



PANETTA INSTITUTE

# update

## A Message from the Chairman

### Our Commitment to Building Leadership

The gathering storms of domestic and international crises, whether it's racial injustice or a growing coronavirus pandemic, provide the United States with some of the biggest challenges in our nation's history, and put a focus on the need for strong leadership at every level of our society.

The principle of good leadership is at the core of everything we do at the Panetta Institute. Promoting and teaching leadership skills to the next generation is the very reason that Sylvia and I founded the Institute back in 1997.

I have often stated that in our democracy the people and the institutions of our country have a choice — to govern by leadership or govern by crisis.

Whether it's the coronavirus pandemic, racial inequality or the growing number of flash points around the world, it is critical that the United States provides the leadership necessary to unify our country and our allies to work together to defeat the biggest threats we have faced since World War II.

Too often in recent years, our country's leaders have favored gridlock over cooperation, party over country, and have lurched from crisis to crisis. But what the president and national leaders must come to realize is that there are no short-cuts and no substitute for the thoughtful work and sacrifice required to protect our country, our democracy and our way of life.

The American people understand that we are all in this together and that leadership, not politics, is the key to victory.

In the case of the coronavirus pandemic, we have already lost too many lives simply because of poor planning and preparation. But our nation is resilient in crisis.

The good news is that the American spirit remains strong, despite the challenges we face. There's evidence in a majority of states that there is a willingness to set aside partisan differences and bring essential relief to those in need.

We will get through these crises. What defines our strength is not our weapons or the value of the dollar, it is the great common sense and patriotism of the American people who want leaders who are courageous enough to do what is right. We cannot govern by crisis alone. That is the story of failed empires throughout history.

The Panetta Institute values the principles of good leadership and an informed citizenry, even during this time of challenge. While the Institute has curtailed its services in order to ensure the safety of those we serve as well as



**Leon Panetta:**  
*"The American Dream is alive and well."*

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- Research Fellows Program Reaches Milestone
- Nation's Students Concerned by Pandemic
- Panetta Institute Programs Move Forward

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## Our Commitment to Building Leadership

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our staff and volunteers, our programs are moving forward. The *Leon Panetta Lecture Series* has been delayed but will take place later in the year. Our *Leadership Program* for university student leaders will be conducted online. As schools closed, *Monterey County Reads* had to be halted but will resume during the upcoming school year. We still plan on conducting our annual *Congressional Internship Program*. Thanks to the creative efforts by the Panetta Institute professors, we have been able to continue the *Policy Research Fellows Program* through distance learning.

I remain optimistic that we will get through these crises. America has always found a way to succeed. Since the Panetta Institute opened its doors twenty-four years ago, Sylvia and I have seen new leaders come through to learn and develop leadership skills and then go on to succeed in a variety of public service fields.

Sylvia and I are very proud that the Panetta Institute has touched so many lives with our programs. In turn, their success gives us reasons to be optimistic that despite the many challenges, the American Dream remains alive and well.

## Policy Research Fellows Program Reaches Milestone

**“WE ARE  
TEACHING  
THE ART OF  
GOVERNING.”**  
—Secretary Panetta

The Policy Research Fellows Program reached a major milestone this spring when seven students from Santa Clara University School of Law completed their semester of study, bringing the number of participants in this acclaimed program to an even 100 since its founding in 2006.

This spring's class was the largest ever in the program's history, and the collaborative nature of the program resulted in a wide variety of policy research. Fellows spent the semester studying and presenting real-world policy proposals on U.S. trade policy, Middle East relations, immigration, cyber warfare, gun control, climate change and education.

“Having a larger number of fellows had the added benefit of creating an engaging in-class environment where the fellows had an opportunity to learn from one another, as well as from Secretary Panetta and the program's four professors,” said Co-Chair and CEO Sylvia Panetta. “Each fellow greatly improved his or her understanding of

the important policy issues Americans face as a nation.”

Secretary and Mrs. Panetta also joined with Institute professors in guiding in-person and independent research.

“Essentially, we are teaching the fellows the art of governing,” said Secretary Panetta. “They do research on both the Republican and the Democratic positions on major national issues and then develop a consensus on what compromise would look like.”



Panetta Fellows gather with Sylvia Panetta and Institute instructors.



## Survey: Pandemic a Major Worry for College Students

In the twentieth year of its nationwide survey of college students, the Panetta Institute for Public Policy has found that college students have been profoundly affected by COVID-19, with 79 percent of those polled saying that the pandemic is changing their life in a major way.

The Panetta Institute commissions this poll in the spring of each year to help guide its curriculum and advance its mission, which is to encourage young people to consider careers in public service and prepare them for the challenges they'll face as future leaders. The study explores student attitudes and opinions on many topics, including social trends, level of political involvement, and a variety of national and international issues.

