



United States Public Service Academy

A Proposal for America's First
National Civilian University

U.S. Public Service Academy

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**Public service is a noble calling
and we need men and women of character
to believe in their communities, in their states, and in their country.**
George H.W. Bush

Executive Summary

Recent events underscore how much our nation' depends upon strong public institutions and competent civilian leadership at all levels of society. National disasters such as 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina have highlighted the importance of public service and convinced Americans that our nation must improve our capacity not only to deal with future emergencies but also to confront daily challenges both locally and globally. As part of this effort, America must create an undergraduate institution designed to cultivate a new generation of young leaders dedicated to public service: the U.S. Public Service Academy.

The Academy will meet critical needs in American society and promote the nation's security.

- Our national security depends on having strong civilian leadership and America faces a growing shortage of public servants and civic leaders at all levels of society. Although George Washington first proposed the idea of a national public university, we still have no such school.
- Thousands of American youth seek to serve their nation in a civilian capacity, but they often are priced out of public service because they are saddled with college debts.

Modeled on the military academies, the Academy will provide a service-oriented, leadership-focused education to more than 5,000 undergraduate students.

- Spots for nearly 1,300 incoming freshmen will be allocated by state, following a congressional nomination process similar to that used for admission to the military academies.
- The structured, academically rigorous program will combine a traditional liberal arts curriculum with stringent requirements for service learning, study abroad, and summer internships.
- Academy graduates will spend five years serving their nation by working as teachers, police officers, emergency responders, and other critical public service jobs at the local, state, and national levels.
- The Academy will cost roughly \$205 million annually. It will be funded as a public-private partnership with Congress appropriating \$164 million — less than 60 cents per American.

The Academy will offer a unique contribution to American higher education.

- Like the military academies, the Academy will create a campus culture of service that will foster strong bonds among undergraduates committed to the same patriotic goals.
- The Academy's five-year post-graduation service requirement has no civilian parallel.
- With unmatched regional diversity, the Academy will be a truly national university.
- The Academy will be an inspiring symbol of the federal government's commitment to public service as essential to the economic and social vitality of the country.

Academy graduates will become lifelong public leaders in local communities nationwide.

- During their five-year post-graduation service, Academy graduates will fan out across the nation and the world, gaining valuable experience while providing much-needed energy and manpower in areas of critical need. This intense experience will launch a lifetime of public service leadership.
- Over time, the Academy alumni network will become a powerful force that will help make public institutions more effective and efficient.

The Academy will become the nation's flagship institution for public leadership.

- The Academy will be the defining institution of our generation, a college that captures the patriotic spirit of our young people and channels it into public service
- It will be a unifying institution that brings students from every corner of America to one campus to study, serve, and lead together.

Mission Statement

THE MISSION OF THE U.S. PUBLIC SERVICE ACADEMY IS TO BUILD A CORPS OF CIVILIAN LEADERS WHO HAVE THE MORAL CHARACTER, ACADEMIC TRAINING, AND LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE NECESSARY TO SERVE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE HONORABLY AND EFFECTIVELY, AND WHO ARE COMMITTED TO DEVOTING THEIR LIVES TO PUBLIC SERVICE.

The U.S. Public Service Academy is dedicated to creating a corps of passionate and patriotic civilian leaders willing to devote themselves to the pursuit of academic excellence, civic engagement, and leadership through public service. The Academy seeks to develop students who pursue the highest ideals of human character and the American values of freedom, democracy, and equal opportunity; strive for individual excellence yet feel a personal responsibility to achieve the common good; and appreciate their rights and uphold their responsibilities as citizens of the United States. As an academic institution, the Academy is committed to free and open inquiry, free expression of ideas, and the pursuit of truth. As a public institution, the Academy strives to connect the classroom and community through a consistent commitment not only to creating knowledge but also to sharing and applying that knowledge to serve the American public and world at large. As a national institution, the Academy endeavors to build a corps of civilian leaders willing and able to confront the challenges that face this country in the future.

Why does America need the United States Public Service Academy?

1. America needs a national institution to promote public service and develop competent, globally aware civilian leaders.

The challenges of the early twenty-first century underscore how much our nation depends upon strong public institutions and competent civilian leadership at all levels of society. National disasters such as 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina, along with our struggle against international terrorism, have highlighted the importance of public service and convinced many Americans that **our nation must improve our capacity to deal with future catastrophes, as well as the daily challenges of life in a global society.** Chronic difficulties in our schools, health care system, and other public institutions cry out for a new generation of competent public servants willing to devote their lives to strengthening our communities. All Americans can agree that our government and our public institutions must *work* for our citizens.

