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**THE COMING CRISIS IN CITIZENSHIP;
UNPRECEDENTED STUDY EXPOSES HIGHER EDUCATION'S FAILURE TO TEACH
AMERICA'S HISTORY AND ESSENTIAL INSTITUTIONS**

*Intercollegiate Studies Institute Releases First-ever College Ranking
Based on What Colleges Teach About America's History and Institutions*

WASHINGTON, September 26, 2006 – An unprecedented study of more than 14,000 randomly selected students from across the country reveals that colleges and universities, including some of the most expensive and elite in the United States, are failing to add to their graduates' understanding of America's history and essential institutions. The study, the largest scientifically valid survey ever conducted to measure student learning of these subjects at colleges and universities, was administered by the University of Connecticut's Department of Public Policy (UConnDPP) on behalf of the Intercollegiate Studies Institute (ISI). A nonprofit, nonpartisan, tax-exempt organization, ISI was founded in 1953 to further in successive generations of American college youth a better understanding of the economic, political, and ethical values that sustain a free and humane society.

College freshmen and seniors at 50 of the nation's colleges and universities were asked 60 multiple choice questions about (1) America's history; (2) government; (3) America and the world; and (4) the market economy. The average overall score for college seniors was 53.2 percent, just 1.5 percent higher than the average overall score for freshmen, which was 51.7 percent. Both scores represent failure by a wide margin on a traditional grading scale. More significantly, the results demonstrate that colleges and universities are failing to advance students' knowledge teach students about their country's history and founding principles. At 16 of the schools, the freshmen actually scored higher than the seniors.

The study's findings are being released today by ISI's National Civic Literacy Board in its report, *The Coming Crisis in Citizenship: Higher Education's Failure to Teach America's History and Institutions*. A copy of the report is available at www.americancivilliteracy.org.

The report also offers the first-ever ranking of U.S. colleges based on the learning added to or subtracted from college students' knowledge of America's history and institutions.

"Today's college students, who are America's future leaders, must understand their nation's history and founding principles if they are to be informed, engaged citizens prepared and motivated to improve the public life of their communities and their nation," said Josiah Bunting, III, ISI's National Civic Literacy Board Chairman. "The students' dismal scores provide high-quality evidence of the state of civic learning on campuses throughout the nation—and the results are far from encouraging. They constitute nothing less than a coming crisis in American citizenship."

Other Key Findings

1. Prestige Doesn't Pay Off.

There is no relationship between the cost of college and the amount that students learn about America's history and key institutions. Students at relatively inexpensive colleges often learn more about America, on average, than their counterparts at prestigious, expensive colleges. Lesser-known colleges such as Rhodes College, Calvin College, and Grove City College ranked at the top of ISI's list, but at many of the nation's most prestigious universities, including Brown University, Yale University, and Georgetown University, seniors know *less* than freshmen about America's history, government, foreign affairs, and economy. "This phenomenon is 'negative learning,'" said Bunting. "We were stunned to find that a majority of the 16 schools where negative learning occurred are considered to be among the most prestigious colleges in the United States." (See chart below and appendix for the complete list of rankings.)

	<u>School</u>	<u>Learning Rank</u>	<u>Learning*</u>
Nonelite Schools:			
	Rhodes College	1	11.6%
	Calvin College	3	9.5%
	Grove City College	4	9.4%
Elite Schools:	Georgetown University	43	-1.2%
	Yale University	44	-1.5%
	Brown University	47	-2.7%

* "Learning added or subtracted" is the average percent correct among seniors minus that of freshmen.

In addition, ISI's research found that colleges ranked high in *U.S. News and World Report's America's Best Colleges* in 2006 (ISI's study was completed before the 2007 edition was published) ranked low in civic learning. Specifically, a one percent *increase* in civic learning as measured in ISI's survey corresponded to a *decrease* of 25 positions in the *U.S. News* ranking.

2. Students don't learn what colleges don't teach.

Schools where students took more courses in American history, political science, and economics outperformed those schools where fewer courses were completed. Seniors at the two top-ranked colleges, Rhodes College and Colorado State University, took an average of 4.2 history and political science courses, while seniors at the two lowest-ranked colleges, University of California, Berkeley and Johns Hopkins University, took an average of 2.9 history and political science courses. And the top schools outperformed the bottom schools in the amount learned per course.

3. Greater civic learning goes hand-in-hand with more active citizenship.

Students who demonstrated greater learning of America's history and institutions were more engaged in citizenship activities such as voting, volunteer community service, and political campaigns. About 86 percent of the students at the four highest-ranked colleges had exercised their right to vote at least once.

Recommendations for Corrective Action

In order to improve undergraduate learning about America's history and institutions, the report recommends five remedies: (1) improving assessment of learning outcomes at the college and university level; (2) increasing the number of required history, political science, and economics courses; (3) holding higher education more accountable to its mission and fundamental responsibilities to prepare its students to be informed, engaged participants in a democratic republic; (4) better informing students and their parents, as well as public officials and taxpayers, of a given university's performance in teaching America's history and institutions; and (5) building academic centers of excellence on campuses to encourage and support the restoration of teaching history, political science, and economics.

