

Free Executive Summary



International Education and Foreign Languages: Keys to Securing America's Future

Committee to Review the Title VI and Fulbright-Hays International Education Programs, Mary Ellen O'Connell and Janet L. Norwood, editors, National Research Council

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Executive Summary

A pervasive lack of knowledge about foreign cultures and foreign languages threatens the security of the United States as well as its ability to compete in the global marketplace and produce an informed citizenry. The U.S. education system has, in recent years, placed little value on speaking languages other than English or on understanding cultures other than one's own. Although there have been times in the country's history when foreign languages were considered as important as mathematics and science, they have reemerged as a significant concern primarily after major events that presented immediate and direct threats to the country's future. Most recently, the events of September 11, 2001, compelled the federal government to reflect on the expertise of its personnel and to focus attention on the need for more and better language skills, particularly in certain languages considered critical.

It would be shortsighted, however, to limit national attention to the needs of government alone. Language skills and cultural expertise are also urgently needed to address economic challenges and the strength of American businesses in an increasingly global marketplace. Professions such as law, health care, social work, and education call out for an international dimension that reflects the changed world environment and increasingly diverse U.S. population. The U.S. education system—from elementary and secondary school to higher education—needs the capacity to provide the requisite training. Higher education needs the capacity to serve as a resource on the politics, economics, religions, and cultures of countries across the globe, countries whose positions on the world stage change over time, often in unpredictable ways. The Title VI and Fulbright-Hays (Title VI/FH)

programs are designed to help to serve these broader societal and educational goals as well as to help respond to specific government needs.

During the most recent reauthorization debates related to the Higher Education Act, questions were raised about one set of programs that are designed to help address these needs—the Title VI programs of the Higher Education Act and the education component of the Fulbright-Hays Act. In response, at the request of Congress, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) asked the National Research Council to review the adequacy and effectiveness of these programs in addressing their statutory missions and in building the nation's international and foreign language expertise—particularly as needed for economic, foreign affairs, and national security purposes—and to provide recommendations to enhance future effectiveness. The committee was asked to consider eight key areas specified by Congress in conducting its review. (Box ES-1 presents a list of the eight.)

The Title VI/FH programs were created nearly 50 years ago in response to concerns raised by the Soviet Union's launch of Sputnik and at the time consisted of three programs: the National Resource Centers (NRC), the Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowships, and International Research and Studies. As a result of reauthorization every six years, programs were added to Title VI to address business needs for international expertise, to improve the programs' reach to undergraduate education, to

BOX ES-1
Key Areas Identified by Congress

1. Infusing a foreign language and area studies dimension throughout the education system and across relevant disciplines, including professional education.
2. Conducting public outreach/dissemination to K-12 and higher education, media, government, business, and the public.
3. Reducing shortages of foreign language and area experts.
4. Supporting research, education, and training in foreign languages and international studies, including opportunities for such research, education, and training overseas.
5. Producing relevant instructional materials that meet accepted scholarly standards.
6. Advancing uses of new technology in foreign language and international studies.
7. Addressing business needs for international knowledge and foreign language skills.
8. Increasing the numbers of underrepresented minorities in international service.

focus on international studies as well as area studies, to create new centers focused on language support overseas research centers, to advance technology use, and to bring individuals from minority groups into international service professions. Today there are 10 programs under Title VI and 4 programs under Fulbright-Hays. The legislative history of Title VI has consistently affirmed the connection between language preparation and area scholarship and has adopted a broad focus on creating globally aware students in a range of disciplines.

The committee's review of the programs was hampered by the paucity of rigorous, reliable information on program performance, particularly related to the impacts or outcomes of the programs. The performance measures used by the ED and aggregate annual data reported by grantees provided insufficient information to judge program performance. Also, there have been few well-designed program evaluations that systematically measure outcomes. In reaching our conclusions, the committee relied on the combined weight of the few program evaluation studies, public testimony, historical funding data, grantee data, select commissioned analyses, and a series of site visits to universities that receive Title VI funding. In many cases, however, the limited evidence available did not support making specific recommendations related to the specified key areas.

The committee concluded that the Title VI/FH programs have served as a foundation for internationalization in higher education. Federal funding, sometimes through the priorities set by the ED for individual competitions, has served as a catalyst for language or area studies initiatives in higher education, with a frequent focus on advanced study of less commonly taught languages. Universities themselves have invested significant resources beyond those provided by the ED. The programs have built substantial capacity in the teaching of less commonly taught languages, with Title VI NRCs across the nation offering instruction in more than 250 less commonly taught languages. The programs have also developed instructional and other materials that are used by academia, K-12 education, and government. Box ES-2 presents the committee's specific conclusions related to future program effectiveness as well as with regard to the eight areas specified by Congress.

