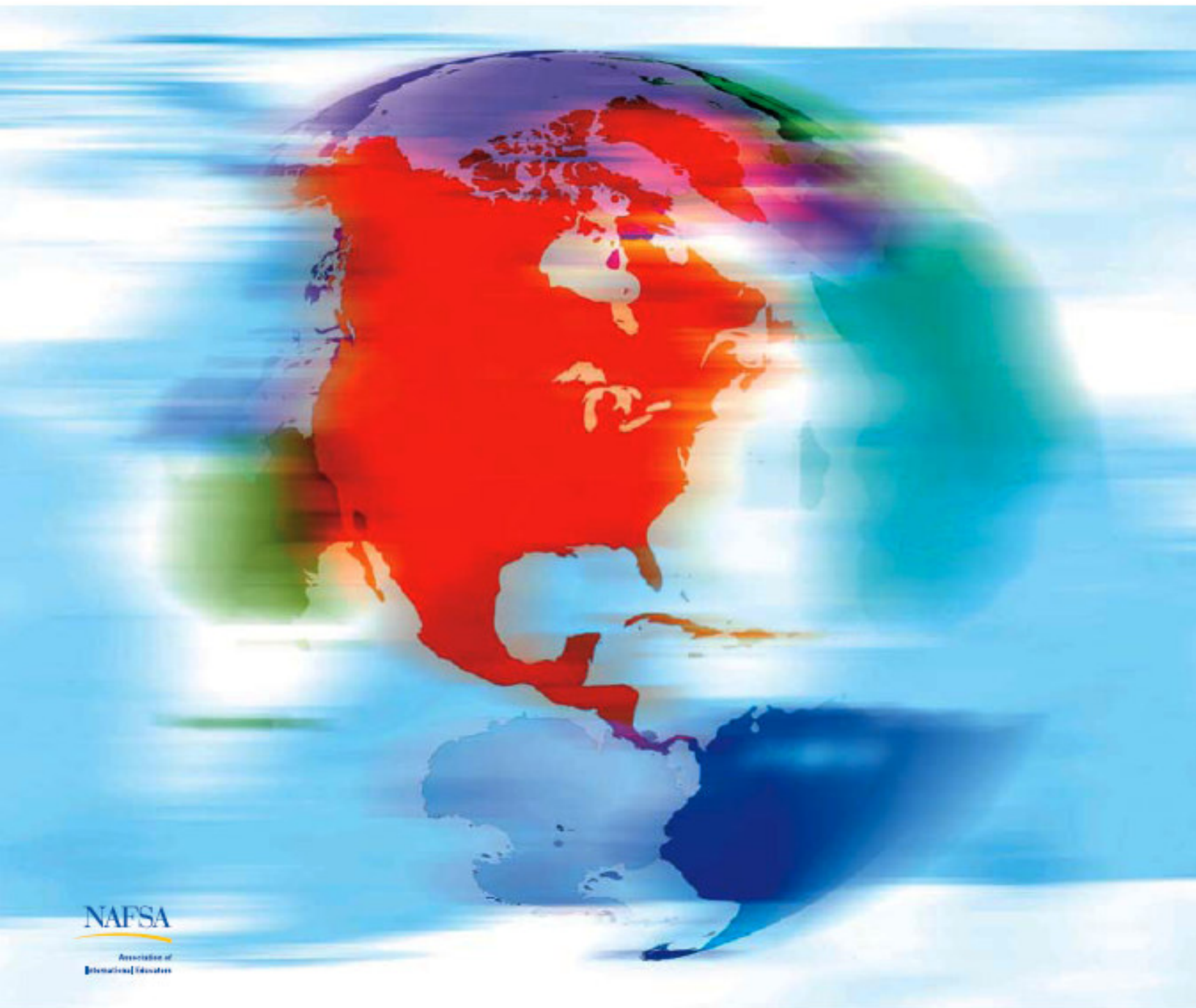


AMERICANS CALL FOR LEADERSHIP ON INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION



NAFSA
Association of
International Educators

A NATIONAL SURVEY ON PREPARATION FOR A GLOBAL SOCIETY

INTRODUCTION

The war on terror. Made in China. Bird flu. Technical support in Bangalore. Daily, Americans are reminded by the label on our T-shirts, calls to customer service, or the evening news, that global events can have local impact and that we have a stake in what happens around the world.