America does not have a national institution to promote public service or develop well-trained, highly qualified civilian leaders. Throughout the world, national universities serve as flagship institutions for that country's best and brightest, offering undergraduates an affordable opportunity to become part of the nation's civilian leadership. Australia National University, Seoul National University, and the National University of Ireland, for example, combine the quest for academic excellence with an emphasis on public service. America has no parallel institution. We do, however, offer outstanding and well-subsidized opportunities to build our nation's military leadership. The five military service academies (Military, Naval, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marine Academies) are extraordinary examples of effective national public education. Students enjoy a four-year, federally-subsidized college education. After graduation, they repay the government for their studies by serving in the military for five years. This reciprocally beneficial relationship provides students with intense academics, physical training, and leadership development while providing the nation with well-trained, highly-qualified military leaders. The service academies fulfill their missions to train the nation's next generation of military leaders, but they do not focus on developing civilian leaders.

It stands without question that our country sorely needs a source of leaders of character dedicated to selfless service in the civilian sector.

*Lt. Gen. Dave R. Palmer, U.S. Army (Ret.)
Former Superintendent, U.S. Military Academy*

America needs a national institution to promote civilian public service because we currently face a growing shortage of public servants at all levels of society. A recent study by the Congressional Budget Office highlighted "the graying of the federal work force," while the Partnership for Public Service warns of a "federal brain drain" as 44% of all federal workers become eligible to retire over the next five years. The problem extends beyond the federal government. The National Center for Education Statistics estimates that more than 2 million teachers will be needed in this decade because of teacher attrition and retirement and increased student enrollment; more than 80% of the nation's 17,000 law enforcement agencies report that they cannot fill needed positions due to a lack of qualified candidates. As the baby boomers retire, we will need more teachers and school leaders, more police officers and chiefs, more effective government leaders at all levels of society.

Wherever they work, our public leaders will need the academic background and foreign experience necessary to work effectively and make sound decisions in an increasingly interconnected world. Recent events have shown that America cannot remain isolated from the rest of the world. Yet American students are woefully under-prepared when it comes to global education. American young adults came in next to last in a recent National Geographic/Roper survey of geographic

knowledge, and Americans often graduate from college without knowing a foreign language or having any experience abroad — a mere 1% of U.S. undergraduates participate in a study abroad program. Calling our global ignorance “an unacceptable national reality,” the bipartisan Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program warned that “the import of our American ignorance of the world and our monolingualism is potentially more far-reaching” even than Cold War-era educational challenges. The United States needs a national institution that will cultivate global awareness among undergraduate students and offer a model of global education for institutions nationwide.

2. America needs a national university that will tap into the younger generation’s desire to serve the country.

America has witnessed a renewed sense of patriotism and civic obligation among young people, particularly since 9/11. According to the Higher Education Research Institute, more than two-thirds of the 2005 freshman class expressed a desire to serve others, the highest rate in a generation. Applications to private programs such as Teach For America and City Year have skyrocketed in recent years, and religious organizations such as the Common Ground Collective and the North American Mission Board report a marked increase in the number of young people interested in mission trips, volunteer projects, and service opportunities. Publicly-funded service programs, including Freedom Corps and the Peace Corps, also have seen an upsurge in the number of applicants as Americans by the tens of thousands seek to help their nation. **The popularity of such programs points to the expanding pool of young people who wish to serve their nation in a civilian capacity.**

The initiative to create a Public Service Academy could not be more timely.

Wendy Kopp, founder of Teach for America

But the reality is that most young people are forced to abandon their dreams of giving back to their country because their college loan burdens price them out of public service careers.

Existing universities offer numerous public service programs, many of which are models worthy of emulation. Yet the cost of pursuing public service opportunities after graduation can be prohibitive because college tuition has increased dramatically in the past decade – 47% at private schools and 63% at public schools. Because of soaring tuition costs, notes the Project on Student Debt, the average college graduate owes about \$20,000, an increase of more than 50% in the past decade. With so much debt, students often must give up their dreams of public service careers in favor of more lucrative fields. **The federal government should provide at least one undergraduate institution that will insure that all students, regardless of economic background, will be able to pursue public service.**

Yet the federal government offers only one set of colleges for high school seniors with the patriotic desire to serve: the military service academies. These academies are highly competitive institutions that attract top students from across the country. Each year, the military academies reject *tens of thousands* of applicants for a variety of reasons, including physical ailments. Furthermore, the requirements of the armed forces, particularly the intense physical nature of military training, serve to discourage many prospective students who otherwise would like to serve their country. Females, who make up 57% of undergraduate students nationwide, comprise only 15% of the student population at the military academies. **The large number of applicants who do not meet the military’s physical requirements and the small number of female enrollees suggest that**

Academy	Enrollment	% female
Air Force	4,157	11%
Coast Guard	994	29%
Merchant Marine	1,007	14%
Military	4, 175	15%
Navy	4,349	17%

there is a vast group of high school seniors who seek an opportunity to serve their country but lack the opportunity. The Academy would provide a publicly-funded, national institution for these young people to serve our country.

