

April 11, 2013

Secretary Richard W. Riley
Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP
101 Constitution Avenue, NW, Suite 900
Washington D.C., 20001

Dear Secretary Riley:

I am pleased to write in support of the Commission on Regulation of Postsecondary Distance Education and its report, and I am proud that ACE was represented on the Commission by our Senior Vice President Terry Hartle.

Distance education is growing in scale and importance for a diverse group of students and institutions, both in the United States and beyond. According to a 2012 report from the Sloan Consortium, 32 percent of higher education students now take at least one course online, and nearly 70 percent of chief academic leaders say that online learning is a critical long-term strategy for their institutions.

Resolving areas of disagreement in higher education is never an easy task, and the overly complex and confusing nature of state regulation of distance education has been a concern of ACE and our membership for some time. The response to this Symposium and the attendance of teams from 47 states demonstrates that this concern is widely shared.

I welcome the set of workable, common sense recommendations that states will consider for implementation. I especially appreciate the inclusiveness with which these recommendations were developed, and the care not to duplicate existing requirements or create unnecessary bureaucracy while also preserving the core values of institutional quality and consumer protection.

That the Commission was able to develop a set of workable, common sense recommendations in such a short amount of time is remarkable. It speaks both to the foundation laid by the early work of the Presidents' Forum, the Council of State Governments, and the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (with support from the other regional compacts), and the significant amount of collaboration and outreach done over the past several months.

I look forward to the implementation phase of this work so that these recommendations can become a reality. I challenge the state leaders in attendance to engage fully with these recommendations over the next two days so that you may return home with plans for action in mind.

Thank you for your personal leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,



Molly Corbett Broad
President