

**PRESS RELEASES****Secretary Spellings Announces New Commission on the Future of Higher Education****FOR RELEASE:**
September 19, 2005**Contacts:** Stephanie Babyak or Jane Glickman
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U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings today announced the formation of the Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education. The new commission is charged with developing a comprehensive national strategy for postsecondary education that will meet the needs of America's diverse population and also address the economic and workforce needs of the country's future.

Speaking at the University of North Carolina in Charlotte, Spellings said, "It is time to examine how we can get the most out of our national investment in higher education. We have a responsibility to make sure our higher education system continues to meet our nation's needs for an educated and competitive workforce in the 21st century."

Former North Carolina governor James B. Hunt joined Spellings at the UNC event and will serve on the new 19-member commission, along with university presidents, CEOs, policymakers, and researchers.

Spellings said the commission will engage students and families, policymakers, business leaders, and the academic community in a national dialogue about all key aspects of higher education. Through public hearings to be held around the country, the commission will attempt to answer questions such as: What skills will students need to succeed in the 21st century? How can we make sure America stays the world's leader in academic research? And, how can we make sure opportunities for quality higher education and best jobs are open to all students?

Spellings noted that the achievement gap is closing and test scores are rising among our nation's younger students, due largely to the high standards and accountability measures called for by the No Child Left Behind Act. More and more students are going to graduate ready for the challenges of college, she said, and we must make sure our higher education system is accessible and affordable for all these students.

"We should send students a clear message: If you work hard, you can go to college—regardless of how much money your parents make," Spellings

concluded. "I hope parents, students, and community members will take an active role in the commission's work. We all have a big stake in the outcome."

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Note to Editors: A list of commission members is attached.

A National Dialogue: The Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education

Commission Roster

Carol Bartz
Chairman of the Board, President and CEO
Autodesk, Inc.

Nicholas Donofrio
Executive Vice President for Innovation and Technology
IBM

James Duderstadt
President Emeritus
University Professor of Science and Engineering
Director, The Millennium Project
University of Michigan

Gerri Elliott
Corporate Vice President
Worldwide Public Sector
Microsoft Corporation

Kati Haycock
Director
The Education Trust

The Honorable James B. Hunt, Jr.
Chairman, James B. Hunt, Jr. Institute for Educational Leadership and Policy
Former Governor of North Carolina

Jonathan Grayer
Chairman and CEO
Kaplan, Inc.

Arturo Madrid
Murchison Distinguished Professor of the Humanities
Department of Modern Languages and Literatures
Trinity University

Robert Mendenhall
President
Western Governor's University

Charles Miller
Private Investor
Former Chairman of the Board of Regents, University of Texas System

Charlene R. Nunley
President
Montgomery College

The Honorable Arthur J. Rothkopf
Senior Vice President and Counselor to the President
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
President Emeritus, Lafayette College

Richard Stephens
Senior Vice President, Human Resources and Administration
The Boeing Company

The Honorable Louis Sullivan
President Emeritus, Morehouse School of Medicine
Former Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Sara Martinez Tucker
President and CEO
Hispanic Scholarship Fund

Richard Vedder
Adjunct Scholar, American Enterprise Institute
Distinguished Ohio University Professor of Economics

Charles M. Vest
President Emeritus
Professor of Mechanical Engineering
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

David Ward
President
American Council on Education

Robert Zemsky
Chair and Professor
The Learning Alliance for Higher Education
University of Pennsylvania

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SPEECHES

A National Dialogue: Commission on the Future of Higher Education

Prepared Remarks for Secretary Spellings at the Meeting of the Commission on the Future of Higher Education in Charlotte, North Carolina

FOR RELEASE:

September 19, 2005

Speaker sometimes deviates from text.

Thank you, Governor Hunt, for that kind introduction, and thanks for welcoming me to North Carolina.

Governor Hunt was one of the first governors to stand up and call for high standards and accountability for results for all students in primary education. He helped pioneer the standards movement in education, along with a few other governors, including one named George W. Bush. They were country before country was cool. They knew with higher standards, annual measurement, and a focus on the performance of every group of students, schools could do better. And we're seeing those principles pay off right here in North Carolina and across the country with the No Child Left Behind Act

I also want to thank Chancellor Dubois and everyone here at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte for reaching out to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina. I know North Carolina is no stranger to hurricanes, most recently Hurricane Ophelia. And as you all know, Katrina has forced hundreds of thousands of students to leave their homes and enroll in new schools across the country.

K-12 schools here in North Carolina have already helped 885 displaced students. I realize districts enrolling significant numbers of these students are facing a number of unexpected costs. We've proposed a plan to reimburse these districts for 90 percent of the cost of educating displaced students—up to \$7,500 per child.

Schools educating these students will need additional resources such as books, desks, and computers. We've launched the Hurricane Help for Schools dot gov Web page to help. It's a clearinghouse of resources to bring together businesses and organizations offering help with schools in need. We're even seeing schools reach out to donate supplies. Willis Hare Elementary School in Northampton County, N.C., has collected four large boxes full of school supplies for Napoleonville Primary School in Louisiana.

I also know that UNC Charlotte has opened its doors and classrooms to students displaced by this tragedy. And we know you're facing some unexpected costs as a result. We've proposed a plan to provide colleges with \$1,000 for every displaced student they accept. We also have proposed forgiving six months of interest on college loans for these students. And we'll make sure these students

continue to receive federal student aid. In the aftermath of a tragedy, school helps students restore a sense of normalcy and structure to their lives. So I want to thank you for welcoming these students to your campus.

