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Penn State's President Warns of Coming Crisis in U.S. Education During Speech to More than a Thousand at College Board Forum in New York City

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Northeast's States and Prestigious Institutions Could Lose Out to Newly Empowered Colleges and Universities in States with Younger and More Diverse Populations

10/30/05

NEW YORK—American higher education faces a crisis over the coming decades as a result of the nation's shifting demographics and the inability of state governments to properly finance institutions of higher learning. That was the warning from the president of one of the country's largest universities.

Public colleges and universities, which educate the majority of America's students, are not well prepared for this confluence of forces, Penn State President Graham B. Spanier cautioned the more than a thousand educators at a College Board Forum 2005 luncheon at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in New York City today.

"Our role as educators is changing on many fronts," Dr. Spanier, a demographer by training, told his audience, citing forces that are reshaping American education, such as the rising costs of a higher education, increased competition, and declining resources from state governments.

Among the warning signs that Dr. Spanier touched upon were:

- Only nine American states will have double-digit increases in high school graduates. Thirty states will experience a decline or no growth in the number of high school graduates. Most of the future increases in high school graduates in the United States will be in the Western and Southern states. They include California, New Mexico, Hawaii, Arizona, and Nevada. This trend will continue through 2025.
- As a result of this trend, competition among universities for 18-year-olds will be more acute than ever, and the pressure to attract nontraditional students will increase dramatically. Given the stagnant demographics of some states, competition for out-of-state students will intensify.
- At the same time, the first baby boomers will turn 65 in 2011, and within seventeen years, 70 million of them will join the ranks of senior citizenry. Seniors vote at significantly higher rates than young people, and influence the policies and issues that the representatives they send to state and federal legislatures stand on. This means the dominant voting population may not give the same support to education as voters of the past.

Forum 2005 at the Marriott Marquis in New York City is playing host to close to 3,000 high school teachers, college and university professors, school counselors, admissions and enrollment professionals, financial aid experts, school administrators, and college

and university deans from across the country.

Starting today at 2 p.m., ET, Dr. Spanier's speech can be read in its entirety on the College Board website, at www.collegeboard.com/forum05/spanier or on the Penn State website, at http://president.psu.edu/presentations/FutureAcademy_CollegeBoard.pdf.

For more information about the College Board Forum 2005, contact Dick Sheridan at (718) 926-1560 today, or (212) 713-8052 on Monday.

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