Lunch and Presentation

Monday, May 16, 2011
11:45 am - 1:00 pm
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We have invited Peter Smith as our luncheon speaker. Get ready, folks, because this presentation will be both provocative and uncomfortable. Smith, senior vice president at Kaplan Higher Education, will discuss the book he recently authored, *Harnessing America’s Wasted Talent: A New Ecology of Learning*.

In Clayton Christensen’s national best seller *The Innovator’s Dilemma*, Christiansen argues that the “disruptive innovation” necessary for an industry to change can’t occur effectively in a successful, ongoing business enterprise; instead, it must happen in new entrepreneurial upstarts. Smith makes a similar case for higher education. He argues that traditional higher education, both because of its success in its current mission and because of “the conceit of academe,” can’t effectively respond to the needs of students it hasn’t served well in the past: students from the bottom two-thirds of the income and educational spectrum.

Yet the U.S. cannot afford not to educate a much larger share of these students if we are to remain economically competitive in the global economy and more socially just than we are today. Smith’s solution: Traditional higher education should stick to its niche, in which it is comfortable and quite good, and leave the task of expanding to new populations to new institutions that see serving these “different” students as their mission. Smith makes a compelling case. Whether you agree or disagree with his thesis, the strength of his arguments and the captivating way he presents them will be worth hearing and will no doubt prompt some serious soul-searching for at least some of us.

Speaker: Peter Smith, senior vice president, Kaplan Higher Education

Biographical Information on the Speaker

**Peter Smith** is senior vice president of academic strategies and development for Kaplan Higher Education and the former assistant director for education of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. Smith also served as the founding president of California State University at Monterey Bay and the Community College of Vermont. He served as Vermont’s lieutenant governor from 1982 to 1986 and was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1989. Smith is the author of the critically acclaimed *The Quiet Crisis: How Higher Education Is Failing America* and *Harnessing America’s Wasted Talent: A New Ecology of Learning*. 