

Higher education key to US competitiveness, security

Report, co-chaired by ASU President Michael Crow, details role of universities: 'This is our 21st-century moonshot'

By Lisa Robbins, ASU News

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ASU President Michael Crow's notion of universities as public service institutions — places that serve society in practical and meaningful ways to solve pressing issues of importance to the country — is well established.

He has long been a staunch advocate for universities to collaborate with business, government and community organizations, and to align research and education with their objectives.

So compelling is that vision that Crow's imprint as co-chair for a report issued by the Council on Higher Education as a Strategic Asset, or HESA, is boldly evident.

The report, "America's Talent Moonshot: How the United States Can Win the Global Competition for Prosperity and Security," was issued Thursday.

Inspired by the recognition that America is not producing the human capital required to keep our nation prosperous and safe, the council came together over the course of 24 months to develop the report. Convened by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, it focuses on how America can create the conditions for colleges and universities to take the next giant leap in educational innovation in order to boost our global competitiveness and national security.

The report identifies urgent talent shortages in sectors essential to national strength — health care, cybersecurity and AI, education and engineering — and calls for scalable, coordinated solutions to close these gaps.

“This is our 21st-century moonshot,” the report states. “And just like the moon landing, it will take ambition, investment and a united effort.”

The report calls for commitment to outcomes in areas the council identified as mattering most to the American people:

- Cultivate talent aligned with present and future national needs.
- Improve achievement of knowledge and essential competencies and skills.
- Develop citizens with civic knowledge.
- Achieve globally competitive levels of degree and certificate attainment.
- Increase affordability and expand access.

“Arizona State University is committed to becoming a model for a new national service university,” Crow said. “ASU has been leading in all these areas and is committing to accelerating efforts and significantly expanding outcomes, including the number of graduates prepared to work in these fields, significant public and private sector partnerships working toward shared goals, and demonstrable results that align with statewide and national priorities.”

The report identifies the following priorities:

- New models for tomorrow’s learners, more personalized, more flexible, inside and outside of traditional academic settings.
- Multiple pathways for attaining degrees and credentials.
- Learning experiences that emphasize development of essential skills and competencies and prepare informed citizens to engage constructively in our democracy.

The report also acknowledges growing public dissatisfaction with traditional education models and responds with a blueprint for action: empowering colleges and universities to serve national interests through innovation, collaboration and rapid response to strategic talent needs.

“HESA-participating universities are committed to supporting America and American ideals,” said Robert King, HESA co-chair and former U.S. Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education. “The global preeminence the U.S. once enjoyed is being eroded as other countries are investing strategically in educating and developing their citizens. At the same time an increasing number of Americans are expressing frustration with the design, outcomes and costs of the current model of higher education.”

It is a focus on new design that those who know ASU will find familiar.

"You will note the alignment of these outcomes with the words of the ASU Charter, which has guided us for the last two decades and continues to define our purpose, frame our mission and affirm our commitment to Arizonans and the nation," Crow said. "In the coming months, you will see new initiatives launched by ASU, and new university partnerships led by ASU, that respond directly to the calls to action in the HESA final report."

"ASU will continue to lead by example, as the New American University committed to our nation's highest priorities and ensuring our economic and national security."

Copies of the full report can be downloaded at www.hesaus.org.

This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).

Main image



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