



PANETTA INSTITUTE

# update

## Lecture Series Examines the American Dream

The quest for the American Dream was the focus this spring as the Panetta Institute's nationally renowned *Leon Panetta Lecture Series* returned to the Monterey Conference Center for its twenty-first season.

With Secretary Panetta as moderator, a variety of national political, media and policy leaders took on the issue, *Is the American Dream Alive and Well?*

Each year, the Panetta Institute brings together nationally known policy and political leaders and journalists to discuss current issues before members of the community, as well as students from central and northern California. They speak with students in the afternoon prior to participating in the evening session in front of a live ticketed and television audience.

The series kicked off on February 26 with two former senators offering their thoughts on *The Economy and the American Dream*. **Kelly Ayotte**, United States Senator, New Hampshire (2011-2017) and **Chris Dodd**, United States Senator, Connecticut (1981-2011), agreed that despite an improving economy, an increasing national debt poses a threat to the country's long-term economic health.

On March 26 the topic turned to *Global Crisis and the American Dream*, with **Michael McFaul**, United States Ambassador to the Russian Federation (2012-2014); **Michèle Flournoy**, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (2009-2012); and **George Will**,

political columnist, television commentator and author. Each of the speakers called upon the president and Congress to embrace the nation's role as the world's leader, and not back away from that responsibility.

For the April 30 lecture, Watergate journalists **Carl Bernstein** and **Bob Woodward** joined former White House Chief of Staff **Reince Priebus** to examine *The American Presidency and the American Dream*.

Speakers looked back at the leadership qualities of recent presidents. Surprisingly, the two journalists who led the *Washington Post* Watergate investigation praised President Ford for issuing a pardon to President Nixon. "He did that pardon knowing it would probably cost him the presidency in the next election," Mr.

Volume 20, No. 1  
Summer 2018

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Institute chairman Leon E. Panetta (left) moderates the April 30 session with Bob Woodward, Reince Priebus and Carl Bernstein.

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## Lecture Series Confronts Questions of Leadership

Bernstein said. “He was willing to put the national interest above his own interest.” As for President Trump, Mr. Priebus defended his former boss, saying, “On nuts and bolts promises he made to the American people, he is delivering.”

The final lecture took place on May 28, and examined *Technology and the American Dream*,

with **Keith Alexander**, Commander, United States Cyber Command (2010-2014) and Director, National Security Agency/Chief, Central Security Service (2005-2014); and **Renée James**, Chairman and CEO of Ampere Computing and President of Intel Corporation (2014-2016) taking a deep look at such issues as artificial intelligence, robotics and cyber threats.



Our speakers: former United States Senator Kelly Ayotte, former United States Senator Chris Dodd, former Ambassador to the Russian Federation Michael McFaul, former Under Secretary of Defense Michèle Flournoy, political columnist George Will, journalist Bob Woodward, journalist Carl Bernstein, former White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus, former Commander of the United States Cyber Command Keith Alexander and Ampere Computing CEO Renée James.

### A Message from the Chairman

## Working to Restore Trust in Our Democracy

By **Leon E. Panetta**

**A**t the Panetta Institute, we are committed to inspiring young people to lives of public service. As part of that effort, we are taking time this year to examine the American Dream and ask whether it is alive and well even in this era of change, economic challenges and extreme partisanship.

I believe that the American Dream is to provide our children with a better life. We want them to inherit a future full of possibilities that include peace and security, economic opportunity, stability, and a functioning democracy.

We devoted the *2018 Leon Panetta Lecture Series* to questions about the American Dream, and we are addressing the subject to



participants in this summer’s *Leadership Seminar* and *Congressional Internship Program*.

I was concerned over the results of our latest survey of America’s college students that revealed their record levels of dismay about the direction of the country and anxiety about their personal finances at a time of growing college debt.

At the same time, I was heartened by the data showing students are taking a deep interest in the upcoming mid-year elections. I see that same interest from young people at our programs here at the Panetta Institute.

For that reason, I feel encouraged that students understand that participating in our democracy is the key to keeping the American Dream alive and well.



## Panetta Survey Shows College Students Engaged but Concerned Over Finances and Leadership

In its latest nationwide survey of college students, The Panetta Institute for Public Policy has found interest in this year's mid-term elections running unusually high on campus, even while students express record levels of dismay about the direction of the country and anxiety about their personal finances as student debts and the cost of college education increase.

Students are nearly twice as likely to be following the mid-term elections "closely" as they were at this time in 2014.

The proportion of students who say the country is "off on the wrong track" stands at 61 percent in this study, the same as in April of last year when the figure hit its highest level in the survey's 20-year history. The percentage who worry about having too much student loan debt has also reached a record level – 65 percent.

"These numbers are dramatic evidence of how college costs have been ratcheting up in recent years," says Institute Co-Chair and CEO Sylvia M. Panetta.

In addition, students express concern for their physical safety, with 43 percent worrying "a great deal" or "quite a bit" about the possibility of a mass shooting on campus.

The Panetta Institute commissions Hart Research Associates in the spring of each year to examine U.S. college students' attitudes and opinions on a wide range of subjects, including social trends, level of political interest and a variety of public policy issues. The results help guide the Institute's efforts to promote greater civic involvement.

A more extensive summary of the findings is available at [PanettaInstitute.org](http://PanettaInstitute.org).

"THE NUMBERS ARE EVIDENCE OF HOW COLLEGE COSTS ARE RATCHETING UP."

— Sylvia M. Panetta

## Young Leaders Learn Best Practices at Leadership Seminar

Student leaders from throughout California arrived at the Panetta Institute for eight days in June for the nineteenth annual *Leadership Seminar*. The objectives of the seminar are to teach young men and women about leadership principles, strategies and practices; to send them back to their campuses and communities as more effective leaders; and to encourage them to pursue lives of public service.

At the program's conclusion, each of the twenty-six participants gave presentations on how they would apply the lessons they learned while at the Institute.

Among the program's nearly two dozen presentations, events and exercises were

discussions by Secretary Panetta, the Institute's professors and community leaders from around the state. They spoke to the students about putting leadership theories into practice.



Students from around the state at *Leadership Seminar*.





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**Reading Program Marks Twenty-One Successful Years**

**T**he Panetta Institute’s longest-running program, *Monterey County Reads*, has just completed its twenty-first year of providing reading assistance to students in grades one through three throughout Monterey County.

The vision of *Monterey County Reads* is to have children in the county read at or beyond grade-level by the end of third grade. In its history, more than 3,500 *Monterey County Reads* volunteers have read over 129,000 hours one-to-one with approximately 18,600 children in Monterey County elementary schools.

Launched in 1997, *Monterey County Reads* continues to devote itself to well-established principles of helping children engage in reading sessions with volunteers to help ensure that their improved reading ability leads to later success, both at school and throughout their lives.

During that time, the Panetta Institute has fine-tuned the program, adding important measurements of outcomes and other analytic data to guarantee that the effort is resulting in improved reading achievement by the students.

The success of the program has further resulted from the work of a team of seven literacy specialists that assures high quality outcomes by conducting orientations with school site teams at each participating school, training



**Reading along with *Monterey County Reads* volunteer Keyiona Ritchey**

new volunteers and performing pre- and post-assessments for every assigned student. This yields a smoother functioning program as well as more accurate data. Panetta Institute staff guides each of these sessions and events.

Institute Co-Chair and CEO Sylvia M. Panetta points out, “*Monterey County Reads* is a tremendous example of the power of partnerships to improve our communities and protect the well-being of our children.”

In its twenty-one years, *Monterey County Reads* has grown to include ten school districts and thirty-four elementary schools throughout Monterey County.