Over the past decade, national surveys and focus groups have shown that the American public is often ahead of its political leadership in recognizing the increasingly interconnected nature of the world. In December 2005, NAFSA commissioned a survey of a broad cross section of Americans to gauge their current perceptions on global preparedness, study abroad, language learning, knowledge of other cultures, and international students.¹

The survey found even more stalwart support than in previous studies for international education initiatives to strengthen our ability to prosper in a global context. The striking fact is that these findings hold true for every demographic group; support remains high regardless of race, age, gender, education, income, or geographic location. Americans universally attach great importance to the task of preparing future generations to live, work, and succeed on this increasingly international playing field.

A Call for U.S. Leadership in International Education

The survey of over 1,000 Americans yielded the following results:

Question 1:

If, increasingly, what happens around the world affects Americans at home, how important is it to prepare our children and grandchildren for a more global society?

Virtually all Americans (90 percent) believe it is important to ensure that future generations have the skills and knowledge needed for a more interconnected world.

Response	Percentage
Very Important	70%
Important	20%
Somewhat Important	5%
Not Important	3%
Undecided	2%

Source: NAFSA: Association of International Educators

Question 2:

Would you agree or disagree that knowledge of other languages will give our children and grandchildren a competitive advantage in career opportunities?

Ninety-two percent of adults agree that knowledge of foreign languages

enhances job competitiveness for future generations.

Response	Percentage
Agree	92%
Disagree	6%
Undecided	2%

Source: NAFSA: Association of International Educators

Question 3:

How important is it for our children and grandchildren to participate in a study abroad program while in college, where they can spend time living and studying in another culture?

More than three quarters of Americans (77 percent) value educational experiences where time is spent abroad in other cultures.

Response	Percentage
Important	77%
A Little Important	15%
Not Important	7%
Undecided	1%

Source: NAFSA: Association of International Educators

Question 4:

How important is it for our children and grandchildren to attend a college where they will have an opportunity to interact with and get to know international students from other countries?

The vast majority (86 percent) of Americans value the opportunity for their kids to attend colleges where they will interact with students from across the globe.

Response	Percentage
Important	86%
A Little Important	11%
Not Important	3%
Undecided	0%

Source: NAFSA: Association of International Educators

Question 5:

How important is it to provide our children and grandchildren with knowledge of other countries and cultures?

Almost unanimously (94 percent), the public understands that part of preparing for a more global society is learning about cultures from around the world.

Response	Percentage
Very Important	71%
Important	23%
Somewhat Important	4%
Not Important	2%
Undecided	1%

Source: NAFSA: Association of International Educators

SUMMARY

Regardless of age, race, gender, income, level of education, or geographic location,

Americans feel strongly about the need for global preparedness and overwhelmingly support educational opportunities that advance world knowledge and cultural sensitivity.

The war in Iraq, the threat of an international pandemic, and the outsourcing of jobs serve as the latest reminders that what happens abroad affects us at home, but Americans have long understood that our most vital concerns do not stop at U.S. borders.

Adults of all demographic backgrounds place high value on opportunities for their children and grandchildren to interact with students from around the world both at U.S. colleges and universities, and through study abroad experiences.

Now more than ever, Americans recognize the need for the next generation to be internationally competent and culturally aware.

With more than 9,000 members, NAFSA: Association of International Educators is the world's largest nonprofit association dedicated to international education. NAFSA has championed the cause of international education and exchange for more than 50 years, supporting the belief that students with international experience and a global perspective are crucial for enhancing U.S. leadership, security, and competitiveness. Our members share a belief that international education advances learning and scholarship, builds understanding and respect among different peoples, and enhances constructive leadership in the global community.

¹Lake Research Partners and The Tarrance Group designed these survey questions, which were included in a nationwide omnibus survey and conducted by phone by professional interviewers. The survey reached 1051 adults at least 18 years of age. The survey was conducted December 1-4, 2005. Telephone numbers for the survey were drawn using random digit dial (RDD). The data were weighted slightly by age, race, gender, and region in order to ensure that they accurately reflect the demographics of the national population. The margin of error for the survey is +/- 3.1%.

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