An Education in Service

The United States Public Service Academy will offer a unique contribution to higher education in the America. As the country's first national civilian university, it will provide competitive, service-driven undergraduate education to students from all across the country and the world. Like the military service academies, the Academy will provide a four-year education that includes tuition, fees, books, room and board, and medical care. In return, Academy graduates will be expected to "repay" their country through five years of service in either the civil service, the public sector, or a pre-approved field in the private sector. Our students are expected to become lifelong civic leaders, people who are actively involved in making their communities live up to this nation's ideals of freedom, democracy, and equal opportunity.

Ask not what your country can do for you.

Ask what you can do for your country.

John F. Kennedy

Admissions

The Academy will attract a high-achieving student body that represents the geographic diversity of our country. Spots for incoming freshmen will be allocated by state, following a congressional nomination process similar to that used for admission to the military academies. Each senator and representative will nominate a minimum of five candidates, who will compete for admission against other nominees from their state. For each incoming class, the Admissions Office will reserve two spots per electoral vote from each state and the District of Columbia. Thus, the state of Mississippi, with six electoral votes, will have twelve spots in the freshman class; the state of Arizona, with ten electoral votes, will have twenty spots. In addition, one hundred spots will be open to international students, and one hundred will be reserved for the Academy Admissions Office to select from Presidential nominees and the remaining pool of congressional nominees. This formula will yield a freshman class of roughly 1,275 students, and a four-year student population of about 5,100. Although slightly larger than the military service academies, the Academy will have approximately the same number of students as other top-tier liberal arts schools.

By tying admissions to state populations, the student body will approximate the geographic distribution of the American population as a whole. This regional diversity will be unique in American higher education, bringing to campus a rich mix of our nation's population — rural and urban, conservative and liberal, Northern and Southern, small town and suburb, East Coast and West Coast, Red State and Blue State. It will help the Academy offer an intellectually stimulating, experientially broad, and culturally diverse learning environment in which students can get a deeper understanding of the full range of American experience.

A Culture of Service

The U.S. Public Service Academy will be unlike any civilian college in America. Like the military academies, the Academy will foster a campus culture of service through an intense program in which various learning experiences — classroom work, community service, study abroad, summer internships — reinforce the overarching goal of developing strong public leaders with the moral character, academic training, and leadership experience they need to serve our nation honorably and effectively. The campus ethos and daily pace of life will be more akin to a military academy than a typical liberal arts college. Students will be held to the highest standards of behavior and character through the Academy Honor System, which will underpin all campus activities. They will follow a structured day of classes — attendance will be mandatory — and they will be required to participate in cultural programs, social events, and service projects throughout the school year. Taken as a whole, these corps-building activities will foster unity, develop discipline, and instill an ethic of service that will remain with Academy students throughout a lifetime of public leadership.

Focus on Public Service and Leadership Development

The U.S. Public Service Academy will serve as the nation's flagship institution for public leadership. Working with top scholars from around the country, the Academy will develop a structured academic program that will engage students in a rigorous program of study devoted to free and open inquiry, free expression of ideas, and the pursuit of truth. It will offer students a broad-based liberal arts education that emphasizes a commitment to public service but maintains the academic rigor and wide-ranging intellectual experience essential to flexible, critical thinking. Academy students will earn a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Sciences degree in traditional subjects such as English, economics, biology, or physics. All students also will be required to take a large number of basic courses in American History, World History, Government, and Economics, and they must become fluent in a foreign language. These universal requirements will provide a solid foundation for civilian leadership.

In addition to their Academic Major, students will participate in a systematic leadership development program that builds students' leadership responsibilities progressively through the four-year undergraduate program. Modeled on the Cadet Leadership Development Program at the United States Military Academy, the program will involve academic work, extracurricular programming on campus, and service in the community. All students will enroll in a service-learning class each semester. This community service will improve living conditions and promote civic well-being in the local community, while contributing to students' sense of responsibility and leadership. Through their community service projects, students not only will interact with local people and see firsthand some of the challenges that citizens face on a daily basis, they also will gain practical leadership experience. The hands-on experience will help guide students in their choice of the public service fields in which they want to work.

