

Tapping America's Potential

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Business Leaders Call for Progress in Advancing U.S. Innovation by Strengthening Science, Technology, Engineering and Math

New Report Shows Inadequate Progress in Shoring up Scientific Talent for U.S. Competitiveness

Washington, D.C. --- Tapping America's Potential (TAP), a coalition of 16 of the nation's leading business organizations, today released a report assessing three years' progress in working towards the TAP goal of doubling the number of students earning bachelor's degrees in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) by 2015.

The TAP progress report, "Gaining Momentum, Losing Ground," indicates that despite growing support for the TAP agenda in recent years, little real progress has been made toward the goal of doubling the number of students earning bachelor's degrees in STEM subjects. The number of STEM degrees awarded to undergraduate students has only increased by 24,000, to 225,000—a number that is not on track to meet the TAP goal of reaching 400,000 by 2015.

"The economy of the 21st century is characterized by increasing competition around the globe, and nowhere do we see that more clearly than in the scientific fields," said William D. Green, chairman and CEO of Accenture and chairman of Business Roundtable's Education, Innovation & Workforce Initiative and a member of TAP. "America's ability to innovate begins with the talent, knowledge and creative thinking of its workforce, and businesses and government must continue to work together to strengthen science and technology education."

The report includes progress updates on the TAP coalition's agenda to advance U.S. competitiveness in STEM through:

- Boosting and sustaining funding for basic research, especially in the physical sciences and engineering
- Reforming visa and immigration policies to enable the United States to attract and retain STEM students from around the world to study for advanced degrees and stay to work in the United States
- Upgrading K-12 math and science teaching to foster higher student achievement, including differentiated pay scales for mathematics and science teachers
- Building public understanding and support for making improvement in STEM performance a national priority

"If we, as leaders of business, do not hold our government officials accountable for the promises they made to increase STEM graduates by the year 2015, we will have failed not only our businesses but our country," added Thomas J. Donohue, president and CEO, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and a member of TAP. "Without workers equipped with the science, technology, engineering and math skills needed to succeed in the 21st century, the United States will lose the global race for talent and its position as the economic leader of the world."

"Technology and innovation have long been America's greatest strengths, providing our nation with political, economic and military advantages that have secured our position of leadership in the world," said Lawrence P. Farrell, Jr., Lieutenant General, USAF (Retired), president and CEO of the National Defense Industrial Association, and a member of TAP. "The U.S. defense and homeland security industries face challenges in filling

some of the best and most critical technical jobs in our country because the U.S. is not producing enough graduates trained in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics who qualify for security clearances. Unless we act now, at both the national and local levels, to at least double the production of STEM graduates by 2015, we are in grave danger of losing the advantage that has ensured both our prosperity and our national security."

"The time to act is now, not after we are forced to surrender the mantle as the world's innovation headquarters," said Phil Bond, president and CEO of Information Technology Association of America, and a member of TAP. "Some creative thinking is also called for – we need to directly engage America's youth in this discussion and reach out to them through the new media they know best."

"While venture capitalists continue to view the U.S. as the global leader in technology development and innovation, they also recognize specific pockets of technology innovation worldwide and in a global economy, venture capitalists will follow the best technologies," stated Mark Heesen, president of the National Venture Capital Association, and a member of TAP. "European countries are emerging as leaders in life sciences and clean technology, two of the fastest growing sectors globally. Asian countries are recognized as offering a high level of innovation in the information technology fields."

John Castellani, president of Business Roundtable and a leader of TAP, added, "We know the way forward: to invest in the future of our nation, we must act now. The ever-growing challenges of the 21st century economy underscore the need to shore up a highly educated workforce in scientific fields that will continue to advance American innovation, competitiveness and leadership in the international economy."

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The [Tapping America's Potential \(TAP\)](#) coalition is composed of 16 prominent business organizations that represent the largest and most innovative companies in America. In 2005, they set the goal of doubling the number of U.S. science, technology, engineering and mathematics graduates with bachelor's degrees by 2015.