Nevertheless, Title VI/FH funding, including staff resources, has not kept pace with the expansion in the mission of the programs. While many new programs and objectives have been added since Title VI began, funding in real dollars has not increased proportionately. Not only is there a need for additional resources to match the growing mission of Title VI/FH programs, but there is also a need to expand support for foreign language, area, and international studies throughout the education system. These relatively small programs cannot be expected on their own to address the wide range of needs throughout the entire K-16 education system, as well

BOX ES-2
**Conclusions Related to Enhancing
Future Program Effectiveness**

- ED has not made foreign language and culture a priority and its several programs appear to be fragmented. There is no apparent department master plan or unifying strategic vision.
- Given the recognized lack of knowledge about foreign cultures and foreign languages, additional resources are needed for an integrated and articulated approach in multiple systems, including K-12, higher education, and business, to help address this critical shortcoming.
- There is currently no systematic, ongoing process for assessing national needs for foreign language, area, and international expertise and developing approaches to address those needs.
- Current efforts to develop language assessments and to effectively apply developments in technology to language assessment and the support of language instruction suffer from a dispersion of resources.
- The current data reporting system for Title VI/FH programs (Evaluation of Exchange, Language, International and Area Studies database [EELIAS]) is inadequate, is difficult to use and has significant consistency problems as well as a lack of transparency in the data collected.
- At the present time, limited information is available to rigorously assess the outcomes and impacts of the Title VI/FH programs, and the nature of the funding (partial funding of a larger set of activities) makes it difficult to assess outcomes and impacts.
- Sharing successful grant applications could improve future competitions and contribute to a continual improvement process.

Conclusions Related to the Eight Key Areas

***Infusing a foreign language and area studies dimension and conducting outreach
(Key Areas 1 and 2)***

- NRC and Language Resource Centers have developed multiple and varied methods for reaching out to the K-12 system, particularly to current K-12 teachers. Within the constraints of limited funds, they also attempt to reach out to other audiences.
- The need for teachers with foreign language and international expertise is great.

as those of business, government, and the public. Additional resources are needed to develop an integrated and articulated approach in multiple systems, beginning in K-12, to help address this critical shortcoming.

The current administration recently announced the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI) to increase the nation's capacity to provide experts with critical language skills—in languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Farsi/Dari, Hindi/Urdu and Turkic—determined to be vital to national

Reducing shortages of foreign language and area experts (Key Area 3)

- The language proficiency of FLAS Fellowships recipients is not at present being adequately assessed.
- Although overseas study has been shown to increase speaking proficiency, ED's policies discourage full-year overseas study by FLAS recipients.

Supporting research, education, and training (Key Area 4)

- The Title VI/FH programs have enhanced the body of knowledge about foreign languages and area studies.
- The Title VI/FH programs make a significant contribution to the teaching of less commonly taught languages in particular.

Producing relevant instructional materials (Key Area 5)

- The Title VI/FH programs develop a variety of instructional and assessment materials, with many aimed at developing proficiency in less commonly taught languages.
- Although there are no uniform scholarly standards for instructional materials, there are widely accepted "best practice" approaches to materials development that are disseminated by professional associations and journals.

Advancing uses of new technology (Key Area 6)

- Title VI/FH programs are using available technologies, such as the Internet and distance learning, but they could do more to maximize the potential created by current technologies.

Addressing business needs (Key Area 7)

- The legal requirement for business involvement in Centers for International Business Education and Research (CIBER) boards provides an appropriate mechanism for business input into the program to enable it to address business needs. The CIBER and Business and International Education (BIE) programs appear to act as resources for the larger business education community, providing resources to business education programs that are interested in developing capacity to support teaching and research on business issues.
- The CIBER has created a network for sharing information and learning from each others' experiences that is a model for the other Title VI/FH programs.

Increasing the numbers of underrepresented minorities (Key Area 8)

- The Institute for International Public Policy, designed to increase the representation of minorities in international service, has so far produced few graduates who entered international service and would be likely to benefit from a redesign of its program. However, it should not be the sole Title VI/FH program concerned with increasing the number of minorities.

security and foreign policy. The initiative draws on evidence suggesting that mastery of these less commonly taught languages requires many years of study and that learning should begin at an early age. This initiative would provide resources for programs at the U.S. Department of State, the Department of Defense (DoD), the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, and ED, many of them aimed at increasing the number of teachers of critical languages or increasing the number of young students studying

critical languages. Although the initiative has not yet been funded, several federal agencies have refocused the resources of existing programs toward these critical languages.

