

ACCREDITING SOCIETIES AND HIGHER EDUCATION:

THE IMPACT OF FEDERAL REGULATION,

1944 - 2008

By

CARRIE ELAINE COTHRUM

Bachelor of Arts, 1996

Baylor University
Waco, Texas

Master of Arts, 1999

University of Texas at Tyler
Tyler, Texas

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AddRan College of Liberal Arts
Texas Christian University
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In his last major speech prior to leaving office, President Dwight D. Eisenhower delivered a warning against the dangers of the military-industrial complex and growing government bureaucracy. Conservatives worried that the era of government retraction of the 1950s faced serious opposition in the future. Eisenhower feared that civil and social activists would in conjunction with industrialists, create a gigantic and manipulative system of influence allowing them to divert federal policy at the expense of public interest. His concerns proved prescient in the field of higher education.

Few citizens noted Eisenhower's trepidation, however, about the threat of big government to higher education. No single national organization or institution, whether public or private, maintains control over postsecondary education. This condition has led to much inconsistency by both states and the federal government in their efforts to exert varying degrees of oversight. The practice of

accreditation, essential for maintaining credibility in higher education, developed rather haphazardly through non-governmental voluntary organizations. These agencies adopted criteria that required colleges and universities to maintain minimum educational standards in order to be recognized as quality institutions by peers, students, and parents.¹

Accreditation served the institutions of higher education and the objectives of the general public. Accreditation was used within the schools for self-improvement through internal studies validated by an external group of peers. Schools asserted that accreditation improved academic quality such as the admission profile of students, the qualifications of faculty, library holdings, and the equipment allocated to a particular discipline. The results and recommendations of an examination by agents of accrediting organizations led to strategic planning and budgeting. Colleges and universities used, for example, the recommendations of accreditors to develop a system of exchanging academic

¹ U.S. Department of Education, "Accreditation in the United States," U.S. Department of Education; http://www.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/accreditation_pg2.html (accessed September 11, 2007).

credit between institutions and for admittance of students to graduate and professional schools.²

The accreditation process also represented the interests of the general public. Accreditation, in essence, provided the public with consumer protection much like federal auditors assured the solvency of banks. This process made it possible to distinguish legitimate operations from substandard schools known as diploma mills, thereby ensuring the legitimacy of credentials from institutions of higher education. Some colleges and universities received funds from public sources, and enjoyed a tax-exempt status from tax-deductible contributions, which gave them a responsibility to safeguard public investment. The public thus depended on accreditation to verify the quality of an institution and provide clear information about the quality of instruction in a particular program.³

Colleges and universities started accreditation to assure inter-institutional quality as far back as 1885 with the creation of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Five other regional organizations followed within the next twenty-five years. Schools funded this

² Robert C. Dickeson, "The Need For Accreditation Reform," *A National Dialogue: The Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education Issue Paper*, (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 2006), 2-3.

³ Ibid.

process of review through a system of dues and fees, as well as support from volunteers. While schools acknowledged their responsibility to the public, they created and maintained a system that emphasized their own interests.⁴ The membership of the six regional accrediting organizations demonstrated the focus of institutional purposes over public ones.

Table 1.1 Public Membership on Regional Accreditation Boards 2006

Organization	Members	Public Representatives
New England	23	6 (26%)
Middle States	27	0
North Central	17	3 (8%)
Southern	77	11 (14%)
Northwest	24	4 (17%)
Western	20	3 (15%)

Source: Robert Dickeson, "The Need for Accreditation Reform", 4.

