



PANETTA INSTITUTE

# update

## Panetta Survey Finds College Students Drawn to National Service and International Issues

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**A**n April survey for The Panetta Institute for Public Policy finds 63 percent of U.S. college students expressing interest in a program that would have them perform two years of national service in exchange for help with the cost of college, and an impressive 37 percent say they have considered pursuing a service oriented experience such as Teach for America, VISTA or AmeriCorps even without such a financial incentive.

Student interest in public service, from community volunteer work to running for elective office, has been on the rise since the Institute began polling on the subject in 1999, leading the organization's chairman **Leon E. Panetta** to suggest that the so-called "me generation" of the late twentieth century is being replaced by an "us generation" (see page 2).

The survey also shows a greater student focus on global issues. Although domestic concerns such as tuition and health care costs still predominate, the portion of students who say the problems their generation will face will be mostly international in scope has risen by 13 percentage points (from 30 to 43 percent) since the Institute's previous survey in the spring of last year.

This shift is likely related to increased worry among students about the possibility of a major terrorist attack against the United States. The percentage expressing this concern

has jumped from 39 to 51 in one year, and the figure rises to 56 percent when students are asked about the possibility of a crippling cyber attack.

The Panetta Institute commissions its annual survey in part to guide its curriculum, which prepares young people for the challenges of public service. Conducted by Hart Research Associates, the study measures students' career expectations, their level of political involvement and their views on a wide range of policy issues. For a summary of this year's findings, including students' candidate preferences in the next presidential election, go to [PanettaInstitute.org](http://PanettaInstitute.org).

### Inside:

- Lectures Highlight Issues that Can Unite or Divide Us
- P.G. Teacher Boosts Lectures Success
- Reading Program Measures Student Progress



Then-defense secretary Leon Panetta meets with troops in Afghanistan in 2011. Student interest in military and other public service is rising.

DOD PHOTO



## Pacific Grove Teacher Helps Panetta Lectures Reach Thousands of Area Students

**F**or most of its eighteen-year history, the Leon Panetta Lecture Series has included special afternoon sessions for students from area high schools, colleges and military installations where they too can hear the evening's scheduled

speakers and ask them questions about the issues they have come to address.

The success of the program, which has reached thousands of young people by now, depends heavily on the teachers who recruit their students to participate, and retiring Pacific Grove High School instructor **Lillian Griffiths** has been one of the most committed.

At a dinner on June 1 for lecture series sponsors, Institute CEO **Sylvia Panetta** and longtime volunteer **Helen Rucker** presented Griffiths with an inscribed crystal bowl in recognition of her exceptional service.

"I've seen these sessions awaken in my students a whole new interest in the civic life of our country," says Griffiths, who has taught American government and honors history since 1984. She notes that she usually brings the lecture topic back to the classroom for follow-up discussion, with the students who attended typically taking the lead.



Institute CEO Sylvia Panetta (right) presents Lillian Griffiths with the first Lecture Series Student Champion Award.

### A Message from the Chairman

## Are We Seeing the Rise of an "Us Generation"?

**C**ommitted as we are to inspiring young people to lives of public service, we at the Panetta Institute were heartened to find in our latest April survey that nearly two-thirds of U.S. college students would be interested in performing some form of national service in exchange for help with their college finances.

A skeptic might suggest this tells us more about the high cost of tuition than about



students' eagerness to serve others, but the trend in these student surveys over the past sixteen years is clear. Student interest in public service has been steadily rising, even when the question makes no mention of a financial reward.

Most of this interest focuses on the civilian side – working for a community nonprofit, serving in government, running for elective office – but the appeal of military service also has risen significantly. What Tom Wolf once described as a "me generation" may be giving way to an "us generation." If so, America will be the stronger for it.

## Lecture Series Explores Privacy vs. Security and Other Issues that Can Unite or Divide Us

On June 1, the Leon Panetta Lecture Series devoted its final event of the season to the difficult balance between national security and personal privacy in a dangerous online world. With the Institute's chairman **Leon Panetta** serving as moderator, a panel of experts painted a chilling picture of the nation's vulnerability to cyber attacks.