### Online Learning

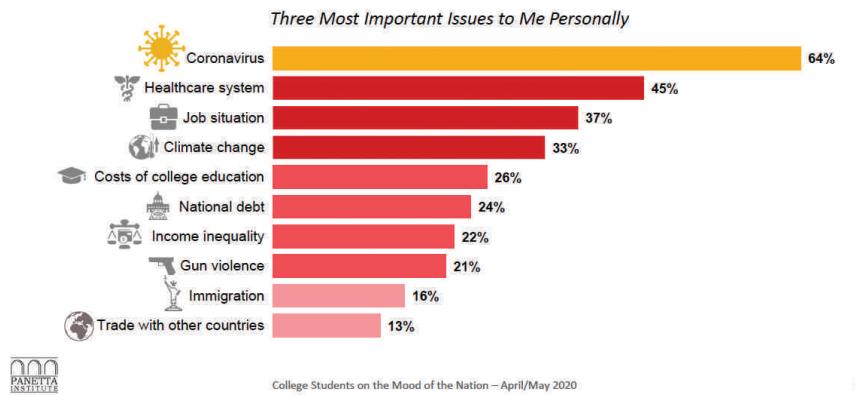
Although students are generally satisfied with how their institution has handled the coronavirus, they question the benefits of distance learning and its impact on the value of their education. While 83 percent support their institution's decisions in the face of this health emergency, some 58 percent say that online classes are worse than in-person classes. In fact, 74 percent report that they miss attending classes in person a great deal or a fair amount, topped only by missing time with friends (84 percent).

About 64 percent of underclassmen say that they have seriously considered asking that institutions reduce tuition while classes are online, while 42 percent say they will seriously consider taking time off until classes return to being held in-person.

### Country on Wrong Track

"While all Americans are being impacted by the coronavirus, it is clear from the survey that

**COVID-19 is far and away the most important issue for college students.**



students in particular believe their lives are changing in a major way," says Secretary Leon E. Panetta. "Their concerns go deeper, to the health of our democracy and the quality of our leaders."

In addition to the spread of the coronavirus, students polled repeated the concern of previous years that the country is "off on the wrong track" (56 percent) instead of moving in "the right direction" (44 percent).

### Financial Burden

Students also said they are pessimistic about their financial future. Fifty-six percent have had to take out student loans, with the average amount of debt exceeding \$30,000. Nevertheless, more than 60 percent are interested in public service. "This is a finding that boosts our spirits at the Institute," says Co-Chair and CEO Sylvia Panetta, "and we're also encouraged by students' continuing high level of involvement in their communities."

For this year, 800 students at four-year colleges across the country were polled from April 29 to May 5.

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

STUDENTS  
QUESTION THE  
BENEFITS OF  
DISTANCE  
LEARNING AND  
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THE VALUE OF  
EDUCATION.



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## We Ask Your Help

The Panetta Institute continues to change and grow, but our mission remains the same: inspiring people to lives of public service and helping them develop the skills they'll need to meet the challenges of the future. Please help us with a tax-deductible contribution. You can contribute online at [PanettaInstitute.org](http://PanettaInstitute.org).

## Institute Programs Continue Moving Forward in Response to Challenges

**T**he Panetta Institute is moving forward with its wide variety of programs, even while observing all safeguards to protect our staff and those we serve.

“By making use of technology, our work hasn’t stopped despite the interruptions,” said Co-Chair and CEO Sylvia Panetta. “It’s times like these that demonstrate the importance of our mission. Thanks to our staff and our supporters, we carry on.”

Here is a look at our program schedules for the remainder of 2020:

- **Leon Panetta Lecture Series:** Three remaining lectures have been rescheduled, and all tickets issued for the previously listed dates will be honored for the new dates and times. The three remaining lectures are tentatively scheduled for August 31, September 21 and September 28. For more information, see our website.
- **Leadership Seminar:** This first-of-its-kind program teaches leadership skills to student body leaders elected by the twenty-three different campuses of the CSU system and three private universities. Student leaders hone their leadership abilities through interactions with Secretary Panetta, military officers, leading academics, and business and civic leaders, learning through the lens of their different experiences. The course will be delivered online.
- **Congressional Internship Program:** This acclaimed program will take place in early August and the students will serve with the members of the California delegation this fall in Washington.
- **Research Fellows Program:** As described on Page 3, this program continued. This year's class of seven students was the largest cohort in the history of the program.
- **Monterey County Reads:** When schools closed, the program ended mid-semester. Nonetheless, by that time, 126 volunteers had contributed approximately 360 hours reading one-to-one with nearly 500 first, second and third-grade students throughout Monterey County. In the interim, the Institute continues to recruit volunteers for placement when schools reopen. The traditional awards program is scheduled for September.
- **Leon Panetta Archive:** Further documentation and archiving of Secretary Panetta’s materials continue as the Institute receives an increasing number of requests for access.