

**ISSUE BRIEF:**  
**Fiscal Year 2012 Budget: Issues Affecting International  
Education**



**Goal: NAFSA urges Congress to support those provisions of the administration's FY 12 budget request that further U.S. economic growth, competitiveness, and international leadership through investments in international education and exchange.**

NAFSA agrees with President Obama, and with most economists and other experts, that even as we address the deficit problem, we must continue to invest in programs and capabilities that are essential to America's ability to resume robust economic growth and maintain a strong presence in the global arena. This means that we must invest in our ability to educate, to innovate, to be a knowledge leader, to understand the world in which we live, and to be constructively engaged in the world in a way that makes us more friends and fewer enemies. It means that we must enable all Americans, and all who choose to make their lives here, to achieve their full potential and contribute to our society. We also urge Congress to understand that arbitrary cuts in non-security, discretionary spending, which constitutes only 12 percent of the budget, cannot in themselves meaningfully address the deficit, and can impede our ability to grow our way out of the deficit.

International education is integral to a successful growth strategy that will make America more innovative, competitive, prosperous, and capable of leadership on the world stage. Accordingly, NAFSA urges Congress to support the following provisions of the administration's fiscal year 2012 budget request:

## **INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

### **Investments in exchange**

*State Department educational and cultural exchange programs.*—The administration's request would maintain robust funding for exchange programs, such as the renowned Fulbright program, that are essential to America's ability to maintain ties with the world's people.

*State Department consular affairs.*—America's ability to attract international students, scholars, and exchange visitors to our country depends on an effective visa system, and our ability to protect American students and other visitors in far-flung locations abroad requires a robust consular presence. In view of this, the administration's bare-bones request for diplomatic and consular operations merits full support.

*Peace Corps.*—The administration's request would increase funding for the Peace Corps, a historically underfunded agency that is arguably the most effective public diplomacy program ever invented. The Peace Corps has made countless friends for America in villages and towns all over the world. Yet today the Peace Corps fields barely half the volunteers that it did 45 years ago.

*Continued on reverse*

### **Investments in peacebuilding**

*U.S. Institute of Peace.*—America has a vital interest in a more peaceful world in which the United States can be secure. The administration’s request would continue funding for USIP’s essential contribution to building such a world.

## **EDUCATION**

### **Investments in international education**

*Higher Education Act Title VI.*—The administration’s modest request straightlines the Education Department’s international education and foreign language studies programs, which support foreign language and area studies centers, international research and curriculum development, study abroad by American scholars, the study and teaching of international business, and activities to increase the number of underrepresented minorities in international service. In addition, the First in the World competition will enhance international education at colleges and universities.

### **Investments in Americans’ access to in-depth, reliable knowledge about world affairs**

*Corporation for Public Broadcasting.*—The United States cannot succeed and prosper in the international arena without an internationally informed citizenry. CPB’s funding for local public television provides Americans with this essential knowledge.