At the end of their second year, students will declare their Public Service Concentration, which will determine the field in which they will serve following graduation. Once they have made their choice, their service learning classes during their final two years at the Academy will focus on that particular Concentration. They may choose from the following Concentration choices:

- Economy
- Education
- Emergency Management
- Environment
- Foreign Policy
- Health Care
- Law Enforcement
- Public Infrastructure

A heavy moral obligation rests upon the man of education to do his full duty to his country.

Theodore Roosevelt

International Education

All Academy students will be required to spend a minimum of eight weeks studying abroad. The study abroad experience will help give students a broader perspective on the world, a greater insight into their own community, and a deeper appreciation for their rights and responsibilities as American citizens. "Expanding access to and participation in study abroad is essential because it provide direct experience in living, learning, and working in other societies," argues the Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program. To help students become more globally aware citizens, the Academy will provide structured study abroad programs that will push students to take full advantage of the cultural and educational resources of their host country. Students will live with host families for the duration of their stay in order to give them deeper insight into the daily lives and culture of their host country. Students also may participate in internships at the American embassy or consulate in their study abroad location. These internships will expose students to the role that government and military representatives abroad play in the execution of American foreign policy.

In addition to sending American students abroad, the Academy will bring international students to campus to study. The presence of foreign students will give bring international perspectives into Academy classrooms, dormitories, and social spaces, and it will foster the kind of challenging, thought-provoking intellectual discourse that is essential to a liberal arts education. With at least one hundred international students in each class, roughly 8% of the student body will come from abroad. An international student's home country is responsible for subsidizing the student's tuition, fees, room and aboard, and other expenses. Like their American counterparts, international students must agree to a five-year post-graduation service requirement in their native country.

Summer Learning

As part of their academic experience, students will be required to spend eight weeks each summer participating in structured learning programs that reinforce the leadership development program.

At a time when “patriotism-lite” characterizes our country, the Public Service Academy would be a major step toward reinvigorating citizenship obligations.

Charles Moskos, Northwestern University

First Summer: Emergency Response Training

All students will be required to undergo emergency response training so that they will prepared to be “lay” Emergency Medical Technicians in the event of a crisis. Too many college graduates leave campus without the practical skills they need to be capable citizens who can react calmly and intelligently during an emergency. To improve our nation's ability to respond effectively to crises, we need more citizens with the skills needed to respond effectively in emergency situations. During the summer after their first year, Academy students will spend eight weeks with an emergency response team at the local, state, or federal level. This experience not only will give Academy students the skills they need to serve the public in an emergency, it also will give them perspective on the challenges faced by emergency responders.

Second Summer: Military Service Internship

During the summer following their second year, Academy students will be required to spend eight weeks in a military service internship. Since the advent of the all-volunteer military force in the 1970s, a decreasing proportion of Americans have experience with the challenges, operations, or culture of the armed forces. That development is not healthy for a democracy. Because the military is an integral part of our government and performs essential tasks on behalf of all citizens, competent civilian leaders must have a working knowledge of and respect for its operations. The summer internship will not necessarily include the physical training associated with military service. Academy personnel, working in close conjunction with military leaders, will identify specific needs at individual military installations around the world, needs that can be met adequately by a college-age intern. The Academy will then assign students to particular internships. For example, a student may work in an educational program for military children at an overseas base; another may serve with a volunteer organization that supports military spouses. The internship will give students firsthand experience with the soldiers, officers, and families who make up the armed forces. This experience not only will bolster our national security and improve the lives of military personnel, it also will help bridge the growing divide between the military and civilian society.

Third Summer: Charitable Service Internship

During the summer after their third year, Academy students will spend eight weeks in a public service internship with a non-profit, 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Non-profit organizations in the private sector provide invaluable services to citizens nationwide, and well-rounded public leaders should have a working knowledge of their role in society. The Academy will form partnerships with non-profit organizations nationwide that are interested in hosting summer interns. As with the military service internships, these organizations will outline their needs, and Academy personnel will assign students to fill those roles. This experience will familiarize Academy students with the potential for public service within the private sector, and it will aid charitable organizations in fulfilling their missions.

The Four-Year Experience

Year	School year	Summer following
1 st	• Academic coursework and leadership development programs	Emergency response training
2 nd	• Academic coursework and leadership development programs	Military service internship
3 rd	• Study abroad	Charitable service internship
4 th	• Academic coursework and Senior Service Project	Pre-employment training

Service Requirements Following Graduation

After graduating from the United States Public Service Academy, students will serve their country for five years. Although non-profit institutions serve the public important ways, for placement purposes “public service” will be defined to include solely public institutions funded by the local, state, or federal government. Partisan political work, including work for lobbying organizations, political parties, campaigns, or elected officials, will not be considered public service and thus will not fulfill the requirement. The Academy will monitor students’ progress during their five-year commitment, but it will not be responsible for their salaries and benefits, which will be paid by whatever public entity serves as employer. The service requirement may be fulfilled in a variety of public service fields, including (but not limited to):

- Civil service employment at the local, state, or federal level and internationally
- Public school teaching and/or administration
- Law enforcement
- Emergency response

Service is the rent we pay to be living. It is the very purpose of life and not something you do in your spare time.