Schools, students, and the federal government have often regarded accreditation as a positive and necessary process. As described in some accounts, accreditation included: "a process of recognizing those educational institutions whose performance and integrity entitle them to the confidence of the educational community and the

⁴ Ibid.

public" and "the recognition accorded to an institution that meets the standards or criteria established by a competent agency or association."⁵ In 1968 the U.S. Office of Education defined accrediting as "the voluntary process whereby an agency or association grants public recognition to a school, institute, college, university, or specialized program of study that meets certain established qualifications and educational standards, as determined through initial and periodic evaluations."⁶ In 1974, as Eisenhower had warned, the Department dropped "voluntary" from the definition and issued a report that characterized accreditation as anachronistic. Thus, the use of accreditation to determine eligibility for federal funding evolved from a voluntary and private method into an involuntary and public process.⁷

By the turn of the twenty-first century the extent of this relationship between government and higher education, which incorporated public and private policy, concerned President George W. Bush's Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings. She planned to hold higher education to the

⁵ Federation of Regional Accrediting Commissions of Higher Education, *Accredited Institutions of Higher Education, 1971 - 1972* (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1971), 275; Lloyd E. Blauch, ed., *Accreditation in Higher Education* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Education, 1959), 3.

⁶ Harold Orlans, *Private Accreditation and Public Eligibility* (Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1975), 6-8.

⁷ Ibid.

same standards that had already been introduced into primary and secondary education. These principles included responsiveness to public policy, implementation of qualitative outcomes assessment, efforts to track students from admission to graduation, and accountability in the use of federal funds and increasing tuition rates. Not surprisingly colleges and universities, both public and private, resisted federal intrusion.

The federal regulation of business and industry included punitive measures, but Congress imposed regulations on colleges and universities in a more benign manner. One author noted, however, that higher education, much like business and industry eventually found itself "in bed with an 800-pound gorilla and not a benign teddy bear."⁸ Actions by business perceived as antagonistic to national interests resulted in laws meant to prevent future abuses. In the first half of the twentieth century, for example Congress no longer allowed railroads to unconscionably raise rates or to give discounts to favored customers. It prevented businesses from restraining trade and held industry to a set of safety standards. On the other hand, Congress viewed education as a valuable opportunity for

⁸Nathan Glazer, "Regulating business and the universities: one problem or two?" *The Public Interest* (Summer 1979): 43.

personal advancement and passed laws to make enrollment in colleges and universities more accessible to the public. Other legislation provided government funding for research. Even though Congress viewed business as profit-seeking and required severe regulation, colleges and universities were thought to be benign and deserving of aid to assist national objectives.⁹ Nevertheless they both endured substantial government regulations.

Federal law pertaining to discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnic group, and sex in admissions and hiring applied to postsecondary institutions. Even after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Affirmative Action of 1972, colleges and universities practiced discriminatory policies. Other abuses occurred in the exploitation of veterans and students receiving grants or loans for tuition. In addition, the explosion of social regulations in the 1970s did not distinguish between for-profit and non-profit entities and led to increasing stipulations that schools protect minority rights. Eventually, Congress deemed laws necessary to protect civil rights of students and to prevent higher education from becoming an elitist industry lacking responsiveness to the public good.

⁹ Ibid., 45.

Economic factors remained a strong and primary motivation for intervention by the government. While educators and policy makers argued about the role that higher education must play to promote the common welfare, postsecondary institutions continued to rely on federal funding. As a result, the government remained the guarantor for billions of dollars in student loans. As increases in defaults on student loans occurred, however, federal regulators probed further into colleges and universities in an attempt to expand regulations.

Two analysts, Carol van Alstyne and Sharon L. Coldren, considered the costs of increasing government regulations in higher education. They asked six institutions to estimate the costs of implementing programs regarding equal-employment opportunity, affirmative action, equal pay, age discrimination, occupational safety and health, environmental protection, fair wage and hour standards, contributions for unemployment compensation, social security taxes, retirement-benefit standards, and a few others. They concluded, from this limited examination, that schools labored under a special burden. They noted that colleges and universities were bound for a year by published tuition and fees that could not be altered in response to higher costs imposed by government programs.