When ED targeted resources toward critical languages under its Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP) (a program complementary to Title VI/FH that provides resources to elementary and secondary schools), outside groups expressed concern that such a narrow focus would be detrimental to the foreign language field. The critical, strategic world areas, and the languages people in those areas speak, are not always predictable. Having the capacity to respond to new and unanticipated challenges requires maintaining capacity in a broad range of languages. The committee concluded that, while greater infusion of foreign languages and cultural instruction is vitally needed in K-12 education, too narrow a focus on a small set of languages in either K-12 or higher education could be detrimental to the country.

Although international education has begun to emerge as a concern in ED, strategic coordination either in the department or with other federal agencies has not. The Title VI/FH programs are not currently administered at the executive level at ED; there is no formal mechanism for coordination across programs; and functions and activities related to foreign languages and international education are scattered throughout the agency. And unlike DoD and the State Department, which place responsibility for the NSLI initiative with a senior executive staff person, ED's efforts have been coordinated by a politically appointed adviser to the assistant secretary for postsecondary education. Finally, ED, as the federal agency with clear responsibility for education issues, should have a more visible presence in directing efforts aimed at education, particularly K-12 education.

Recommendation: The Department of Education should consolidate oversight of its international education and foreign language programs under an executive-level person who would also provide strategic direction and consult and coordinate with other federal agencies. The position should be one that requires presidential appointment and Senate confirmation (12.1).

The resources of ED should be coordinated with the resources of other programs. The Title VI/FH programs play a unique role among the array of federal programs by focusing on creating a broad infrastructure in higher education, whereas FLAP provides resources to K-12 education. DoD's Defense Language Institute and the State Department's Foreign Service Institute are designed to address specific governmental needs for particular language skills at specific points in time. DoD's National Security Educa-

tion Program targets critical languages and includes a government service requirement. All relevant federal agencies should have a formal mechanism to consider the range of national needs for area and international education and foreign languages and the appropriate balance between maintaining capacity in a range of languages and areas of the world and responding to immediate needs. The committee concludes that this is best accomplished through a regular, publicly available report to Congress.

Recommendation: Congress should require the secretary of education, in consultation and coordination with the Departments of State and Defense, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, and other relevant agencies to submit a biennial report outlining national needs identified in foreign language, area, and international studies, plans for addressing these needs, and progress made. This report should be made available to the public (12.2).

To implement this recommendation most effectively, information on both needs and program accomplishments will need to be improved across government. For example, one of the primary criticisms directed at the Title VI/FH programs was that they do not produce graduates with sufficient levels of language proficiency. ED requires recipients of FLAS Fellowships and Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad, the primary programs aimed at advanced language study by individual students, to provide, upon completion of their fellowship, self-ratings of their proficiency before and after their fellowship. However, there is no available evidence of the reliability or validity of these ratings, and the way it is implemented limits its use in assessing student's proficiency. If self-assessment is to be maintained, a more reliable and valid approach should be developed.

Recommendation: The Department of Education should stop using its current self-assessment approach and develop an alternative approach to measuring foreign language proficiency with demonstrated reliability and validity (5.2).

At the same time, demand for proficiency assessment has increased and is likely to continue to increase, both to demonstrate the language results of select Title VI/FH programs and to determine the success of a range of new foreign language initiatives in government and in elementary and secondary education. Although ED has encouraged the development of other standardized assessments, these efforts have received limited funding, have been widely dispersed among the Title VI centers, and have not yet addressed many of the less commonly taught languages.

Similarly, information and communication technology has made significant and continual progress; this progress provides unharnessed opportunities to advance foreign language assessment and instruction. Technology provides particular opportunities to advance instruction of less commonly taught languages—languages that are among the strengths of the Title VI/FH programs and a subset of which are of particular current interest in the federal government. Investment in research and development that marries language instruction and assessment efforts with technology would benefit the range of federal agencies concerned with international education and foreign languages. It will also require coordinated effort by individuals with a range of specific areas of expertise.

Recommendation: The federal government should contract for a new National Foreign Language Assessment and Technology Project. The initial focus of the project should be on the research and development needed to design and implement a range of new technology-based methods for (1) assessing language proficiency and (2) supporting language instruction through the development of common platforms (12.3).

In general, meaningful data on program performance is lacking. Grantees must report extensive annual information via a web-based reporting system. However, technical issues with the system design, staffing limitations at ED that affect staff ability to ensure data quality and integrity, and widely held perceptions by grantees that the system is a burden without benefit, limit its use. Although the department recognizes many of these issues and has implemented system improvements to address several technical issues, there is no immediate plan to assess the relevance of performance measures or to make data fully available to grantees or to the public that might improve program transparency.

