To: Interested Members of the Higher Education Community

From: William “Brit” Kirwan, Chancellor, University System of Maryland
Nicholas S. Zeppos, Chancellor, Vanderbilt University

Re: Feedback Needed on Burdensome Federal Regulations

Date: March 14, 2014

Dear Colleagues:

We write today as co-chairs of the Task Force on Government Regulation of Higher Education to seek your assistance and input. The Task Force was appointed by a bipartisan group of senators—Lamar Alexander (R-TN), Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), Michael Bennet (D-CO), and Richard Burr (R-NC)—with the charge of identifying specific federal regulations that are both burdensome to colleges and universities and provide little benefit to the government and the public. These senators understand that the federal government’s over-regulation of American higher education is detrimental to the country. However, the goal of this effort is not simply to eliminate regulations; instead, it is to create a more efficient and effective regulatory process.

Composed of 16 presidents and chancellors representing the broad spectrum of American higher education, the Task Force has been charged with a comprehensive review of the regulatory requirements affecting colleges and universities, with a focus on regulations stemming from the Higher Education Act and, more broadly, from the Department of Education. The Task Force has been asked to provide specific recommendations to streamline and reduce regulations while at the same time ensuring that important student and taxpayer protections are maintained.

The scope of our effort is as follows:

1) Provide specific recommendations to consolidate, streamline, and eliminate burdensome, costly and/or confusing regulations, legislation, and reporting requirements;

2) Review and quantify the extent of all federal reporting and regulatory requirements with which institutions must comply, including estimates of the time and costs associated with specific regulations and requirements; and

3) Provide recommendations for reform to ensure future regulations are promulgated in a manner that appropriately considers existing law and accurately examines the costs and benefits to taxpayers, institutions, and students.

The following leaders from higher education have agreed to serve on the Task Force:

- Sen. William Armstrong, president, Colorado Christian University
- Bruce Benson, president, University of Colorado
- Molly Corbett Broad, president, American Council on Education (ACE)
- Thomas Chema, president, Hiram College (OH)
- Margaret L. Drugovich, president, Hartwick College (NY)
In addition, our colleagues at ACE are staffing the Task Force. The ACE team working on this project includes: Terry Hartle, senior vice president; Sang Han, senior policy advisor, government relations; Anne Hickey, director of government relations; and Jessie Brown, associate general counsel.

If you have specific recommendations on ways to streamline and improve higher education regulations consistent with the charge outlined above, we encourage you to submit them to regulations@acenet.edu by April 30.

With the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act on the horizon and the willingness of key senators to assist us, this project represents a critical opportunity for us to address a major concern that all of us as leaders of higher education institutions share.

Thank you for your assistance on this important effort.