

# Archived Information

Speaker Biography  
Public Hearing-Seattle, Washington  
February 7, 2006  
The Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education

## Samuel H. Smith

Dr. Samuel H. Smith has enjoyed a distinguished career in higher education, first at the University of California, Berkeley, then at Pennsylvania State University. He served 15 years (July 1, 1985 - June 8, 2000) as president of Washington State University, the eighth leader of WSU, which was founded in 1890. Under his leadership, Washington State University grew in size and stature. Its teaching, research, and public service activities have received worldwide recognition. Strengthening undergraduate and graduate education, placing an international imprint on programs, and increasing opportunities for women and minorities were among his presidential priorities.

In the state of Washington, he is well known for establishing Washington State University urban campuses in Spokane, the Tri-Cities, and Vancouver to serve place-bound and job-bound students. Learning Centers and award-winning Extended Degree Programs have further expanded access to Washington State University. More than one-third of all Washington State graduates -- since the university's first commencement in 1897 -- had their academic degrees granted by him. His recognition as a national leader in distance education is indicated through his current service as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Western Governors University, of which Washington State is a founding member.

In addition to having chaired the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges Board of Directors, his leadership positions with the association have included serving as chair of both the NASULGC Council of Presidents and its Commission on Information Technologies. NASULGC is the nation's oldest higher education association. He is a member of the state of Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board. Appointed by Governor Gary Locke, his term continues until June 30, 2007.

Smith also served on the Kellogg Commission on the Future of the State and Land-Grant Universities. In 1998, he was honored at the NASULGC annual meeting as the Justin Smith Morrill Memorial lecture. His background includes serving as chair of the Executive Committee of the National Collegiate Athletic Association. He became active in the NCAA when he was elected as the Division I representative to the Presidents Commission. He later was elected chair of that commission and then was elected chair of the Executive Committee, the NCAA's newly formed primary governing body, and served in that capacity until completion of his term.

In 2000, he was saluted by the Washington State Legislature. The Senate and House of Representatives both issued special resolutions honoring his contributions to Washington State University and the state. In addition, Washington's Snohomish County and King County lauded him for his leadership and accomplishments. He is chairman of the board of directors of the Talaris Research Institute. Located in Seattle, the institute is devoted to the study of early learning. He also chairs the board of directors of the Institute for State Studies, a non-profit foundation devoted to the development of strategies to resolve public policy dilemmas resulting from new technology. Before his association with Washington State University, Dr. Smith served 16 years at Pennsylvania State University, initially as a faculty member, then department head, and finally, dean of the College of Agriculture and director of both the Cooperative Extension Service and Agricultural Experiment Station.

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A native of Salinas, California, he holds a bachelor's and a doctoral degree in plant pathology from the University of California at Berkeley and honorary doctoral degrees from Nihon University in Tokyo, Japan, and Far Eastern State University in Vladivostok, Russia.