



EMBARGOED UNTIL 4:00 PM EDT, TUESDAY, MAY 26

Contact: Rebecca Morgan, rebeccam@nafsa.org, 202.495.2553

Katie O'Connell, katieo@nafsa.org, 202.495.2559

Former U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley Awarded NAFSA Board of Directors Special Award for Outstanding Leadership in U.S. International Education Policy

BOSTON, Mass., May 26, 2015 – Today, at the opening plenary session of the 2015 NAFSA Annual Conference & Expo, former U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley was presented with a prestigious NAFSA Board of Directors Special Award for Outstanding Leadership in U.S. International Education Policy. This award recognizes Riley's long-standing commitment to global education and fostering international collaboration.

As U.S. Secretary of Education, Riley was the driving force behind President Clinton's unprecedented [Executive Memorandum on International Education Policy](#) issued in April 2000. This memorandum calls on the Vice President and heads of government agencies and executive departments to work with educational institutions and the private sector to coordinate a fully integrated U.S. government international education strategy.

Specifically, the executive memorandum states: "It is the policy of the federal government to support international education. We are committed to:

- Encouraging students from other countries to study in the United States
- Promoting study abroad by U.S. students
- Supporting the exchange of teachers, scholars, and citizens at all levels of society
- Enhancing programs at U.S. institutions that build international partnerships and expertise
- Expanding high-quality foreign language learning and in-depth knowledge of other cultures by Americans
- Preparing and supporting teachers in their efforts to interpret other countries and cultures for their students
- Advancing new technologies that aid the spread of knowledge throughout the world"

Also in 2000, Secretary Riley and former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright launched the first International Education Week (IEW), a joint initiative of the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Education. Now celebrated by more than 100 countries each November, IEW aims to promote international understanding and build support for international education programs.

“Secretary Riley personifies leadership at its best. He has never let the supposed limits of his position stop him, but has looked for opportunities to use his position to advance the values this country was founded upon,” explained Fanta Aw, NAFSA President and Chair of the Board of Directors. “Historically, the Department of Education has not focused on international education, but Secretary Riley saw an opportunity and knew he could play a role to advance his strong belief in international education. That driving force and commitment to international education policy is what makes Secretary Riley a true champion for students across the globe.”

At the end of the Clinton administration, Secretary Riley joined NAFSA as a resident distinguished senior fellow. From that position, he continued to advocate for international education policy.

“Secretary Riley set the gold standard for what it means to champion international education policy as a public leader. He was the first to articulate the need for a comprehensive national strategy to promote educational diplomacy.” said NAFSA Executive Director and CEO Marlene M. Johnson. “No government official in the last 20 years has come close to equaling his commitment, and I can see no one more deserving of such an honor as to receive NAFSA’s Board of Directors Special Award for Outstanding Leadership in U.S. International Education Policy.”

For more information on NAFSA awards, visit www.nafsa.org/awards.

Sample Tweet: [@NAFSA](https://twitter.com/NAFSA) honors former U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley with Board of Directors Award: <http://bit.ly/1cesPmj> #NAFSA15

About NAFSA

With more than 10,000 members, NAFSA: Association of International Educators is the world's largest nonprofit association dedicated to international education. Visit us at www.nafsa.org/press and follow [#NAFSA15](https://twitter.com/NAFSA15) for conference information.

To learn more about our advocacy efforts, visit www.ConnectingOurWorld.org and follow [@ConnectOurWorld](https://twitter.com/ConnectOurWorld) on Twitter.

###