

Education Trade Mission Builds Ties Between United States and Poland

U.S. Academic Institutions Look to Attract Polish Students

By Adam Wilczewski



On April 15-17, representatives from 12 of America's regionally accredited graduate programs and four-year undergraduate schools will participate in a U.S. Department of Commerce Education Trade Mission to Poland—marking the first time the U.S. Government has led such a mission there. As the leader of the mission, I look forward to connecting Polish students and universities to opportunities for study in the United States.

The United States and Poland have a long history of shared values, something that I personally appreciate from my own Polish family heritage. Polish students, like their American counterparts, have an enthusiasm for multi-cultural educational experiences that helps them grow both personally and professionally, promote cultural understanding, and furthers their potential to contribute to the betterment of our global society.

The potential for Polish students to benefit from these experiences has never been greater. According to the *Times Higher Education*, the U.S. boasts 14 of the top 20 universities in the world. Furthermore, the Institute of International Education reports there are more international students—in excess of 723,000—at U.S. institutions than anywhere else.

While most Polish students choose to study abroad in Europe, several factors bode well to increase the current number of Polish students studying in the United States:

- With the passage of new legislation last October, Poland is streamlining the education process—thereby raising educational standards that may further increase interest in study abroad programs such as those in the United States.
- The Polish economy continues to grow, and there is stronger interest on the part of U.S. educational institutions in recruiting Polish students.

- Poland has a high concentration of young students with keen interest in higher education. The country's population of 38 million includes more than 5.5 million young people from 15 to 24 years of age, including 1.9 million students.
- Polish students have a strong affinity toward the United States, and English is the first choice for a second language by almost all high school and university students.

Recognizing these trends points to the eagerness of the educational institutions from across the country to join me on this trade mission.

During the mission, our delegation will participate in a student recruitment fair in Warsaw (visit <http://www.educationusa.pl> for more information). They will connect with Polish universities, schools, and businesses – and their students and business professionals. Trade professionals from the U.S. Department of Commerce at the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw will be on hand to facilitate these networking opportunities, as well as meetings between U.S. trade mission participants and the Polish higher learning community.

The mission also adds to the U.S. Embassy's EducationUSA program in Poland, where U.S. Embassy representatives promote the U.S. educational experience to thousands of Polish students each year, including a greater awareness of available financial aid and scholarships.

One example of ongoing U.S.-Polish academic collaboration was the recent inauguration of a new university partnership between the Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences at Case Western Reserve University in Ohio, and the Institute of Sociology at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan. The partnership agreement allows for student exchanges between the two schools' programs, broadening the horizons of all participating students.

We look forward to visiting Warsaw, and with this, the goal of building upon such successes that will open new doors of opportunity for the next generation. By furthering the avenues to higher learning, we will make an important contribution to our countries' long-standing relationship that continues to endure.

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