*Marian Wright Edelman
Founder, Children’s Defense Fund*

The Academy Placement Office will be responsible for assigning students to particular post-graduation jobs. State and local governments, federal agencies, school districts, law enforcement agencies, and other qualifying entities interested in employing Academy graduates will contact the Placement Office. Partnering entities must agree to place Academy graduates on the fast track to leadership positions. The Placement Office will then assign graduates to appropriate employment after assessing local community needs, student experience, and student academic performance. As with the military academies, students at the top of their class will be given preference in the assignment process, but the Placement Office will make all assignment decisions. Graduates will be required to go where they are assigned, just as military personnel are required to follow their assignments.

The Academy will maintain close contact with graduates during their five years of service through site visits, alumni events, and communication with employers. Academy officials will be responsible not only for insuring that graduates fulfill their commitment in letter and spirit, but also for maintaining a strong sense of corps unity. After five years of service, Academy graduates will have fulfilled their commitment to the American people and will be free to chart their own future course. As with the military, some graduates will choose to enter the private sector, where the skills, contacts, and experience they developed in public service likely will inform their career choice and enhance their prospects for success. Many more graduates likely will choose to make public service a career. Whether they choose a

career in the private sector or one in public service, Academy graduates will be recognized leaders in their communities.

Graduate Education

Many Academy graduates will want to pursue graduate education in medicine, science, law, and other service-related fields. To encourage students to continue their studies, the Academy will follow the lead of the military academies and subsidize students' graduate education at a public institution in return for an extended service commitment. For every year of subsidized graduate education, students must add two additional years to their service commitment. Thus, an Academy graduate who pursues a four-year medical degree will be responsible for serving the nation for a total of thirteen years following their graduation from medical school – the required five years, plus eight additional years. The nation will benefit from having service-minded doctors, scientists, lawyers, researchers, administrators and other highly-trained professionals spend more than a decade in public service, while Academy graduates will be able to pursue their studies without suffering economic hardship.

Funding

The U.S. Public Service Academy will be a public-private partnership. Like the military service academies, it will be funded primarily by congressional appropriation, augmented by private partnerships to endow professorships, construct special facilities, and build a lasting endowment. An initial, two-year appropriation will begin the process of acquiring land, constructing facilities, recruiting faculty and students, hiring employees, and developing curricula in preparation for the opening of the Academy. A second appropriation will fund the Academy as it grows one class at a time into a four-year institution. The amount of money necessary to run a top-quality institution should roughly approximate \$40,000 per student annually. With a student body of 5,100, the annual operating budget of the Academy will equate to roughly \$205 million. This sum represents less than 1% of the \$24 billion in special projects earmarked in the 2005 transportation bill. Assuming a public match of 4 to 1, the annual congressional appropriation will total roughly \$164 million. The Academy's lasting benefit to the American people far exceeds the appropriation – it is an investment in our nation's long-term future.

Timeline

Because the Academy will be a public institution, Congress must pass legislation to authorize its creation and appropriate funding to support its operation. The timetable for the political process is difficult to predict, and Academy officials are working with Congress to draft and pass the necessary legislation. In the interim, we have begun the process of planning the college. We have assembled teams of experts to study various aspects of the school, from admissions to budgeting to curriculum. These

The creation of the United States Public Service Academy is a stunning idea.

William Sessions, former head of FBI

teams will collaborate to draw up a detailed three-year plan that will guide the creation of the Academy. Once the legislation is passed, Academy officials can begin the process of implementing the plan according to the following timeline:

- Year 1: Secure campus location; recruit faculty and staff; develop curricula; plan programs; renovate and construct facilities; raise private funds to build endowment
- Year 2: Recruit faculty and students; develop curricula; plan programs; renovate and construct buildings; prepare campus for first class of incoming students; raise private funds to build endowment
- Year 3: Begin classes

The Academy will require four years to reach its complete cycle of students. The initial four classes of incoming freshmen will comprise roughly 600 students apiece, less than half the proposed total. Admitting fewer students initially will give Academy officials more time to develop a high-quality program that will attract top scholars and students from across the nation.