Recommendation: The Department of Education should ensure that its new data system, the International Resource Information System, provides greater standardization, allows comparison across years and across programs, and provides information to all grantees and to the public (11.1).

In addition, meaningful evaluations of outcomes and impacts are lacking. More rigorous, periodic evaluations are needed to ensure public accountability, inform the process of regular reauthorization, and advance continued departmental efforts to stimulate internationalization.

Recommendation: The Department of Education should commission

independent outcome and impact evaluations of all programs every 4 to 5 years (11.2).

Unlike earlier years, when the Department of Education measured performance of all 10 Title VI programs using measures based on just two programs, they now have three measures approved by the Office of Management and Budget for most of the 10 programs (one has only two measures). These measures meet federal reporting requirements but appear to have little buy-in from grantees and capture only isolated aspects of the program. The measures used for the NRC program, for example, do not capture outreach activities emphasized by the department nor advanced language offerings. In general, in the recent past, there has been little effort to collaborate with universities to specify mutual goals, measures that address those goals, and promising approaches to best meet goals. Such collaboration requires the executive-level leadership mentioned earlier and could build on emerging efforts by program staff to take a broader view of the program, the collaborative networks developed by grantees of the largest programs, and the significant expertise that has developed in some universities. Universities must be ready partners willing to refine and direct their programs toward mutual goals.

Recommendation: The Department of Education should work with universities to create a system of continuous improvement for the Title VI and Fulbright-Hays programs. The system would help develop performance indicators and other improvement tools and should include networks of similar centers (National Resource Centers, Language Resource Centers, Centers for International Business Education and Research) and university officials with overall responsibilities in language, area, and international studies (11.3).

The Title VI/FH programs were created nearly 50 years ago, when the country's economic, political, and military challenges were narrower than they are today. The mission of the programs has continually expanded to address national needs for internationalization across multiple systems without a concurrent increase in funding. As the programs face their next 50 years, they must be more closely aligned with other federal resources to ensure that resources operate in a complementary way and maximize achievement of multiple goals. They must implement efforts to achieve specific objectives more effectively (see the full list of recommendations in Box ES-3), must be held more accountable for performance via collaborative mechanisms between universities and ED, and must harness the opportunities and challenges presented by a world increasingly dominated by technology.

BOX ES-3
All Recommendations*

Recommendation 4.1: The Department of Education should increase incentives in the application process for National Resource Centers and Language Resource Centers to collaborate with schools or colleges of education on their campuses in the development of curriculum, the design of instructional materials, and teacher education.

Recommendation 5.1: The Department of Education should modify its policy guidelines to encourage overseas study by Foreign Language and Area Studies fellows.

Recommendation 5.2: The Department of Education should stop using its current self-assessment approach and develop an alternative approach to measuring foreign language proficiency with demonstrated reliability and validity.

Recommendation 10.1: The Institute for International Public Policy should redesign its activities in order to increase graduation rates and facilitate entry in careers in international service.

Recommendation 10.2: The Department of Education should encourage Title VI and Fulbright-Hays grantees to actively recruit minority members.

Recommendation 11.1: The Department of Education should ensure that its new data system, the International Resource Information System, provides greater standardization, allows comparison across years and across programs, and provides information to all grantees and to the public.

*The recommendation number refers to the chapter in which the recommendation appears and the number of recommendations in that chapter.

Recommendation 11.2: The Department of Education should commission independent outcome and impact evaluations of all programs every 4 to 5 years.

Recommendation 11.3: The Department of Education should work with universities to create a system of continuous improvement for the Title VI and Fulbright-Hays programs. The system would help develop performance indicators and other improvement tools and should include networks of similar centers (National Resource Centers, Language Resource Centers, Centers for International Business Education and Research) and university officials with overall responsibilities in language, area, and international studies.

Recommendation 11.4: The Department of Education should make its award selection process more transparent, including making successful applications publicly available via the Internet.

Recommendation 12.1: The Department of Education should consolidate oversight of its international education and foreign language programs under an executive-level person who would also provide strategic direction and consult and coordinate with other federal agencies. The position should be one that requires presidential appointment and Senate confirmation.

Recommendation 12.2: Congress should require the secretary of education, in consultation and coordination with the Departments of State and Defense, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, and other relevant agencies to submit a biennial report outlining national needs identified in foreign language, area, and international studies, plans for addressing these needs, and progress made. This report should be made available to the public.

