

Summary of Legislative Issues:

Accreditation:

The Department of Education is in the process of revoking the recognition of ACICS as an accreditor. Currently ACICS accredits 243 schools, with 850 campuses serving over 800,000 students! The Department has made clear their objection is with the accreditor, not the schools or the students. If so, together we must find ways to ensure that these schools and students are not hurt in this process.

We have asked the Department to take the maximum steps possible to support an orderly transition. But we are also asking Congress to extend the time period because everyone agrees this transition cannot happen within 18 months. We are asking Congress to encourage the Department to ensure all schools are given adequate time to transition to a new accreditor.

Defense to Repayment:

The Department of Education is in the process of advancing a regulation to protect students should their school close. We support the basic premise of this regulation. Unfortunately, language has been added which will close many good schools if they are required to post letters of credit, simply because some ideological opponent has filed frivolous lawsuits against them. We believe that such a requirement should only be in place when lawsuits are decided against a school, not simply because someone filed suit. We ask you to communicate to the Department the severe consequences on good schools if such language is included in a final regulation.

Restore Year-Round Pell:

Our students go to school all year, seeking to complete their studies and begin their careers in the quickest possible time. Year-round Pell is essential for this student. The House and Senate Appropriations Committee are currently working to restore year-round Pell Grants. President Obama supports such action. We ask your help in making this a reality.

Ability to Benefit:

Many career programs are designed to help students learn a trade that can provide them with a real job and real income for the rest of their lives. For some of these students, a mistake was made when they didn't finish high school. But, this mistake should not destroy their lives. A properly designed ability-to-benefit program would enable low-income students to access financial aid for such career programs once they have proven their commitment by completing an appropriate number of courses. We ask Congress to work with us to develop a fraud-safe program that builds a path to career success for many of these students.

Manage Student Loans, Minimize Student Debt:

Student loans can be either a bridge or a curse on one's future. The way to prevent excessive student borrowing is to limit student loans to educational expenses. We encourage the Congress to develop language giving schools the ability to work with a student to limit their loans to real needs for pursuit of their education.

Regulatory Reform:

A bi-partisan panel organized by Senators Alexander and Mikulski made a comprehensive set of recommendations on reducing higher education regulations. We encourage the Congress to implement

these recommendations.

Adequate Time to Implement Gainful Employment:

Since the Department began implementing this complicated regulation, they issued over 77 different memoranda to schools on just this one regulation! Currently, schools have only 45 days to understand the impact of the preliminary debt/earnings ratios on their school's program. We are simply asking that schools be given six months to determine the regulation's impact on their different programs; to determine if the numbers seem wrong and must be appealed; and/or if they need to modify/end such programs. The Department has had two years to implement the regulation. We are asking that schools have at least six months to comply.