This state has a long tradition of excellence in higher education. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill was the first state-supported university in the United States. And as you all know, the Charlotte area is home to several top-notch schools, including the one my oldest daughter attends just a few miles from here at Davidson. I'm honored to have President Zeiss from Central Piedmont Community College with us as well today.

And I want to thank Bob Wilhem for inviting us here to the Charlotte Research Institute. This center is bringing together the best minds from the education and business communities. Students here are learning the skills to compete in the new high-tech economy, and more industries and jobs will be coming to the Charlotte area as a result.

The message here is simple. In today's global economy, the best jobs go to the most skilled and most motivated workers. Over 80 percent of the fastest-growing jobs require at least some postsecondary education. That means a college education is more important than ever. And now is the time to have a national conversation on our goals for higher education.

The good news is that we still have the finest system of higher education in the world. But we're at a crossroads. The world is catching up. In 1970, America produced more than 50 percent of the world's doctorates. But if current trends continue, by 2010, we will produce only around 15 percent.

As taxpayers, we all have a stake in the higher education system. Most people don't realize that federal dollars make up about one-third of our nation's total annual investment in higher education. By comparison, the federal government's investment in K–12 education represents less than 10 percent of total spending.

But unlike K–12 education, we don't ask a lot of questions about what we're getting for our investment in higher education. And as a result, we're missing some valuable information to help guide policy to ensure that our system remains the finest in the world. And parents have a tough time getting answers about the way it all works.

A few weeks ago, I dropped my oldest daughter off at college to begin her freshman year. I miss her a whole lot—though I am enjoying having some hot water for my morning shower again. Unloading the car was the last step in a long college process, which started with me thumbing through college guides at Barnes & Noble.

I found plenty of information on dining hall food, intramural sports, and campus architecture. I learned at one school that you can attend a Jimmy Buffet Bash and a toga party all in one year. Who knew?

I even found one book called Schools that Rock with good tips on which schools have the best music. But I didn't find a book on "schools that engineer" or a book on "schools that prepare you for the future." And I didn't find much information on what courses to take, how long it takes the average student to graduate, and whether it's a better deal to graduate from a less-expensive state school in six years or a private school in four. I learned just how confusing the college process can be for parents. And I'm the secretary of education!

The federal government is part of the problem, too. We have around 60 different Web sites for federal financial aid and dozens of different toll-free phone numbers. We're working on a plan to streamline the process. But right now, all the forms and questionnaires can be so dense that some families just give up and incorrectly assume college is unaffordable or unattainable.

Parents need better information. And so do policymakers. It's hard to make good policy without sound data on what's working well and what needs to work better.

We all have a part to play at the federal, state, community, and private levels. I'm not advocating a bigger role for the federal government, but it's time to examine how we can get the most out of our national investment. We have a responsibility to make sure our higher education system continues to meet our nation's needs for an educated and competitive workforce in the 21st century.

That's why today I'm announcing the formation of a new commission on higher education to lead this debate. We are calling it "A National Dialogue: The Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education." The goal is to launch a national discussion on the future of higher education and how we can ensure our system remains the best in the world and provides more opportunities for all Americans.

In recent years, there have been many good studies and recommendations on different aspects of higher education such as the National Commission on Accountability in Higher Education and the National Commission on the Cost of Higher Education. It's time to review this work and take stock of where we stand. We must have a plan for moving forward. We must develop a comprehensive national strategy for postsecondary education.

We need a coordinated approach to meet rising enrollment numbers and new economic demands. The commission will tackle vital questions such as: How can we ensure that college is affordable and accessible? And how well are institutions of higher education preparing our students to compete in the new global economy?

Earlier this year, we held roundtables in Washington and Colorado to start discussing these issues. I learned that there is a real need for national leadership on this issue. I have asked the commission to probe these and other questions and submit a final report to me by August 1 of next year with specific findings and recommendations.

I want to thank all the members for volunteering their time. The members include university presidents, CEOs, policymakers, and researchers. And I am proud to have Governor Hunt on board. I've asked my good friend Charles Miller to chair this commission. He has a long history of involvement in higher education, from serving as the chairman of the Board of Regents for the University of Texas System to serving on numerous advisory panels. He's also a successful businessman, who understands what's needed to succeed in the 21st century. And he's been instrumental in improving K–12 education for many years.

We already know we must do a better job of preparing students for the challenge of college. Today, less than a third of Americans have bachelor's degrees. A recent study from ACT found that less than half of high school students graduate ready for college-level math and science. We know that students cannot be successful in higher education if they don't succeed in high school.

President Bush has proposed a plan to extend the benefits of high standards and accountability to our high schools. And we must act on it. Thanks to No Child Left Behind, we've already seen what a difference these principles have made for our younger students. Scores are rising, and the achievement gap is closing.

As we improve the quality of high school, more and more students will graduate ready for college. Our higher education system needs to have place for all these students who choose to continue their education. We should send students a clear message: If you work hard, you can go to college—regardless of how much money your parents make.

Throughout our history, we've answered the call to extend the promise of higher education to more Americans with bold measures like the Land Grant Act of 1862, the G.I. Bill of 1944, and the Higher Education Act of 1965. When the Soviet Union launched Sputnik in 1957, America answered with an unprecedented national investment in math and science education that secured our place as the world's leader in innovation and research.

Now it's our turn to act. And that's why today I'm launching this national dialogue. We must address these issues. Our future depends on it. I hope parents, students, and members of the education community will take an active role in the commission's work. We all have a big stake in the outcome. Thank you.

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BOARDS & COMMISSIONS

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.

Spellings Announces Commission on Future of Higher Ed (September 19, 2005)



Secretary Spellings and Governor Hunt of North Carolina at the announcement of the formation of the Secretary's Commission on the Future of Higher Education.





U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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

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