It is a task worthy of our time and attention because nothing less than the future well-being of our nation is at stake.”

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## **TV and Print Public Service Announcements**

The public will see the first visible sign of the *Solutions* campaign starting Thursday, March 16 when public service announcements begin airing on CBS and ESPN—via time provided by the NCAA—during coverage of the NCAA men’s and women’s Division 1 basketball championships. The PSAs will continue to run on ESPN coverage of the NCAA championships throughout the remainder of the spring.

Fox Television is also providing the *Solutions* campaign with major visibility. During March, the Fox Networks Group will air the PSAs across its 29 cable and broadcast networks.

Full-page print advertisements will run in *The Wall Street Journal*, reaching the nation's top decision-makers.

The television ads were developed by Austin, Texas-based advertising agency GSD&M.

"Our approach in the *Solutions* effort is to use humor to communicate our sense of purpose and go against the stereotype that higher education takes itself far too seriously," said Roy Spence, president and founder of GSD&M. "But I can assure you that we are about a very serious purpose in this campaign. While the United States should be justly proud of our colleges and universities—in many ways, the best in the world—we are in danger of losing our competitive edge if we don't make an aggressive case for future investment."

Additional support for *Solutions for Our Future* comes from a full range of public and private colleges and universities, along with community and business partners including TIAA-CREF, NCAA, Campus Compact and FirstWorthing/University Partners of Dallas, Texas. First Worthing Chairman Bob Utley commended the higher education community for its focus on showing benefits to society.

“This is new for colleges and universities, and it shows how they’re living in the real world, where real issues need the help of America’s best and brightest,” said Utley.

*Founded in 1918, ACE is the major coordinating body for all the nation's higher education institutions, representing more than 1,600 college and university presidents, and more than 200 related associations, nationwide. It seeks to provide leadership and a unifying voice on key higher education issues and influence public policy through advocacy, research, and program initiatives.*

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**Editor’s Note:** Media may view the campaign PSAs at <http://www.solutionsforourfuture.org/media> beginning at 8 a.m. Tuesday, March 14, 2006. The material may also be viewed at <http://www.acenet.edu/solutions/media>.

**SOLUTIONSFOROURFUTURE.org**