A Unique Contribution

The U.S. Public Service Academy promises to offer students of all backgrounds and from all over the country the opportunity to experience the best in American higher education. With four years in a structured, service-oriented undergraduate program and five years of hands-on public service, these young leaders will have the experience, skills, and commitment to become strong leaders in their communities. By allocating spots by state, the Academy will attract a geographically diverse student body and will avoid the trap of many top universities, which tend to be stocked primarily with high achievers from the seaboard cities and suburbs. By offering a competitive academic program tuition-free with a post-graduation service requirement, the Academy will not become the exclusive province of the privileged. By structuring its academic program around a commitment to public service, the Academy will create a corps of patriotic leaders dedicated to helping fulfill the ideals of our nation. This is a winning idea.

**The Public Service Academy has enormous appeal –
and is a terrific initiative.**

*Lt. Gen. Dan Christman, U.S. Army (Ret.)
Former Superintendent, U.S. Military Academy*

One Logical Home for the Academy: Washington D.C.

Congress will determine the location of the Academy through the legislative process. One site that stands out as a logical potential site is our nation's capital, Washington, D.C. As the seat of the federal government, Washington offers opportunities that would be invaluable to Academy students – internships where students would be able to get hands-on experience in public service; partnerships with government agencies that could provide speakers and visiting professors for Academy classes; easy access to research materials and subjects; and other concrete resources that would be hard to duplicate elsewhere. More intangibly, living and studying in Washington would give Academy students an insider's view on the federal government, warts and all. When they return home to become citizen leaders, they would have a better understanding of the potential and limitations of the federal government.

Washington, D.C., is our nation's showcase, the place where people from all over the world come to learn about the history, institutions, and day-to-day operation of the American experiment in democracy. Each summer, thousands of college students flock to Washington to participate in internships and experience life in the nation's capital. Yet **the nation's capital does not have a national public university for undergraduate students**. Without the choice of a competitive public university, students who hope to study in our nation's capital must pay the costs of a private institution, which can be prohibitive — private universities in the District are on average nearly 30% more expensive than their peers nationwide. Furthermore, D.C. area private schools are geographically homogenous, with a majority of the students hailing from the Northeast, a region that accounts for less than one-fifth of the nation's population. As the nation's capital, Washington should offer a top-quality national public institution open to all Americans.

The District offers numerous potential sites for a new college, but one in particular is practical, feasible, and well-placed: **Walter Reed Army Medical Center** on Georgia Avenue. In Fall 2005, the Base Realignment and Closure Commission recommended the closing of Walter Reed, a decision to be implemented during the course of the next five years. As the military moves its medical operations to Bethesda, Walter Reed and its stately campus of beautiful oak trees and brick buildings cry out for a new mission. With 113 acres located along a major artery into downtown Washington, the Walter Reed complex promises many benefits to a new college. Although set in the heart of the city, the complex resembles a small town college campus more than a typical urban college, with rolling green hills and grassy walking areas offering a respite from the surrounding concrete. The Capitol lies just two miles away by bus or Metro, giving students and faculty easy access to the national historic sites and resources.

Being the home of a top public university would establish Washington's reputation as a prime locale for academic excellence. The city would be able to boast not only of a cadre of excellent private universities, but also a top public college accessible to students from all over the nation. With the United States Public Service Academy, the District would continue to be a magnet for the nation's top students and would solidify its standing as our national showcase to the world.

Washington, however, is not the only potential site for the Academy, and Congress will make the ultimate decision about location. Policymakers may find other sites, such as former military bases, to be more appropriate, and the ultimate decision about location will be determined through the legislative process. More important than the location is the concept itself – our nation needs a national public service university.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why should the federal government make the Academy a priority?

Like military service, civilian public service is important enough that America should have a stand-alone institution dedicated to developing a new generation of civic leaders. Our rhetoric exalts public service, but we do not put enough resources behind it. As the Preamble to the Constitution states, the federal government has the responsibility to “establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, and promote the general welfare.” We have five extraordinary academies that provide federally-subsidized education to nearly 20,000 future military leaders who will “provide for the common defense,” yet we have no public undergraduate institution devoted to meeting the government’s other responsibilities. Building the Academy sends a clear message to our young people about the importance of serving our nation and places civilian service on par with military service.

Don’t we already have “public service academies” in existing universities?

American higher education boasts thousands of outstanding colleges and universities, many of which have instituted public service programs on campus. Yet a decreasing proportion of undergraduates choose to enter public service as a field. This decrease stems in part because the cost of college can make pursuing public service opportunities after graduation prohibitive — the average college graduate now owes about \$20,000, a debt load that often prices students out of public service. But the unwillingness of students to commit to public service also reflects campus cultures that value individual achievement and material gain over patriotism and service to the nation. At a time when our country faces critical and growing shortages within our public institutions, we no longer can afford to rely solely on existing universities to meet the nation’s needs. We must build a new kind of college, one that emphasizes public service and gives young people a chance to serve their country in a civilian capacity. The U.S. Public Service Academy will become the nation’s flagship institution for public leadership development.

