



Shawnee State University

**SHAWNEE STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF
TRUSTEES WHITE PAPER April 2006**

The Solutions For Our Future Public Awareness Campaign

Background

The American Council on Education (ACE) and nearly 400 colleges and universities across the country, with corporate support, have launched a national public outreach campaign designed to raise awareness about higher education's critical role in the future of our country.

Founded in 1918, ACE is the major coordinating body for all the nation's higher education institutions, representing more than 1,600 college and university presidents, and more than 200 related associations, nationwide. It seeks to provide leadership and a unifying voice on key higher education issues and influence public policy through advocacy, research, and program initiatives.

The *Solutions For Our Future* Campaign emphasizes the importance of state and federal support for higher education, both of which have waned in recent years and builds upon national polling findings that Americans are aware of the value of a college education, i.e. improved earning potential, but did not associate higher education with its broader contributions to society. Shawnee State University will be one of the participating institutions.

The Campaign

The campaign has three primary goals:

- Increase awareness of the public benefits of higher education.
- Enable every campus to do its part in meeting the nation's needs for higher education.
- Make higher education a public policy priority.

The *Solutions for Our Future* campaign will employ national newspaper and television advertisements, the first of which were aired during the NCAA college basketball tournament. ACE anticipates spending \$4.5 million during the next three years and the value of the donated media time and space will be in the millions (*Chicago Tribune*, March 15, 2006).



Shawnee State University

The first phase of the campaign has emphasized the contributions of higher education to society at large. The next phase of the *Solutions for Our Future* is slated to begin in August and will focus on the importance of access to a college education. As it is central to Shawnee State's mission, we will become more prominently involved in *Solutions* during the second phase.

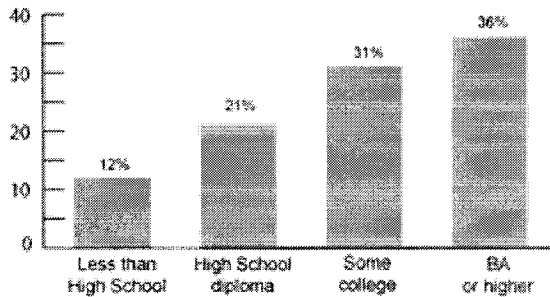
Solutions

The campaign will drive home to the public that higher education provides the solutions to the challenges facing Americans.

Solutions for Society:

College graduates volunteer more, vote more often, and participate more in community and civic organizations than people without college degrees.

Percentage of US population 25 and older who reported
volunteering in the past 12 months by education level



Solutions for the Economy

- Earning a college degree increases earnings: The median earnings for male college graduates are 60% higher than median earnings for high school graduates. For females, the earnings premium for a college degree is 58%.
- By the age of about 33, the typical college graduate has earned enough to compensate for both paying full tuition and fee charges at the average public four-year college and forgoing earnings for four years. From that point on, each year increases the lifetime earnings benefit of a college degree.
- Higher levels of participation in college lead to increased productivity and growth, higher levels of wages throughout the economy, increased tax revenues, and reduced public expenditures on social support programs.



Shawnee State University

Solutions for Better Lives

Colleges and universities are home to laboratories and centers that generate the scientific and technological advances that have powered the United States economy, been the source of medical and scientific breakthroughs, and improve the quality of life for all Americans.

Breakthroughs attributable to university-based research:

- Internet search engines
- Overnight delivery technology
- Pharmaceutical treatment of the mentally ill
- Nasal spray vaccines
- Advances in treatment of burns
- Laser eye surgery
- Advances in open heart surgery
- Bone marrow transplants for treatment of leukemia

Answers to the Challenges Facing the United States:

With sufficient support, higher education can address the challenges facing the United States today and in the future.

Skilled Labor Shortage

According to the 2005 "Skill Gap Report" of the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) More than 80 percent of members responding to a NAM survey indicated that they are experiencing a shortage of qualified workers overall - with 13 percent reporting severe shortages and 68 percent indicating moderate shortages. Also worrisome is the finding that 90 percent of respondents indicated a moderate to severe shortage of qualified skilled production employees, including front-line workers, such as machinists, operators, craft workers, distributors, and technicians.

Global Competition

Among Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, the United States has slipped to 16th in high school graduation, and 9th in postsecondary enrollments.

The United States has long been the first in the world in its system of higher education, however, no longer can it make that claim - not because of declines in performance here, but because of increasing investments in higher education abroad.



Shawnee State University

Enrollment Changes

The period from 2000 to 2015 will see the single largest growth in college enrollments in our nation's history: upwards of two million more students, or nearly 20 percent growth overall.

The large majority of the new students will be low income "minorities," from Latino, Asian/Pacific-Islander, and African-American families. The majority of the growth in new students will come from groups that have historically been least successful in advancing across the educational pipeline from K-12 through college. It should be noted that students from Appalachia are included in this growing group of students.

Despite the increasing economic necessity of a college education for workforce readiness, this new generation of students is arriving at college at a time of budget retrenchment and cutbacks for higher education.

Continuing Education for Older Workers

While adult learners make up almost 40 percent of U.S. college students, these students are a small segment (6.5 million) of the more than 90 million adults 25 and older that participate in formal and informal education beyond high school.

Adult learners take advantage of numerous continuing education options beyond on-site college classes - online courses, apprenticeship programs, and military training, as well as work-related courses and community-based learning. Their learning covers a wide span, from English as a Second Language and GED preparation classes to post-baccalaureate certificates and master's and doctoral degrees.

In order to provide the huge pool of adult learners with the opportunity to attend college, higher education is working to remove the barriers these individuals face.

The Importance of State and Federal Support

A primary element of the *Solutions for the Future* campaign will be to stress the importance of state and federal support - specifically that funding cuts mean higher tuition. Even as higher education has become a necessity for jobs, state and federal budget cuts have reduced public funding for need-based student aid, and for public colleges and universities.

The result has been a combination of higher education tuition increases and program reductions, threatening access and affordability. Historically, state funding for higher education tracks the general economy going up in good times, and down in bad times. Over the past 20 years, however, the proportion of college revenues from state funds has slowly declined, largely because of budget cuts during times of economic recession. The largest decline occurred between 2001 and 2004, when state educational appropriations per student decreased by 17 percent, or close to \$1,000 per student on average.



Shawnee State University

Federal funding is key to our national capacity to ensure college access and affordability, and to maintain capacity to perform research and generate technological advances. The combination of tax cuts and pressures on spending from health care and defense have crowded out higher education as a federal budget priority. One of the most dramatic consequences has been the shift in funding for student aid away from-need based grant aid, to student loans.

Not surprisingly, college tuitions have increased on average by 54 percent at public four-year institutions over the last decade. Private four-year institutions have seen an average increase of 37 percent.

Conclusion

The *Solutions for the Future* campaign is a well-organized, national effort to highlight the great social and economic value of public investment in higher education. Shawnee State will actively participate in the campaign by reaching out to public officials and the local media. We will also inform members of the campus community of the campaign's main messages so they can act as ambassadors for higher education.