

Davis Program Offered as Model for Remaking U.S. Public Diplomacy

As the U.S. Congress works to find ways of improving America's public diplomacy, it has turned to the Davis UWC Scholars Program as a model. Executive Director Phil Geier, whose whole career has focused on international education, was invited last year by U.S. Representative William Delahunt, D-Mass., to testify twice before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights and Oversight.

Geier spoke to both the immediate and long-term potential of a revamped public diplomacy featuring scholarship opportunities in America for disadvantaged students in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East.

"Imagine our diplomats being able to promote a competition for thousands of scholarships among young people in developing countries to come to U.S. colleges and universities," the Davis CEO said. "Imagine perceptions of America as the land of opportunity for those without the means for ongoing education. Imagine the positive impact on American students interacting with the rest of the world right here at home on U.S. campuses. And every dime of the funding would be invested in American institutions right here at home."

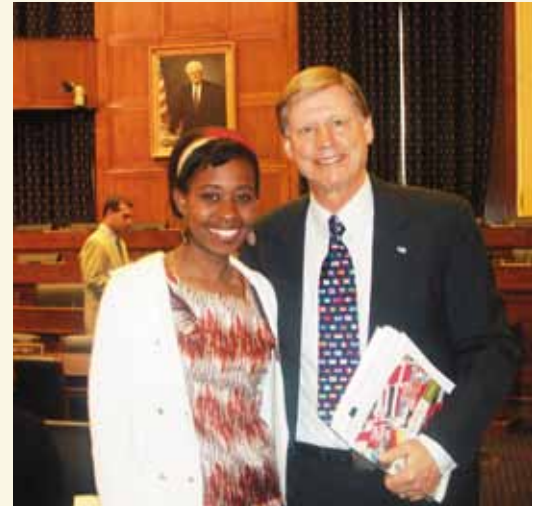
Known as the "Uniting Students in America" act, the envisioned program would appropriate \$1 billion per year to support, in partnership with U.S. colleges and universities, approximately 30,000 foreign students in earning U.S. undergraduate degrees.

In his second appearance, last June, Geier brought along Davis UWC Scholar Rachel Ochaka (Kenya, UWC Singapore, Middlebury College) to share the impact of her scholarship with the panel.

"I have received an international education. This is what is key," Rachel declared. For potential leaders, she explained, a U.S. higher education provides a "coagulation of ideas" — a chance to hear and share different points of view.

For young potential leaders of their own countries, "this is what you are taking back," Rachel told the committee.

Added Geier: "The Davis UWC Scholars Program is a model, scratching the surface of how we Americans can more effectively engage with and embrace the world, person to person. The global landscape is changing and we invite the U.S. government to use our model for a broader initiative to improve our global reach and leadership in the world."



At the U.S. Congress, Davis UWC Scholars Program co-founder Phil Geier with scholar Rachel Ochaka of Kenya.