



NEWS RELEASE

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Monday, March 30, 2015
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HIGHER EDUCATION ACT REAUTHORIZATION MUST INCLUDE MEANINGFUL ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES, SAYS WOODROW WILSON FOUNDATION PRESIDENT

Levine: "HEA reauthorization provides a rare opportunity to transform higher education into what we need in the 21st century, not just to honor what it was in the 19th century"

PRINCETON, N.J. (March 30, 2015) – As the U.S. Congress prepares to reauthorize the Higher Education Act, Arthur Levine, president of the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, urged policymakers to break from the failed policies and approaches of the past, holding colleges and universities more accountable for their overall outcomes. The former president of Teachers College, Columbia University, Dr. Levine released the following statement:

“As a nation, we are moving from a national, analog, industrial economy to a global, digital, information economy. This shift demands change to both inputs and outcomes. In sectors like media, transportation, and healthcare, we see this shift in full development. Yet education has been slow to embrace the necessary changes in thinking, behavior, and expectation.

With Congress preparing to reauthorize the laws that govern higher education across the nation, it is essential that federal regulation adjust with the times. The shift to a true information age demands we hold our institutions of higher education to higher standards, both in terms of their accreditation and the quality and impact of their graduates. It requires greater focus on what is learned, in terms of competencies and mastery, and lesser attention to seat time. And it calls for knocking down many of the walls that all achievement gaps, access gaps, and financial gaps to prevent generations of students from high-need schools from obtaining postsecondary educations.

Last week, Senator Lamar Alexander, the chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, released a series of recommendations on how to improve HEA and how to boost accountability throughout American higher education. These ideas warrant significant discussion and consideration. Senator Alexander is absolutely correct in saying we need to better collect data from our colleges and universities, that we need to transform the accreditation process, and that we need greater accountability across the board.

Whether one agrees with these recommendations or not, we must all agree that maintaining the status quo in higher education is insufficient and unwise. Changes in our economy, our nation, and our expectations of postsecondary education demand real change in higher education. HEA reauthorization provides a rare opportunity to transform higher education into what we need in the 21st century, not just to honor what it was in the 19th century.”

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About the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation

Founded in 1945, the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation (www.woodrow.org) identifies and develops the nation’s best minds to meet its most critical challenges. The Foundation supports its Fellows as the next generation of leaders shaping American society.