

March 7, 2003

Honorable Robert B. Zoellick
United States Trade Representative
Office of the U.S. Trade Representative
600 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20506

Dear Ambassador Zoellick:

I am writing on behalf of the undersigned associations which, taken together, represent every public and private, two- and four-year college and university in the United States and their 15 million students. Together, we are requesting an urgent meeting with you concerning the U.S. offer on higher education services that is due to be submitted to the World Trade Organization by the end of this month. We believe that in an effort to open certain markets for the relatively small proprietary higher education services sector, the U.S. offer will have the unintended consequence of undermining all traditional higher education services in the U.S.

For the last two years we have been in discussions with your staff about the need to consider the unique structure of the U.S. higher education services sector in crafting any WTO proposals. (See the attached June 20, 2001 letter to Joseph Papovich.) In a meeting with Assistant U.S. Trade Representative Joseph Papovich last June, we were assured that our concerns were understood and could be accommodated. However, we understand that the U.S. request for commitments to other countries submitted last June calls for full market access and national treatment commitments in modes 1, 2 and 3 for higher education and training services, adult education and "other" education services. As explained in the attached white paper, if the substance of the U.S. offer is consistent with that request, we believe it will have a serious negative effect on U.S. higher education service and its providers.

We request a meeting with you as soon as possible so that we can explain our concerns in detail. We are not trying to impede the efforts of the proprietary segment of the higher education services sector to increase their access to other markets. But

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it is critically important that the U.S. avoid taking a path that would fundamentally alter the traditional U.S. higher education services sector. We remain eager to work with the USTR to avoid such an outcome.

Sincerely,

David Ward
President

DW/cms

Attachments

On behalf of:

American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Association of University Professors
American Council on Education
APPA: The Association of Higher Education Facilities Officers
Association of American Law Schools
Association of American Universities
Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities
Association of Community College Trustees
Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges
Association of International Education Administrators
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Council for Christian Colleges & Universities
Council for Higher Education Accreditation
Council for Opportunity in Education
Council of Independent Colleges
National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education
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 Collegiate Athletic Association

University Continuing Education Association