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November 19, 2013

The Honorable Arne Duncan
United States Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan:

On behalf of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), I want to express our appreciation for your meeting with a group of Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) leaders and me on October 25. We are especially grateful that you took the time to listen to our concerns about the President's Plan to Make College More Affordable. As was clear from the meeting, the presidents in attendance (and, I'm sure, the leadership of all our member institutions) are deeply committed to both the affordability agenda and the need for transparency in higher education costs and quality.

Equally clear were our reservations about the proposed rating system. As several noted, institutions like ours that seek to serve low-income, first-generation populations have not been fairly treated by the popular iterations of rating/ranking schema. Failing to take into account the institutional mission, the characteristics of the student population served, and especially the *value added* by the educational experience will perpetuate a distorted picture of American higher education, one that will have long-lasting adverse effects on our nation's intellectual and workforce capital. The Administration's assurance that this new approach will be different assumes metrics and data not currently available. While we are hopeful, we trust you understand our skepticism.

As was also noted, HSIs are essential to meeting the needs of the majority of Latinos in higher education today, a population critical to the 21st century American workforce. Furthermore, their mission to an underserved population means serving disproportionate numbers of low-income, first-generation students. However, HSIs continue to be dramatically underfunded, receiving on average only 68 cents for every dollar of federal funding that other colleges and universities receive, on a per full-time-equivalent student basis. We understand the difficult appropriations environment in Washington at this time. Nonetheless, we expect an Administration committed to education to at least *request* levels of appropriations for HSIs more in keeping with their mission and their need. Asking only for level funding fails to keep pace with the growing number of HSIs eligible to compete for Title V HSI grants.

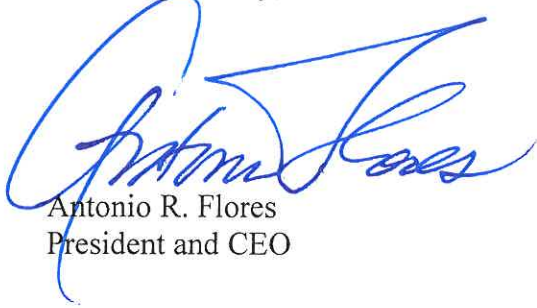
While a number of additional points were raised during the meeting, the only other issue I want to recall to your attention is our request for a President's Advisory Board on HSIs, parallel to long-standing Boards for HBCUs and Tribal Colleges. The absence of such a board continues to relegate HSIs and their important mission to an afterthought. As a consequence, the much-needed progress in increasing Hispanic educational attainment continues to be painfully slow. During the last few weeks, I have read of the President's meeting personally with HBCU representatives and another White House meeting with representatives of selective universities to

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address their outreach to minority and low-income students. With all due respect, the selective, and wealthy, universities will never be able to meet the higher education needs of the burgeoning Latino population, not for lack of will or student aptitude, but simply for lack of capacity. If the Administration is serious about improving Latino education, it *must* pay more attention to HSIs. A President's Advisory Board is a good first step. This is a matter of national security and paramount to our nation's future as a world power.

Thank you again for calling this meeting and for your presence and evident readiness to listen to us. As always, we look forward to working with you to make a real difference in the lives of the students we serve.

Most respectfully,



Antonio R. Flores
President and CEO

Cc: HACU Board of Governors
Participants (Meeting of October 25, 2013) - see attached

MEETING WITH SECRETARY DUNCAN
October 25, 2013

ATTENDEES

Hon.	First Name	MI	Last Name	Title	Company Name	Contact City	Contact State
Dr.	Jose		Aybar	President	Richard J. Daley College, City Colleges of Chicago	Chicago	Illinois
Dr.	Ronald	T.	Brown	President	University of North Texas at Dallas	Dallas	Texas
Dr.	Mike		Flores	President	Palo Alto College	San Antonio	Texas
Dr.	Robert	G.	Frank	President	The University of New Mexico	Albuquerque	New Mexico
Dr.	Frank		Gornick	Chancellor	West Hills Community College District	Coalinga	California
Dr.	Dana	A.	Grove	President	Morton College	Cicero	Illinois
Dr.	Willie	J.	Hagan	President/CEO	California State University, Dominguez Hills	Carson	California
Dr.	Brenda		Hellyer	Chancellor	San Jacinto College	Pasadena	Texas
Dr.	Cesar		Maldonado	President	Texas State Technical College		
Dr.	Félix	V.	Matos Rodríguez	President	Eugenio Maria de Hostos Community College, CUNY	Bronx	New York
Dr.	Kate		O'Neil	Executive Director	UNM-Taos Branch Campus	Taos	New Mexico
Dr.	David		Potash	President	Wilbur Wright College	Chicago	Illinois
Dr.	David		Sam	President	Elgin Community College	Elgin	Illinois
Mr.	Andrew	C.	Sund	President	St. Augustine College	Chicago	Illinois
Dr.	Jorge Iván		Vélez-Arocho	President	Pontificia Universidad Católica de Puerto Rico, Ponce	Ponce	Puerto Rico