

Opening Statement for Ranking Member Hall

The Globalization of R&D and Innovation, Pt. II: The University Response

Thursday, July 26, 2007

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

2318 Rayburn House Office Building

Mr. Chairman, there is no doubt that the American higher education system is one of our nation's crown jewels. An increasing demand for U.S. degrees and an escalating use of our higher education system as a model by other countries reflect decades of hard work and investment by the American people and by dedicated professionals like those on the panel before us. While congratulations are in order, we should take care not to rest on our laurels while the world around us continues to invest and improve their research and educational facilities.

Today I look forward to discussing one way in which U.S. institutions of higher education are trying to continue their record of leadership. Scores of universities are now looking overseas for opportunities to expand. Many have partnered with foreign universities to offer joint programs and degrees while others have opened new branches complete with classrooms, laboratory space, and dormitories. Some universities offer a limited curriculum overseas and require students to complete their training in the U.S. while others offer complete degree programs abroad. This wide range of models makes it difficult to confidently predict how the globalization of higher education may affect U.S. institutions and the U.S. economy overall. However, we have a panel before us today that can help us map out the pros and cons of these trends.

In addition to the schools represented here today, I would like to take a moment to mention the work of Texas A&M in Qatar, which is highlighted in the American Council of Education (ACE) report, *Venturing Abroad: Delivering U.S. Degrees through Overseas Branch Campuses and Programs*. Started under the presidency of Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, Texas A&M continues to build a substantial engineering program in Qatar. The inaugural class began in September, 2003, with twenty-nine students and has grown from there. Currently, Texas A&M offers four engineering degrees in Qatar, with a faculty of fifty-two, and student body of two hundred. The coursework in Qatar meets the same standards of those in College Station, including a course on Texas history, I might add.

There are a few key questions that I am eager to have addressed today. First of all, who are the students that take advantage of U.S. programs abroad and where do they go after graduation? Do significant numbers work for American firms after graduation, either in their home country or in the U.S.? Do more U.S. students study abroad when branch campuses are available? Next, I'm interested in our panel's thoughts on the ability of their international efforts to serve as centers for business development. Do these centers provide a foot in the door for U.S. businesses, or do they largely stimulate growth only within the foreign country? Finally, I think we should also consider the role these

international arrangements have in further projecting America's soft power. Many of these programs are located in areas of the world where the U.S. has a strategic interest in being on the ground.

I look forward to our panel's testimony and for the opportunity to continue this discussion in earnest during the question and answer period.