

Remarks for Stephen Joel Trachtenberg
President, The George Washington University
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) Conference
The George Washington University
Wednesday, March 31, 2004

President Flores and distinguished guests, it is my pleasure to welcome you to The George Washington University and to our nation's capitol.

You've certainly come to the right place at the right time. As our nation's leaders here in Washington seek ways to improve access to higher education and to hold universities accountable for student achievement, Congress must also understand the problems and the needs and the aspirations of our country's fastest-growing minority population.

Too often, diversity is simply thought of as one of the criteria used by admissions offices in making decisions about an incoming class of students. Of course, ensuring that our admissions criteria and processes are sensitive to diversity is necessary—but this is hardly sufficient. A sensitive and enlightened approach to the aspirations of all students—that is, creating a welcoming environment in all campus endeavors, from the classrooms ... to the residence halls ... to the athletic fields—is vital to the success of a university or a college.

The Educational Testing Service has predicted that a few short years from now college enrollment will increase by some 2,000,000 students. Let me say that again: **two million students**. Of these two million new students, 80% will come from racial and language minority groups. Finding ways to respond to students who may represent the first generation in their family to go to college, helping students for whom English is not their native language, and supporting young people who may feel displaced when they first come to campus, must be a priority in the future of higher education in America.

Here at GW, our mission is broader than simply helping the Hispanic students who choose to enroll at this university. GW is committed to continuing to work with the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities to conduct research on how to improve the educational opportunities in higher education for Latino and other minorities. Your success is our success, and we are pleased to be able to continue our partnership with you.

Thank you for choosing our university as the location for your conference. Again, welcome and best wishes for a most successful and productive meeting.