

November 30, 2012

**Memorandum**

**To:** Council on Federal Relations  
Council of Governmental Affairs

**From:** Matt Owens and Mollie Flounlacker, AAU  
Jennifer Poulakidas and Craig Lindwarm, APLU  
Terry Hartle and Becky Timmons, ACE

**Subject:** The Coalition for International Education

Dear Colleagues,

As we all agree, the need for international education and foreign-language training is more important now than ever before, particularly with documented shortages of language-proficient workers. Yet, despite the critical need and shortage of American workers capable of engaging internationally, the challenges in securing federal funding for the programs that support their training have perhaps never been greater.

The Association of American Universities (AAU), Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), and American Council on Education (ACE) remain committed to strengthening the foreign language and international education pipeline to meet the nation's need for a steady supply of graduates who can engage internationally in the educational, governmental, and business sectors. Given the immense challenges likely ahead in securing funding for the programs that support such training, the three associations thought it wise to both assess the effectiveness of past advocacy efforts and plan for strengthened efforts in the future, including a review of our role in the Coalition for International Education.

Though modestly funded from the start and cut deeply in recent years, the Department of Education's Title VI/Fulbright-Hays programs are the federal government's most comprehensive programs for supporting instruction in less-commonly taught languages, particularly from regions of national strategic importance; researching issues important to our national security; and providing global learning experiences for American students.

Unfortunately, these programs have suffered from several recent funding and policy challenges. These have included a combination of federal budget pressures, the loss of Congressional champions for Title VI programs, and lack of support from the Department of Education and the Office of Management and Budget. All of these challenges played a role in the drastic 40% cuts to Title VI programs in FY2011. Unfortunately, the same challenges that led to the cuts in FY2011 still remain. The Administration's major shift in international education plans to focus more on broad global competencies among K-16 students and less on the intended goals of the Title VI programs to increase deep expertise in foreign languages and area and international studies is a clear sign that these challenges will not abate in the near future.

Just recently, the Department of Education released its international education strategy for 2012-2016. The only mention of Title VI in the report was in relation to the programs benefitting a "relatively small number of students" and that the Department is exploring how to "leverage" the programs to "achieve broad global competencies for more students and teachers."

In addition to the challenges within Congress and the Administration, the advocacy reach of the Coalition for International Education, representing 30 national higher education organizations, has suffered in recent years. With the help of an independent consulting firm, the Oldaker Group, the associations have identified several areas of weakness in past advocacy efforts, including lack of consistent contacts with House and Senate appropriators and authorizers, lack of coordination with internal campus constituencies, particularly federal relations officers in planning funding strategies, and out of date messaging and rationales for funding requests.

As a result of the broad challenges and internal issues related to the operations of the Coalition for International Education, AAU, APLU, and ACE have decided that the Coalition is not sufficiently serving our present needs and therefore we feel we should not continue as members at this time. Instead, AAU, APLU, and ACE will develop a new advocacy strategy in broad consultation with the international education community to more aggressively protect and strengthen Title VI/Fulbright Hays programs.

While the Coalition for International Education can no doubt serve a valuable role for some, particularly in providing campus international constituencies with grant solicitations and regulatory-related information, we believe that our associations, in collaboration with campus federal relations officers, can effectively advocate for the Title VI/Fulbright Hays programs. Therefore, AAU, ACE, and APLU are withdrawing from the Coalition.

As we go forward, it is clear that a coordinated strategy in support of the Title VI/Fulbright Hays programs will be important to improving our advocacy. We appreciate the dedicated efforts of the Coalition for International Education and look forward to working with you and others in the international education community to develop and execute a strategy and various activities on behalf of these programs.