



THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20202

October 1, 2025

Dear Interim President Mahoney:

Thank you for your tireless work to improve higher education in our country. The Administration is committed to a forward-looking vision of higher education that serves our nation by helping the next generation grow into resilient, curious, and moral leaders, inspired by American and Western values. While the Administration will continue to address ongoing or past violations of civil rights and concerning actions contrary to the interests of the United States, the opportunity presented here is designed to be different: the proactive improvement of higher education for the betterment of the country.

To that end, the White House plans to release a “Compact for Academic Excellence in Higher Education,” agreed to by a wide range of excellent universities and supported by philanthropists equally committed to the pursuit of this vision. Compact signatory schools will signal to students, parents, and contributors that learning and equality are university priorities. In addition, the Federal Government would have assurance that signatory schools are complying with civil rights law and pursuing Federal priorities with vigor. This assurance will yield multiple positive benefits for the school, including allowance for increased overhead payments where feasible, substantial and meaningful federal grants, and other federal partnerships. In short, this Compact will renew and strengthen the vital, mutually beneficial relationship between the U.S. Government and higher education that is essential to our nation’s future and success.

The Compact is attached. It is largely in its final form, but we welcome limited, targeted feedback to ensure mutual alignment. We would appreciate comments, in writing, no later than October 20, 2025. After receiving feedback, schools that show clear alignment and a strong readiness to champion this effort will be invited to the White House to finalize language and be initial signatories. We are aiming to have a signed agreement by no later than November 21, 2025.

We look forward to your thoughts. Should you have any questions in the interim, please feel free to reach out for clarification.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, likely belonging to Linda E. McMahon.

Linda E. McMahon

A handwritten signature in cursive script, likely belonging to May Mailman.

May Mailman

A handwritten signature in cursive script, likely belonging to Vincent Haley.

Vincent Haley