For-profit commercial enterprises enjoyed the freedom to raise prices, whereas tuition provided the primary source of funding for educational institutions. Changes in income from endowments or federal and state programs could not be adjusted for rising costs. Tenure and long term employment contracts also limited institutional response to rising expenses. And the cost of communicating the details of requirements proved even greater in higher education than in private business.¹⁰

In response to expanding regulations and expenses, private accrediting organizations implemented new policies to appease the federal government and prevent further legislation. Recent efforts to ensure quality in postsecondary education have included: verifying that an institution meets established standards; assisting prospective students in identifying acceptable institutions; determining the acceptability of transfer credits; providing information for the investment of public and private funds; protecting an institution from some internal or external pressures; creating goals for self-improvement; involving faculty and staff in planning and evaluation; establishing criteria for professional certification; and providing a basis for determining

¹⁰ Ibid., 52.

eligibility in federal financial aid. Along with these requirements, the federal government continued to press for a better and more sophisticated system of accrediting schools.

The process of becoming an accredited school intensified as the requirements for quality grew. First, the accrediting agency established standards for institutions or programs. Then a school conducted a self examination of its abilities to meet those standards and invited the agency for an on-site evaluation. Once the school received approval, the agency provided public notice of the decision. Monitoring and further evaluation of each institution continued as the school attempted to maintain its accredited status.¹¹

Failures within the accreditation process appeared as the process grew more complicated. The Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development in Paris in 2006 reported that among its thirty member nations, the United States ranked seventh in the percentage of the population that enters and completes a postsecondary education. The National Assessment of Adult Literacy released in 2006 revealed that the average literacy of college educated Americans declined from 1992 to 2003. One-third of

¹¹ Ibid.

students entering postsecondary schools needed academic remediation in reading, writing, or mathematics. Finally, a recent survey of four-year college presidents revealed that almost three-fourths of them thought schools should be held more accountable for their students' "educational outcomes." Thus the achievement of ensuring a quality education through the accreditation process has waned, despite increased government involvement.

Additionally the public's need for information regarding higher education remains unmet. Students and parents lack reliable information about admission requirements, available programs, costs, the availability of financial aid, and the range of accessible postsecondary options. In the absence of accreditors providing this information, *U.S. News & World Report* filled the void through an yearly analysis and rankings of institutions. The annual issue became the most popular for the magazine.

Accreditation continues to be a central feature of higher education. The federal government, state governments, accrediting agencies, and the institutions of higher education have developed countless policies and requirements. Despite these efforts, the public remains skeptical of higher education.

The United States government has consistently promoted postsecondary education for all citizens, and the current debate over higher education focuses on the goals of improving student financial aid programs, student access, student success, and student learning. Government's expansive intervention into higher education brought severe consequences and might artificially inhibit its ability to compete in a global market.

CHAPTER TWO

"On the Eve of a Period of Reconstruction"

Accreditation has demonstrated the American way of solving social problems through voluntary actions. The founders of the United States carefully separated government powers through a strong central government balanced by the Bill of Rights. The first amendment guaranteed freedom of assembly and the extensive use of voluntary associations, and these measures played a major role in both public and private enterprises. Thanks to the tenth amendment, states of the Union maintained their general powers. Under these conditions, a complex system of voluntary educational associations grew and provided an important part of the accreditation process.¹

State governments also played a significant role in the development of the accreditation process for postsecondary education. An early form of the accreditation process began at the state level in 1784 when the Board of New York Regents went into operation to

¹Fred F. Harcleroad, *Accreditation: History, Process, and Problems*, (Washington, D.C.: American Association for Higher Education. AAHE-ERIC/ Higher Education Research Report No. 6, 1980), 1 - 2.

provide oversight for King's College (Columbia University) and other colleges or schools in the state through yearly visits, registration of curriculum, and reports to the legislature. Three years later, New York revised the law to allow for each college or university to have its own board of regents to determine such requirements. State accrediting bodies appeared in Iowa in 1846, Utah in 1896, Washington in 1909, Virginia in 1912, and Maryland in 1914.²

Meanwhile, national voluntary accrediting organizations for specialized fields began to organize. The American Medical Association became the first voluntary programmatic association in 1847. The agency emerged to protect the public reputation of legitimate doctors and prevent the expansion of popular and lucrative paper mill diplomas in the medical field. At the end of the nineteenth century, new academic disciplines grew, and accreditation organizations quickly developed in chemistry, journalism, architecture, art, theology, Bible studies, medical technicians, medical records, occupational therapy, and physical therapy.

