INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION – FY 2006
A Key to U.S. National Security and Economic Competitiveness

To meet national needs for international expertise, AAU recommends that Congress provide additional funding for the Department of Education’s Title VI international programs and the Department of Defense's National Security Education Program (NSEP).

Department of Education Title VI programs: The President's FY06 budget would flat fund Title VI programs at the FY05 level of $106.8 million – including $92.5 million for domestic programs, $12.7 million for Fulbright-Hays overseas programs, and $1.6 million for the Institute for International Public Policy. For the Title VI programs, AAU supports a $39.2 million increase above the FY05 level to $131.7 million. The increases would be distributed as follows: domestic programs, $113.7 million; Fulbright-Hays overseas program, $15 million; and Institute for International Public Policy, $3 million.

National Security Education Program: The President's FY06 budget would increase funding for NSEP from $8 million to $16 million to support existing undergraduate and graduate programs; provide additional funds to expand the National Flagship Language Initiative; and add funding for a new program aimed at “heritage” speakers of less-commonly taught languages, such as Arabic, Chinese, and Korean, who reside in the United States. AAU supports the President’s proposed increase for NSEP.

Additional funding is also needed to support the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) development cooperation programs, as well as the State Department’s student and faculty exchange programs and its Russian and Independent States Studies Research and Training program.

The Nation Needs to Expand its International Education Capacity
National interests increasingly must be pursued in a global environment. National and homeland security, economic competitiveness, and the knowledge requirements of an informed citizenry all demand expanded understanding of the languages and cultures of other nations with whom the U.S. cooperates and competes. The responsibilities of world leadership, promoting democracy, and providing humanitarian assistance draw increasingly on international expertise. Yet the U.S. is failing to train enough individuals to meet its need for international expertise. The Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, and State, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and other federal agencies face shortages of personnel with mission-critical foreign language expertise.

At the same time, surveys of the business sector confirm that to compete effectively in overseas markets, corporations will need more managerial staff with international knowledge and experience.

Higher Education is Vital to Meeting the Nation’s Need for International Expertise
The higher education sector is key to addressing the nation’s growing needs for international expertise. Yet colleges and universities are sharply limited in their ability to meet these needs. The high-quality, low-enrollment programs necessary to provide specialized language training – particularly in less-commonly taught languages such as Korean, Arabic, and Russian – are costly to initiate and maintain. Study-abroad and other exchange programs that provide students with rich opportunities to learn the languages and cultures of other countries also require significant funding to initiate and sustain. Funding for Department of Education international education programs should be increased to meet current and future language and international expertise demands. These programs are an important investment in the nation’s global leadership, economic competitiveness, and national security.