Why should the Academy be a stand-alone institution, rather than a satellite school within an existing university?

The Academy will be the defining institution of our generation, a college that captures the patriotic spirit of our young people and channels it into public service. Placing the Academy as a public service offshoot of an existing university would be too timid – it would lack the visibility and prestige necessary to inspire a renewed commitment to public service. We must create an independent college devoted to public service, a flagship without the institutional baggage that would accompany placing the Academy at an existing institution. Having a stand-alone, federally-funded institution gives legitimacy to the idea that public service is a national priority.

Why not channel federal money into public service scholarships at existing institutions rather than creating an entirely new college?

Public service scholarship money is an important way to encourage national service among undergraduate or graduate students at existing institutions. Such scholarships alone, however, do not cultivate the culture of service that a separate institution devoted to national service would instill in its students. Existing institutions have their own set of priorities and procedures; scholarship money would benefit individual students but would not necessarily alter the overarching mission of their institutions. Having a stand-alone campus is the only way to create a unique, unified campus culture that develops a strong esprit du corps around the public service mission. Like cadets at the military academies, Public Service Academy students would give up the traditional college life to focus on serving their nation. The result? Students gain a more intensive, more focused, more rewarding education, while the nation gains stronger, better-trained, more dedicated young leaders required to serve their country for five years.

Why not create a ROTC-type program that could be instituted at colleges around the country?

The military's ROTC program is an effective supplement to its officer training at the academies, but it is precisely that: a supplement, not a substitute. The military academies serve as flagship institutions for leadership development, and they offer an intense culture of service that is hard to replicate on other campuses. Without the military academies, the armed forces would lose an essential part of the spirit and culture that make the American military such an effective fighting force. If we want our civilian institutions to be similarly effective, we should provide an institution that develops future citizen leaders with a similarly intense service experience. Following the ROTC model would be expensive and unwieldy, and the government could not replicate the intensity and hard-core culture on hundreds of traditional college campuses across the country. More importantly, refusing to create a Public Service Academy sends the message to our young people that public service is somehow less important, less legitimate, or less patriotic than military service. Strong civilian leadership is as essential to our nation's long-term strength as military leadership is, and the federal government must provide a civilian institution on par with the ones created for the military.

How will the Academy be different from the Kennedy School of Government, the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, and other existing academic programs?

Existing public service programs at universities play a vital role in the development of talented citizen leaders, and the Academy will provide a complementary approach. The vast majority of existing programs, including the Kennedy School, focus on graduate education; a smaller number of others, such as the Woodrow Wilson School, admit a select few upper-class undergraduates for a special certificate or concentration. Like these programs, the Academy will offer rigorous academics focused on finding solutions to public problems. The Academy, however, will be an undergraduate institution that offers all its students four years of service-oriented education, followed by a five-year post-graduation service requirement. As a national public university, it will provide this education tuition-free, making it accessible to all Americans. It also will offer students the opportunity to interact with and learn from young leaders from all parts of the country; the Academy's regionally diverse student body will be unmatched in American higher education.

Doesn't France have a school like this? Will the Academy be similar?

France has a national university devoted to civil service, the Ecole Nationale de Administration (ENA), but the U.S. Public Service Academy will be completely different. The ENA is an exclusive school that caters to an extremely small number of students – there have been fewer than 7,000 graduates in the school's sixty-year existence – and it aims to create an elite cadre of upper-echelon leaders. The Academy will follow a different model. The Academy will be open to students of all economic classes from every section of the country, and it aims to build strong leaders who will work in public institutions at all levels of society. Rather than being isolated within a faceless bureaucracy, Academy graduates will get firsthand experience in working with people from all walks of life. From their service learning courses as undergraduates to their five years of post-graduation service, Academy students will be immersed in the daily challenges faced by their fellow Americans.

Won't the Academy simply create a bunch of know-it-all federal bureaucrats?

Absolutely not. Academy graduates will serve at all levels of American society, from local public schools and charities to state departments of health to national agencies. The structure of the academic program, combined with five years of service in areas of critical need across the country, will instill a sense of humility and perspective within Academy graduates. They will have both the academic training necessary to think critically about challenges facing the nation and the firsthand experience essential to real-world problem solving.

How will Academy graduates be different from public policy or government graduates from other universities?