"ISI offers this report with the hope that it will stimulate corrective action and accountability among those immediately responsible for higher education—trustees, donors, alumni, parents, public officials, administrators, faculty, and students," said T. Kenneth Cribb, Jr., president, Intercollegiate Studies Institute. "By producing these findings year after year, ISI will provide a continuous flow of authoritative evidence that can be used to develop solutions that will strengthen the study of America's history, government, foreign affairs, and market economy. Good citizenship requires at least a passing knowledge of these subjects."

For a copy of the report and other survey findings, please visit www.americancivilliteracy.org.

About Intercollegiate Studies Institute

The Intercollegiate Studies Institute (ISI) was founded in 1953 to further in successive generations of American college youth a better understanding of the economic, political, and ethical values that sustain a free and humane society. With ISI's volunteer representatives at over 900 colleges, and with more than 50,000 ISI student and faculty members on virtually every campus in the country, ISI directs tens of thousands of young people each year to a wide array of educational programs that deepen their understanding of the American ideal of ordered liberty.

ISI annually conducts more than 300 educational programs around the country, including lectures, debates, student conferences, and summer schools. ISI also offers graduate fellowships for aspiring college teachers and distributes more than three million copies of ISI books, journals, and affiliated student newspapers on college and university campuses across the country. These programs work at different levels and in different ways to nurture in the rising generations an appreciation of our nation's founding principles—limited government, individual liberty, private property, a free market economy, personal responsibility, and ethical standards.

In 2002, ISI launched a new initiative, the American Civic Literacy Program, designed to study and strengthen the teaching of America's history and institutions at the college level. During the fall of 2005, ISI contracted with the University of Connecticut's Department of Public Policy to conduct an annual national survey to learn to what extent colleges and universities are teaching America's history and institutions to undergraduate students. For more information about ISI's American Civic Literacy Program, please visit www.americancivilliteracy.org.

About the University of Connecticut's Department of Public Policy

The University of Connecticut's Department of Public Policy (UConnDPP), a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, is a nationally and internationally recognized leader in the field of public policy and public opinion research. The scope of the Department's projects ranges from national and international studies of public opinion and public policy to local community-based surveys. The Department is an outgrowth of the tremendous success of original survey research conducted under the aegis of the Roper Center/Institute for Social Inquiry formed in 1979.

During the past two years alone, UConnDPP has conducted more than 70 national, regional, and local surveys. Clients include the United States Department of Education, the United States Department of Homeland Security, the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, the First Amendment Center, and the Connecticut Attorney General's Office.

Appendix

**Intercollegiate Studies Institute’s Ranking of Colleges
by Learning Added to or Subtracted from Students’ Knowledge of
America’s History and Its Institutions During the Baccalaureate*
(shade and red indicates “negative learning”)**

Rank	College	Learning Added or Subtracted
1	Rhodes College	+11.6%
2	Colorado State University	10.9
3	Calvin College	9.5
4	Grove City College	9.4
5	University of Colorado, Boulder	8.9
6	Spring Arbor University	8.3
7	University of New Mexico	8.2
8	University of Mobile	7.5
9	Florida Memorial University	6.8
10	Central Connecticut State University	5.0
11	George Mason University	5.0
12	Youngstown State University	4.9
13	North Carolina Central University	4.8
14	Utah State University	4.5
15	Lynchburg College	4.0
16	Catholic University of America	3.2
17	University of Massachusetts, Boston	3.0
18	Princeton University	2.8
19	Eastern Kentucky University	2.7
20	Baylor University	2.6
21	West Texas A&M University	2.5
22	University of South Alabama	2.0
23	University of Texas, Austin	2.0
24	Wheaton College	1.9
25	Harvard University	1.9
26	University of Washington	1.8

Rank	College	Learning Added or Subtracted
27	Appalachian State University	1.7
28	University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill	1.6
29	Capital University	1.3
30	American University	1.0
31	Stanford University	0.9
32	University of West Florida	0.7
33	Washington & Lee University	0.2
34	Dartmouth College	0.1
35	University of Michigan	-0.1
36	Ithaca College	-0.2
37	University of Chicago	-0.3
38	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	-0.4
39	Williams College	-0.7
40	University of Florida	-0.8
41	Wofford College	-0.9
42	University of Virginia	-1.1
43	Georgetown University	-1.2
44	Yale University	-1.5
45	University of West Georgia	-2.0
46	Duke University	-2.3
47	Brown University	-2.7
48	Cornell University	-3.3
49	University of California, Berkeley	-5.6
50	Johns Hopkins University	-7.3

* “Learning added or subtracted” is the average percent correct among seniors minus that of freshmen. (Testing occurred in fall of 2005)