

Monday, May 5, 2014

AASCU Update



To: AASCU Presidents, Chancellors and Government Relations staff

From: Ed Elmendorf, Senior Vice President of Government Relations and Policy Analysis
Makeese Motley, Assistant Director of Federal Relations and Policy Analysis
Barmak Nassirian, Director of Federal Policy Analysis

Re: Proposed Teacher Prep Regulations/Campus Sexual Assault

Date: 5/2/2014

Teacher Preparation

Last week U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan announced that the Department of Education will move forward on issuing new proposed regulations for teacher preparation programs sometime this summer. Indeed, we have learned that the Department transmitted a draft Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for regulatory clearance on April 28th. This regulatory effort was the subject of a negotiated rulemaking in early 2012, and is intended to articulate eligibility for the TEACH grant program and implement statutory requirements of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 with regard to institutional and programmatic “report cards” on the quality of teacher preparation programs at institutions participating in federal student aid. While we will withhold judgment on the proposed regulations until they are published, we have been quite concerned about the direction in which the Department appeared to be heading in the unsuccessful 2012 negotiated rulemaking process. Specifically, we hope that the new NPRM will reconsider the following problematic elements of the previous approach:

- Use of the unproven “value-added method” to assess teacher preparation programs based on student outcomes on standardized tests. The American Statistical Association just recently issued a **policy statement** on this topic that should serve as an analytical warning to the Department that the path it was pursuing was scientifically and methodologically flawed.
- Imposition of federally mandated state criteria for teacher program assessment.
- Rating of teacher preparation programs based on the federally mandated state criteria.
- The precedent-setting linkage of student aid eligibility to program rating, as the previous proposal to link Title II state program accountability with TEACH Grants would do.

As you are aware, AASCU has taken a neutral stance on the administration’s broader proposal of a college rating system, and we remain committed to help the Administration and other stakeholders in devising reasonable accountability metrics to better assess institutional impact. We certainly don’t believe that teacher preparation programs should be immune to accountability, but believe any metrics to assess or impose accountability should be evidence-based and scientific, not politicized or based on anecdotes.

While it is too early to know what approach the pending NPRM will adopt, our concern about this regulation transcends the immediate topic of teacher preparation, and centers on the imposition of political perspectives on issues that have historically—and quite correctly—been the exclusive domain of the faculty and subject solely to their academic judgments.

We strongly urge you to inform your provost and dean or director of teacher preparation program of this development and suggest that they familiarize themselves with the substance of the issues discussed during the last round of **negotiated rulemaking** on these regulations, so that they can be

prepared to submit comments on the NPRM when it becomes available.

To facilitate timely communication with stakeholders on AASCU campuses, we have set up a closed **teacher prep discussion** list that you, your provost, your education dean, and other teacher prep stakeholders can join to monitor and keep up with developments. We will circulate our analysis of the NPRM when it becomes available to assist your campus with submission of comments.

White House Task Force on Sexual Assault

This week, the Whitehouse Task Force on Sexual Assault led by Vice President Joe Biden released a series of recommendations aimed at reducing the number of sexual assaults on college campuses. The **report** is the conclusion of an initial 90 day period of study where the task force met with stakeholders from inside and outside higher education. A group of AASCU presidents led by Dr. Muriel Howard attended the unveiling ceremony and provided feedback to the task force. If you have feedback on the task force's recommendations please contact Makeese Motley, Assistant Director of Federal Relations at **motleym@aascu.org** or at 202-478-4652.

You are encouraged to showcase campus safety initiatives that have proven successful on the **AASCU Innovations Exchange** website. The Innovations Exchange is an open access resource featuring successful programs and practices at AASCU institutions, on a broad range of topics, with case illustrations presented in concise and uniform manner. The case illustrations featured on the website are broadly promoted and used to respond to requests from the White House and U.S. Department of Education Officials as examples of effective institutional practices. A new category of Campus Safety is being added to the list of topics addressed on the website in light of the Administration's urgency involving campus sexual assault prevention. Simply have the appropriate contact on your campus complete the attached Innovations Exchange submission form.

Contact Us

Makeese S.Motley

Assistant Director, Federal Relations and Policy Analysis

(202) 478-4652

motleym@aascu.org

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American Association of State Colleges and Universities
1307 New York Avenue NW, 5th Floor, Washington, DC 20005
p 202.293.7070 | f 202.296.5819 | **www.aascu.org**

SUMMARY

Created by Claudia DiMercurio (dimercur@oakland.edu) on Monday, May 5, 2014
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