

THE NEED FOR MULTILINGUAL HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE USA AND A STRATEGY FOR MEETING IT

This paper suggests how a multilingual model of higher education could address three critical problems facing the U.S. today: 1) the linguistic inaccessibility of higher education to language minorities, 2) the decline in enrollments by international students in U.S. institutes of higher education (IHE), and 3) the embarrassing and now threatening lack of multilingualism among English-speaking Americans.

By abandoning policies and practices that require English-only entrance exams and university courses, and by replacing these with a combination of language immersion education, sheltered instruction with multilingual support and English for Special/Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction, US IHEs will serve domestic language minority students more equitably; increase international students' ability to teach their subject matter in their native languages when they return home; slow down the global language shift to English; provide opportunities for multilingual and multicultural growth for American professors; provide English-speaking students with more effective ways to become truly bi- and multilingual; increase higher education employment opportunities for bi- and multilingual scholars; provide for professional growth for ESL teachers who will experience interesting collaborative opportunities with content teachers; and increase enrollments, as international and language minority students complete their degrees faster and enjoy an institutional environment committed to multiculturalism and a more humane, "di-" and "multi-glossic" globalization.