



PANETTA INSTITUTE

update

Lecture Series Asks: How Will We Preserve the American Dream for the Next Generation?

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This year's Panetta Institute Lecture Series brought an outstanding lineup of policy experts and decision makers to the Monterey Peninsula to address a fundamental question: In this era of extraordinary threats to our national wellbeing, how can we keep the American dream alive for our children?

Citing high unemployment, ballooning federal deficits, a crisis in education funding, partisan gridlock in Washington and the continuing burden of war and international terrorism, Institute director Sylvia Panetta challenged the speakers to lay out clear and realistic ideas for getting the country moving in a more positive direction.

The series began on February 21 with former Senator **Alan Simpson** (R-WY) and former White House chief of staff **Erskine Bowles** (D) speaking on the topic "Is there a fair way to reduce the federal deficit?"

The two co-chairs of the President's National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform agreed that fairness is achievable, but not without some sacrifice from nearly everyone. Under questioning by CNBC senior analyst **Ron Insana**, they insisted that getting the deficit down will require tax increases as well as spending cuts.

On March 28 the topic turned to the future of public education. With CNN senior

analyst **Gloria Borger** posing the questions, series subscribers got a sobering rundown of the challenges facing California's schools from former state superintendent of public instruction **Jack O'Connell**, California State University system chancellor **Charles Reed** and Los Angeles mayor **Antonio Villaraigosa**.

Borger returned on April 18 to moderate a discussion of national security challenges with former U.S. Senator **Chris Dodd** (D-CT), former Marine Corps commandant **James L. Jones**, who recently served as President Barack Obama's assistant for national security affairs, and **Stephen Hadley**, former national security affairs

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- Students See U.S. on Wrong Path

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Our lecture series speakers also meet with students from area high schools, colleges and military installations to answer their questions.



Reading Volunteers Praised by Local Authors for Their Service to Monterey County's Children

Friends of the Monterey County Reads program, which is headquartered at the Panetta Institute, gathered in early May for a special ceremony honoring 175 reading volunteers, including two who have devoted 10 years to the effort.



Institute director Sylvia Panetta (right) thanks Katherine Goodwin for her 10 years as a reading volunteer. Liz Andrus also has given a decade of service to the effort.

Katherine Goodwin of the Monterey County Health Department and **Liz Andrus** of St. Joseph's Church have each given a decade of service helping area children learn to read.

Noted children's authors **Paul Fleischman**, **Joanne Ryder** and **Laurence Yep** spoke at the event, warmly praising the volunteers' commitment and the program's impressive accomplishments. Institute director Sylvia Panetta, who has directed the effort since its launch in 1997, described it as "critical to the economic future of these children and their ability to participate in our democracy."

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

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Speakers Address Legacy for Next Generation

assistant to President George W. Bush. Looking at the challenges of American leadership in an increasingly competitive world, the three covered issues ranging from the future of NATO to the popular uprisings in the Arab world to the rise of China and India as major economic powers.

For the season finale on May 23, with PBS NewsHour co-anchor **Judy Woodruff** moderating, former U.S. Senators **John Warner** (R-VA) and **Evan Bayh** (D-IN) addressed the question whether civility and bipartisan cooperation can be returned to national governance.



This year's Panetta Institute Lecture speakers: former Senator Alan Simpson, former White House chief of staff Erskine Bowles, former state superintendent of public instruction Jack O'Connell, CSU chancellor Charles Reed, Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, former Senator Chris Dodd, former Marine Corps Commandant James L. Jones, former national security assistant Stephen Hadley, and former U.S. Senators John Warner and Evan Bayh. Watch the lectures online at PanettaInstitute.org.

Santa Clara Student Finds Job of His Dreams Through Panetta Congressional Internship

Since its founding in 1999, the Panetta Institute's Congressional Internship Program has introduced hundreds of California students to the world of politics and public service. One of them is Santa Clara University graduate **Mark Nakamoto**, whose serves today as legislative assistant to San Jose congressman Mike Honda. We caught up with him for an interview in Washington, DC.

What attracted you to the Institute's intern program?

Well, I had dreamed of getting involved somehow in public service at the national level, but my chances seemed very remote. Then my school sent out this application notice and I realized here was a vehicle, with no financial obstacle.

Obstacle?

Yes, I'm the first person in my family to go to college, and although my parents supported me as much as they could, there's no way that I, as a student, could have afforded an eleven-week stay in Washington. The Panetta Institute provides the airfare, the lodging and a stipend for living expenses for every intern.

And a thorough orientation beforehand.

"Thorough" is putting it mildly. It's a two-week immersion course, where you meet with members of Congress, congressional staff, political journalists, all kinds of experts on the legislative process. It means, when you arrive on Capitol Hill, you're going to be ready to work on day one.

So tell us about your internship.

I was assigned to my hometown congressman, Mike Honda, and I did the kinds of things most interns do – answering phones, organizing the office supplies. But I also got the chance to assist the legislative staff with



Legislative assistant Mark Nakamoto of San Jose got his start in Washington through the Institute's Congressional Internship Program.

research and get a behind-the-scenes look at how legislation is crafted.

Plus some exposure to the rest of Washington?

Yes, that's actually part of the program. We met with the White House chief of staff, for example, and many other key people in and out of z. It was an amazing experience.

And apparently it led to further opportunities.

Exactly. When I went back to Santa Clara, I picked up another internship in the congressman's home district office, and later, when I was about to graduate, they offered me a staff job in Washington, which eventually led to my legislative assistant role today. I cover legislative branch appropriations, plus homeland security and a number of other issues. It's really a dream come true for me, and I absolutely would not be here if it hadn't been for that Panetta internship.

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Institute's Survey Shows U.S. College Students Newly Pessimistic About Nation's Direction

American college students have turned dramatically more negative in their view of where the country is heading, according to the Panetta Institute's annual campus survey, with fully half of them (50 percent) now saying the U.S. is "on the wrong track." Only 39 percent held that view in April of last year.

Meanwhile, the portion of students who say we're going in the "right direction" has fallen from 53 percent last year to 37 percent today.

The U.S. economy appears to be a big factor, with only 15 percent of students in the survey rating it "good" and not a single one calling it excellent.

"Most students are just not seeing the national rebound the economists keep telling us about," says Institute director Sylvia Panetta.

Students rank "improving the job situation" as the issue most important to them personally, and nearly two-thirds (64 percent) believe it will be harder for their generation to achieve the American dream than it was for their parents.

At the same time, by a margin of 62 to 36 percent, students put a higher priority on reducing the federal deficit than on increasing federal spending to help the economy recover.



Job worries loom large in students' outlook.

College students also take a negative view of the partisan rancor in Congress that can get in the way of solving the nation's problems, with 76 percent saying it's more important for legislators to compromise and reach agreement than to stick to their party principles.

On a positive note, the annual survey shows a slow, steady increase over the past decade in student interest in serving some day in government.

Conducted by Hart Research Associates, the March 30 to April 4 poll explores a wide range of topics, including students' expectations about their own careers, their rating of the quality of the education they're receiving, and their level of involvement in politics and community service. A summary is posted at PanettaInstitute.org.