Federal funds spent on foreign studies make us safer and more competitive

As Congress moves to end the deficit while preserving national security, zealous budget cutters must take care not to miss the forest for the trees.

A case in point is current discussions in Congress to end or limit international higher education programs funded under Title VI of the Higher Educational Act and the related Fulbright Hays program. These funds are the foundation for college and university programs that center on specific area studies (such as East Asia or Central Europe), foreign language training, international business, and overseas research.

The budget resolution passed by the House suggests the elimination of Title VI and the related Fulbright Hays program, a $59 million slash-and-burn strategy that would force the closure of more than 150 international centers on college campuses nationwide. The House subcommittee on labor, HHS and education appropriations recently agreed to fund Title VI, but a long legislative process is still ahead.

Graduates of Title VI are an important part of the Department of State, our military forces, and sundry concerns relating to our national defense and our global competitiveness. Equally as important, these programs teach thousands of students the intricacies of foreign cultures and the importance of understanding our worldwide neighbors.

On behalf of colleges and universities across the nation with Title VI programs, I ask members of the House and Senate to follow the House subcommittee lead. We all must share the pain in balancing the budget. But we must also balance the dire future consequences of today’s hasty actions. Sharp cuts in our international programs are not the answer to solving our budget woes.

Myles Brand
President
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IUPUI Librarian Assists Dominican Library

Carole Franq, Collection Manager for Indiana University School of Medicine Ruth Lilly Medical Library, updated the circulating collection at the Dr. Elias Santana Eye Clinic Library near Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, in one of the economically least developed areas of the country.

The June 1995 trip was a return visit. The Eye Clinic Library was established in 1992 to support a new three-year ophthalmology residency program for Latin American physicians to train as specialists in eye care. The Clinic provides health care for a large population of Dominicans who cannot afford full cost of treatments and many whose homes have dirt floors, no doors, and no running water.

During her two-week expedition, Franq and two helpers, also from Indiana, processed over 20 boxes of gift materials, cataloged 50 additional books for the collection of 400 titles, organized the journals, readied three large boxes of loose journal issues for a Dominican binder, and oversaw many other managerial tasks including updating circulation records. The Hospital Elias Santana administration and ophthalmology residents wanted to maintain better order in the self-serve library, so the top priority was identifying a staff member of the hospital to train in returning all materials to the shelf instead of having each user return his or her own materials. Franq took with her a portable computer and specialized software for cataloging medical and Spanish language materials.

Carole Franq presenting shelving techniques at Hospital Elias Santana in the Dominican Republic.