

October 1, 2001

Dear Colleague:

On behalf of the American Council on Education and the undersigned organizations, I write regarding an important and timely matter of public policy.

President Bush has issued the largest Reserve and National Guard call up since the Persian Gulf War in response to the recent terrorist attacks. Roughly one-fourth of those called to active duty will be college and university students.

Students called to active duty will have their academic progress disrupted. In previous call ups, institutions responded with policies that returned tuition, provided for course completion at later dates, and otherwise showed flexibility to ensure that no servicemember suffered a loss of funds or educational opportunity because he or she was called to serve.

On September 24, 2001, the U.S. Department of Education directed lenders and colleges and universities to provide relief from student loan obligations by postponing student loan payments for borrowers during the period of the borrower's active duty service. Additionally, the Department urged colleges and universities to provide full refund of tuition and other institutional charges and encouraged flexible re-enrollment options for affected students. Student aid recipients who withdraw from school because they are called to active duty, or are otherwise affected by mobilization or terrorist attacks, will not be required to return financial aid funds they received for books and living expenses.

I know these last few weeks have brought sorrow and administrative hardship to many of our colleges and universities. While complying with this department directive may be difficult for some campuses, it is one important way that we can support our students and help our nation in its response to terrorism.

In fact, once your institution has complied with this order, it may prove worthwhile to issue a press release to local media that points out how your campus has done its part to support our troops during this critical period. Thanks again for your efforts.

Sincerely,

David Ward President

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On behalf of:

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers  
American Association of Community Colleges  
American Council on Education  
Association of American Universities  
Association of Community College Trustees  
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities  
Council for Advancement and Support of Education  
Council for Opportunity in Education  
Council of Graduate Schools  
National Association of College and University Business Officers  
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities  
National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges  
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators  
United Negro College Fund  
United States Public Interest Research Group  
United States Student Association