Students who graduate from other universities with government or public policy degrees no doubt have a solid grounding in their academic course of study. But no undergraduate institution offers a program as intense, practical, or service-oriented as what the Academy will provide. Four years at the Academy will be an education in service, an unparalleled experience that produces graduates with:

- **Stronger bonds:** Like cadets and midshipmen at the military academies, Academy graduates will form strong bonds during the course of four years of service-oriented training. The campus culture of service will unify graduates with a shared sense of mission that will span across graduating classes, creating an invaluable network of people who can share knowledge and experiences.
- **More experience:** The Academy's educational program will be designed to give students regular hands-on experience in the real world of public service. While some universities require an internship to give their government majors hands-on experience, the Academy will require internships, community service, study abroad, and a summer of military service.
- **Longer commitment:** The Academy will require five years of national service following graduation. There is no similar commitment from any other civilian institution.

What will this new academy do that is not already being done?

The Academy will be a unique institution, one that offers a number of singular contributions to American higher education:

- 1) With **unmatched regional diversity**, the Academy will be a truly national university economically accessible to all Americans.
- 2) Like the military academies, the Academy will create a **campus culture of service** that will foster strong bonds among undergraduates committed to the same patriotic goals.
- 3) The Academy's **five-year post-graduation service** requirement has no civilian parallel.
- 4) The Academy will be an institutional manifestation of the **federal government's commitment to public service** as essential to the economic and social vitality of the country.

Everyone can be great because everyone can serve.
Martin Luther King, Jr.

Why will the Academy require five years of service post-graduation?

Like students at the military service academies, Academy students will get four years of education tuition-free, followed by five years of service. This post-graduation service requirement gives American taxpayers a healthy return on their investment in the Academy. Taxpayers pay up front for four years of education and in return the nation gets five years of government work, public school teaching, law enforcement, and other essential services that will improve the lives of citizens all across the country. A five-year commitment gives graduates enough time to make a lasting contribution in whatever field they choose. By the time they complete their commitment, they will have amassed the experience, skills, and connections that will propel them to become leaders throughout their careers.

This sounds like a good idea, but won't it cost too much money?

The Academy will be worth every penny we spend on it. America deserves our best, and we as a nation must be willing to make a serious investment in our future leadership. We have the money – the Academy's total budget of \$205 million represents less than 1% of the \$24 billion in special projects earmarked in the 2005 transportation bill. What we need is political courage. For less than 60 cents annually per person, we can create a flagship institution for public leadership that will serve as a catalyst for change in how we inspire and develop young leaders.

Will this be another big government project?

No. The Academy will be a public-private partnership. Like the military service academies, it will be funded primarily by congressional appropriation, augmented by private partnerships to endow professorships, construct special facilities, and build a lasting endowment.

Why should the American people support the Academy?

1. Patriotism: The Academy will help make America stronger, safer, and better. From the application process to the academic program to the post-graduation service requirement, it will instill in its students a culture of service and duty to this nation and our ideals of freedom, democracy, and equal opportunity. Each year, the Academy will graduate nearly 1,300 young civilian leaders ready to “establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, and promote the general welfare” in local communities around the country.

2. Competence: The Academy will promote the bipartisan goal of good government and strong public institutions. No matter how much we may disagree about the appropriate size of government, Americans of all political stripes want our government and our public institutions to *work*. The Academy will help make our government more efficient and effective by developing young public servants with the academic training, personal experience, and long-term commitment they need to become competent leaders able to handle the challenges of the twenty-first century.

3. Regional diversity: The Academy will be America’s first truly national civilian university. The Academy’s admissions process will be tied to states, thus guaranteeing that students from all regions of the country will live and study in the same place. As a result, the Academy will be perhaps the most regionally, economically, and ideologically diverse campus in America. Following graduation, Academy graduates will return home not only willing and able to serve their communities, but also connected by personal experience to their fellow public servants in other communities across the nation.

4. Timing: The Academy has never been more needed. From 9/11 to Hurricane Katrina to our struggle with international terrorism, we have witnessed both the remarkable resilience of our people and the frustrating failures of too many of our public institutions. These tragedies have inspired a new generation of young people willing to commit themselves to making this nation the best place in the world to live. The Academy will tap into this spirit of service and offer a national institution where young people can get a practical, service-oriented education that will train them to become effective public leaders.

How realistic is this politically?

There is strong bipartisan support for national service, particularly in the wake of September 11 and Hurricane Katrina. With courageous leaders from both sides of the political aisle, we can create a lasting institution that will stand as a monument to visionary leadership. Americans are a can-do people, and we will build this Academy just as we have built the military academies, the Peace Corps, the Freedom Corps, and other publicly-supported service institutions.

How can I get more information?

To learn more about our effort to build a Public Service Academy, please visit our web site: <http://www.uspublicserviceacademy.org>. You also may contact our Chair:

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