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100,000 STRONG IN THE AMERICAS

Expanding and Enriching Study in the Americas

President Obama launched *100,000 Strong in the Americas* to underscore the critical relationship between broader educational opportunity and greater regional prosperity. Expanding study abroad opportunities for students, our future leaders and innovators, strengthens bi-national relations and better prepares young people for the 21st century global workforce. In today's interconnected, technology-driven world, quality education alone is not enough. We need to be more internationally-aware and cross-culturally adept. We need a generation of leaders who can reach across borders. For this, students need a broad base of skills and experiences, including exposure to other countries and cultures. That is the vision of *100,000 Strong in the Americas*.

Why the Americas The Challenge The Solution

The future of the people and nations of the Americas is inextricably linked. As the Hispanic population in the United States surpasses 50 million, Americans increasingly recognize a shared connection and stake in this region. The Western Hemisphere represents a thriving market of nearly a billion people. Approximately 40 percent of U.S. exports go to our Latin American and Caribbean neighbors, and Latin American exports to the U.S. are even higher. The middle class in Latin America has grown by 50 million in the last decade alone. By 2060, the population in the Americas is projected to be greater than that of China, and more deeply linked to the U.S. by trade, culture, and family ties than any other region. Against this future landscape, *100,000 Strong* will deepen relationships across the Hemisphere, enabling young people to understand and navigate the rich tapestry of shared values and culture and lead the process of greater commercial and social integration key to our region's long term security and prosperity.

Our goal of 100,000 students moving in both directions by 2020 is ambitious. Currently, 40,000 U.S. students study in Latin America and the Caribbean and 64,000 Latin American and Caribbean students study in the United States each year. We are seeking to more than double those numbers in less than ten years. Many Latin American and Caribbean students, particularly those of less advantaged backgrounds, to include those of afro or indigenous descent, lack the English language skills or resources to succeed at U.S. institutions. Conversely, many U.S. students are still unaware of the opportunities available in the hemisphere. U.S. and Latin American colleges and universities face challenges integrating study abroad into degree programs, designing programs for nontraditional students, and developing cost-effective opportunities for all students. To reach our goal, colleges and universities must make study abroad accessible for all students, regardless of their major, socio-economic status, or the type of institution in which they are enrolled.

To implement the President's vision, the Department of State established a public-private partnership with *NAFSA: Association of International Educators*, the world's largest nonprofit association dedicated to international education, and *Partners of the Americas*, a leading voluntary and development agency with over 45 years of experience in the Americas. Our matching grant program leverages private and corporate giving so that universities and colleges can expand study abroad programs and make international study more broadly available. This unique public-private partnership will educate and prepare tomorrow's leaders through today's investment by corporations, schools, and governments who understand the value of connecting the hemisphere through its young people. Enhancing productive people-to-people ties is a key component of the partnership vision that underlies President Obama's policy in the Americas and *100,000 Strong in the Americas*: changing lives, connecting countries, and forging a shared future in this hemisphere.

"...The United States will work with partners in this region, including the private sector, to increase the number of U.S. students studying in Latin America to 100,000, and the number of Latin American students studying in the United States to 100,000."

President Barack Obama