Recommendation 12.3: The federal government should contract for a new National Foreign Language Assessment and Technology Project. The initial focus of the project should be on the research and development needed to design and implement a range of new technology-based methods for (1) assessing language proficiency and (2) supporting language instruction through the development of common platforms.

International Education and Foreign Languages

KEYS TO SECURING AMERICA'S FUTURE

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International Education Programs

Mary Ellen O'Connell and Janet L. Norwood, *Editors*

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This report has been reviewed in draft form by individuals chosen for their diverse perspectives and technical expertise, in accordance with procedures approved by the Report Review Committee of the NRC. The purpose of this independent review is to provide candid and critical comments that will assist the institution in making its published report as sound as possible and to ensure that the report meets institutional standards for objectivity, evidence, and responsiveness to the study charge. The review comments and draft manuscript remain confidential to protect the integrity of the deliberative process.

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sions or recommendations nor did they see the final draft of the report before its release. The review of this report was overseen by Kenji Hakuta, School of Education, Stanford University, and Elena Nightingale, Scholar-in-Residence, Institute of Medicine. Appointed by the NRC, they were responsible for making certain that an independent examination of this report was carried out in accordance with institutional procedures and that all review comments were carefully considered. Responsibility for the final content of this report rests entirely with the authoring committee and the institution.

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Janet L. Norwood, *Chair*
Committee to Review the Title VI and Fulbright-Hays
International Education Programs

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Acronyms

TITLE VI PROGRAMS

AORC	American Overseas Research Centers
BIE	Business and International Education
CIBER	(also CIBE) Centers for International Business Education and Research
FLAS	Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowships
IIPP	Institute for International Public Policy
IRS	International Research and Studies
LRC	Language Resource Centers
NRC	National Resource Centers
TICFIA	Technological Innovation and Cooperation for Foreign Information Access
UISFL	Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language

FULBRIGHT-HAYS PROGRAMS

DDRA	Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad
FRA	Faculty Research Abroad
GPA	Group Projects Abroad
SA	Seminars Abroad

OTHER ACRONYMS RELATED TO COMMITTEE WORK

AAU	Association of American Universities
ACE	American Council on Education
ACIE	American Councils for International Education
ACLS	American Council of Learned Societies
ACTFL	American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
ADFL	Association of Department of Foreign Languages
AIBER	Association for International Business Education and Research
CAORC	Council of American Overseas Research Centers
CAST	computer-assisted screening tool
CED	Committee for Economic Development
CIE	Coalition for International Education
CIES	Council for International Exchange of Scholars
CLRC	Civilian Linguist Reserve Corps
COPI	Computerized Oral Proficiency Instrument
CNRC	Council of National Research Centers
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CRS	Congressional Research Service
DARPA	Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, formerly known as the Advanced Research Project Agency, U.S. Department of Defense
DIA	Defense Intelligence Agency
DLI	Defense Language Institute
DoD	U.S. Department of Defense
ED	U.S. Department of Education
EELIAS	Evaluation of Exchange, Language, International and Area Studies database
FAO	U.S. Army Foreign Area Officer Program
FH	Fulbright-Hays International Education Act (Section 102(b)(6)), formally known as the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act
FIPSE	Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education
FLAP	Foreign Language Assistance Program
FSI	Foreign Service Institute
GAO	Government Accountability Office, formerly known as General Accounting Office
GPRA	Government Performance and Results Act
HBCUs	historically black colleges and universities
HEA	Higher Education Act
IB	International Business Education (also IBE)
IEPS	International Education Programs Service

ACRONYMS

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ILR	Interagency Language Roundtable
IPS	International Programs and Studies
IRIS	International Resource Information System
JNCL	Joint National Committee for Languages
LCTLs	less commonly taught languages (e.g., Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Pashto)
MLA	Modern Language Association
NCASA	National Council of Area Studies Association
NCOLCTL	National Council of Organizations of Less Commonly Taught Languages
NDEA	National Defense Education Act
NFLP	National Flagship Language Program
NSA	National Security Agency
NSEP	National Security Education Program
NSLI	National Security Language Initiative
OPE	Office of Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education
OPEPD	Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, U.S. Department of Education
OPI	oral proficiency interview
PART	Program Assessment Rating Tool
PPIA	Public Policy and International Affairs Fellowship Program, formerly known as Woodrow Wilson Fellowships in Public Policy and International Affairs
RFA	request for applications
SMART	Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent
SOFLO	Special Operations Forces Command Foreign Language Office
SOPI	simulated oral proficiency interview
SSRC	Social Science Research Council
Title VI	Title VI of the Higher Education Act

International Education and Foreign Languages

KEYS TO SECURING AMERICA'S FUTURE