Regional accreditors served as another example of voluntary accrediting organizations. These associations

² Ibid.

formed in response to a need to distinguish higher education from primary and secondary schools. The agencies created standards for admission and for completing a degree in colleges and universities. In addition, problems concerning the lack of a common curriculum coupled with the growth of specialized fields stimulated the rise of regional voluntary organizations. Some examples of new associations were the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. By 1895 these organizations represented member schools through much of the United States, excluding the Pacific Coast and some mountain states.

Regional associations emerged out of a turbulent period for higher education. Between the end of the Civil War and beginning of World War I, postsecondary schools experienced a breakdown in a fixed, classical curriculum and expansion of a system for electing enrollment in various courses. This change in the number and availability of courses combined with the acceptance of new academic fields in psychology, education, sociology, and American literature provided an impetus for the growth of a variety of schools. New types of institutions developed to

meet the progress in academics such as teachers colleges, junior colleges, land-grant colleges, research universities, and specialized professional schools. Expansion of both secondary and postsecondary education resulted in overlapping courses and confusion as to the definition of a college. Likewise, the absence of commonly accepted standards for admission to college and completion of a degree created a lack of standardization and understanding.³

Educators in various regions banded together to organize private, voluntary membership groups to facilitate uniform entrance requirements for colleges. The growing diversity among postsecondary institutions prompted communication and cooperation within specific regions regarding admission and, in particular, the transfer of students to a college. In New England, a group of Massachusetts secondary schoolmasters initiated the process and Vanderbilt University led southern states in this direction. Six regional associations started in New England and expanded west. Princeton University President Woodrow Wilson captured the feeling of the period in a 1907 speech at a meeting of the Middle States Association of

³ Philip G. Altbach, Robert O. Berdahl, and Patricia J. Gumpert, eds., *American Higher education in the Twenty-First Century*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 262-263.

Colleges and Schools when he said, "We are on the eve of a period of reconstruction. We are on the eve of a period when we are going to set up standards. We are on the eve of a period of synthesis, when, tired of this dispersion and standardless analysis, we are going to put things together into something like a connected and thought-out scheme of endeavor. It is inevitable."⁴ During this same period, Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Columbia became universities, and new institutions such as the University of California, Howard University, and Stanford University were also formed. Accreditation emerged during a time of ferment and hope as an idealistic, self-motivated, reform-minded system believing in individual initiative and voluntary collective action. Educators did not trust government, though they viewed government as the ultimate authority in righting the wrongs within society.⁵

In all regions except the Northwest, there was a prolonged period between the creation of the regional association and the formal accrediting of colleges. The North Central states waited fifteen years and in 1912 the North Central Association initiated the first list of

⁴Woodrow Wilson, "School and College," in *Proceedings of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools* (Philadelphia: Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 1907), 89.

⁵Kenneth E. Young, Charles M. Chambers, H.R. Kells, et al., *Understanding Accreditation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1983), 6-7.

accrediting standards. The following year it published a report listing the member schools. These fledgling efforts marked the initial attempt of a regional voluntary association to inform the public of accredited institutions. In the New England states seventy years passed before the independent private institutions of the East submitted to a process of standards, reports, and inspections. The meeting at which the New England association resolved to accredit colleges cautioned that it "should not become involved in technicalities, and preferably should only re-examine those who do not . . . satisfy our standards." The strong public universities of the Midwest, however, more readily accepted the process.⁶

