

International Education Benefits the U.S. Economy

As our country is transfixed by the current economic crisis, U.S. policymakers recognize that there will not be one simple solution that will get our economy back on track. There are difficult choices ahead, and it will be important for policymakers to understand that we must continue to invest in our long-term future, even while we deal with this immediate crisis at hand. Part of the solution to our economic challenges – both short-term and long-term – lies in tapping into an essential but undervalued resource: the international students, scholars, and scientists here in the United States who are aiding our economy, advancing innovation, and preparing American students for entering the global workforce.

- **International education generates billions of dollars for the U.S. economy.**
NAFSA estimates that international students and their dependents contribute approximately \$15.54 billion to the U.S. economy, making international education the fifth largest U.S. service export, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce. At a time when many of our colleges and universities are cash-strapped, it is important to remember what valuable assets foreign students are, not only for our economy, but also for the quality of our education system.
- **International education prepares American students for a global workplace.**
International education does much more than open eyes and broaden perspectives. To be competitive in today's job market, Americans must have more than a cursory understanding of other countries and other cultures. Our higher education system must produce graduates that have the advanced international and foreign-language expertise required in today's workplace.
- **Americans benefit from international academic talent.**
Some of the world's most talented people choose to study, teach, and conduct research in the United States. In doing so, they impart a number of benefits to this country, not the least of which is that their presence creates a top-notch educational experience for American students. The international students studying here also forge ties with Americans that will serve us well into the future, whether these students immediately depart or remain here to contribute to our economy and spark innovation.