Intel Corporation president **Renée James** said American companies are "only sixty percent of the way" to where they need to be to ensure their online security, and former head of the U.S. Cyber Command **Keith Alexander** concurred with former Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman **Mike Mullen** when he said a public-private partnership is needed to address the many challenges in this area.

The lecture series' eighteenth season was themed "The Test of Leadership – Critical Issues That Can Unite or Divide America." It kicked off on March 23 with a lively exchange on how to meet the nation's energy needs while also protecting the environment. The panelists included former U.S. energy secretary **Steven Chu**, coal state Senator **Joe Manchin** (D-WV), former White House office of energy and climate policy director **Carol Browner**, and legendary oilman and philanthropist **T. Boone Pickens**.

On April 20 the subject turned to race relations and the tensions brought to light by recent conflicts over policing practices. On



Before each lecture, area students get to hear and quiz our speakers.

hand were former NAACP president **Ben Jealous**, former New York City police commissioner **Ray Kelly**, and former U.S. Senator **Ken Salazar** (D-CO).

The third event, on May 11, focused on the U.S. economy and the widening income gap between most Americans and a handful at the top. Speakers included **Michael Boskin**, who chaired the president's council of economic advisers for George H.W. Bush, **Robert Reich**, who served as President Clinton's secretary of labor, economist **Christina Romer**, who advised President Obama during the financial crisis, and former Senator **Alan Simpson** (R-WY).

**"WE NEED A  
PUBLIC-PRIVATE  
PARTNERSHIP."**

**Admiral Mike Mullen**



Our speakers: former White House energy advisor **Carol Browner**, energy secretary **Steven Chu**, Senator **Joe Manchin**, oilman **T. Boone Pickens**, NAACP president **Ben Jealous**, former New York police commissioner **Ray Kelly**, Senator **Ken Salazar**, former labor secretary **Robert Reich**, economist **Christina Romer**, Senator **Alan Simpson**, former council of economic advisers chair **Michael Boskin**, General **Keith Alexander** (USA, Ret.), Intel president **Renée James** and Admiral **Mike Mullen** (USN, Ret.).



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**Jefferson-Lincoln Awards, November 14, 2015**



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## **Reading Program Adds Assessors to Measure Student Achievement and Build More Support**

**T**he Panetta Institute recently hired additional professional staff to improve the measurement of student achievement in the ambitious reading assistance program for area school children which the Institute has headed since 1997.

“It’s important to be able to accurately track student progress, to show communities and schools what a powerful tool we have here to give these students a better chance at educational success,” says Institute CEO **Sylvia Panetta**, who supervises the program.

Working with the county’s Office of Education, along with area colleges, businesses, military installations, faith groups and community organizations, Monterey County Reads (MCR) recruits and trains volunteers and places them in local elementary schools, where they work with individual children who are having trouble with their reading.

Originally MCR relied on each school to conduct its own pre- and post-participation assessment of each child’s reading ability, says Institute chief of staff and programs **Chris Haubert**, but that made it difficult to measure and compare performance across the program.

With a uniform set of tests, principal assessor **Mary Alicia McRae** and her newly expanded team of **Tina England**, **Bertha Guzmán de**



**Reading expert Tina England (left) meets with the Panetta Institute’s Chris Haubert.**

**Jasso** and **Taffra Mayo** now generate a reliable, easily comparable baseline of reading ability and trajectory of performance for each participating child.

In the fall, second and third graders are tested to see if they qualify for the program, Haubert notes, and this determines how many reading volunteers will be needed and where. Post-assessments are conducted at the end of the school year.

Since its inception, Monterey County Reads has placed nearly 3,000 volunteers in area schools to work one to one with about 15,000 students. “It would be hard to exaggerate the importance of this effort to the many children who struggle with their reading,” says CEO Sylvia Panetta.

