



September 20, 2010

The Honorable Arne Duncan
Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education
1990 K Street, NW, Room 8031
Washington, DC 20006-8502

Re: Gainful Employment

Dear Secretary Duncan:

On behalf of our nation's historically and predominantly black colleges and universities and other minority serving institutions, we write to applaud the Administration's efforts to regulate career education programs that allow students to incur large amounts of debt to pay for programs that do not prepare them for employment in a recognized occupation. The draft policy also restricts access to Title IV funding for students entering any certificate or non-degree granting program not in compliance with the proposed requirements. The proposal's parameters were outlined on July 26, 2010 as a part of the Department's Notice of Proposed Rule Making related to Gainful Employment.¹ As a policy matter, we support the Administration's position that the gainful employment regulation should not apply to degree granting programs at non-profit institutions.

Adoption of these regulations will promote educational accountability. Our organizations believe in educational accountability not only to protect students but to protect the country. We support competition and growth among legitimate for-profits and other institutions. It is the abuse that has given rise to the proposed policy and ruins lives and de-stabilizes communities that we oppose. We encourage other organizations to join us in taking proactive steps to protect student loan borrowers from incurring woefully onerous debt burdens associated with enrolling in certificate and non-degree granting programs that do not lead to gainful employment.

Many minority students are among those who are lured into incurring huge amounts of student loan debt for programs that fail to provide adequate training. Furthermore, many of the students who are the most vulnerable to these practices reside in the very communities where our member institutions are located, or are connected to students and families we serve. More importantly, the missions of our organizations are based on a special responsibility toward many of the students and families who are being victimized by the fast-buck proprietary practices targeted by these regulations. In order for our nation to keep President Obama's commitment to regain for the U.S. world leadership in college education, we must ensure that programs meet recognized standards and that students are well informed. Students deserve protection from incurring excessive debt. Employers deserve to know that their employees are well qualified.

¹ Program Integrity: Gainful Employment; Proposed Rule, 34 CFR Part 668

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Taxpayers deserve to know that their dollars are being spent wisely and effectively. Our economy deserves and needs a diverse pipeline of certificate recipients prepared to compete in the economy.

We look forward to working with the Administration to ensure the final regulation is one that fulfills its intended purpose and works best for all those impacted. We want to ensure the regulation benefits students.

For-profit institutions, not-for profit institutions and community colleges all play important roles in ensuring our nation meets these objectives, as well as the Administration's 2020 goal of doubling college graduation rates. As a nation, we must commit to the integrity of programs offered by all segments of the higher education sector, continue to ensure college affordability, and demand that students receive the accurate information they need to make the most informed decisions. The recently proposed regulations, coupled with the Administration's education and federal student loan reform, are necessary steps to achieving a stronger economy and global competitiveness.

We look forward to working with you to create greater educational opportunities for all Americans.

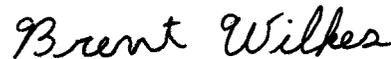
Sincerely,



Michael L. Lomax, Ph.D.
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UNCF



Dr. Lezli Baskerville
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LULAC



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Janet Murguia
President and CEO
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cc: Chairman Tom Harkin
Chairman George Miller
Majority Whip James Clyburn
CBC Chair Barbara Lee