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, state and voluntary accrediting organizations proliferated. The federal government also sought to distinguish and recognize institutions of education with the establishment of the Office of Education in 1867. The office first produced a list identifying high schools and colleges in the United States. In 1870, the report listed 369 colleges and by 1910 catalogued 602. Presidents William Howard Taft and Woodrow Wilson, however, limited

⁶Harold Orlans, *Private Accreditation and Public Eligibility* (Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1975), 10.

federal involvement in education by not allowing the list to be published by a government agency. In 1914 the Association of American Universities (AAU) provided a list at the request of German Universities. The publication divided colleges into three groups based on the success of its students in graduate school. This action made the AAU, not the federal government, the major recommending body for institutions of higher education for the next forty years. Not until the Veterans Act of 1944 did the federal government undertake to develop a meaningful policy toward accreditation for institutions of higher education.⁷

A lack of leadership by the federal government in postsecondary education left a vacuum in the early twentieth century. As a result the Northwest, Middle States, Southern, and national voluntary associations followed the North Central group's efforts by creating criteria for accreditation.

⁷ Harclerod, 25-29.

Table 2.1 Regional Associations: Formation and Accrediting

Association	Year of Initial Formation	Accreditation Standards for Colleges
New England	1885	1954
Middle States	1887	1921
North Central	1895	1910
Southern	1895	1919
Northwest	1917	1921
Western	1924	1949

Source: Harold Orlans, *Private Accreditation and Public Eligibility*, 1975.

In the 1930s, led by the North Central Association, the regional accreditors from across the country implemented a rule of accreditation based on judging an institution according to its purpose or mission. This new policy allowed the regional agencies to adapt to the increasing number of vocational schools and teaching schools during this era. As non-traditional institutions increased in number following World War II, regional accreditors remained a vital part of higher education. At the same time, national voluntary associations continued to form in law, business, library science, music, engineering, dietetics, podiatry, veterinarian medicine, nurse anesthesia, pharmacy, and optometry.⁸

⁸Harold Orlans, 9.

These national organizations gave rise to the umbrella approach of accreditation in the medical and engineering fields. Institutions with schools in those disciplines could not keep up with the expanding requirements of countless agencies. Larger organizations, called umbrella groups, attempted to limit the number of confusing standards. For example the American Medical Association and the Engineers Council for Professional Development worked to eliminate the burden of large numbers of requirements and multiple visits to institutions.⁹

External factors impacted the development of accreditation. The Veterans Act of 1944 provided federal assistance to servicemen who attended an institution of higher education. Initially this measure implemented few regulations regarding requirements for institutions to become eligible to participate in the program. Following the re-authorization of the veterans' benefits in 1952, however, the Office of Education and the Department of Veterans Affairs made use of accreditation associations to determine eligibility. A school received federal student

⁹ For a recent example of umbrella organizations, see Pedro J. Lecca's *Allied Health: Practice Issues and Trends in the New Millennium* (New York: Haworth Press, 2003) or Harland G. Bloland's *Creating the Council for Higher Education* (Phoenix, Arizona: The Council on Higher Education and Oryx Press, 2001).

assistance only after a regional or national voluntary association deemed it eligible through accreditation.¹⁰

In 1948, when the AAU ceased publication of accredited institutions, regional accrediting associations and presidents from colleges and universities organized the Western and Northwest organizations which became the official regional accrediting associations for their member institutions. They later joined the other regional agencies in forming the Federation of Regional Accrediting. In addition, presidents from a number of major universities organized the National Committee on Accrediting. These two organizations provided the leadership necessary for the regional and national voluntary organizations for several decades. They later combined their efforts in 1975 to form the Council on Post Secondary Accreditation (COPA).

Education experienced significant change during the 1960s. The Civil Rights movement demanded equal opportunities for all citizens and desegregation broke down some of the barriers that existed in educational opportunities. The federal government had a renewed interest in funding opportunities for veterans and students. Institutions of higher education had become the veteran's hope to improved social standing and, following

¹⁰ Harclerod, 5.

the Civil Rights Act of 1964, an opportunity for minorities as well. The creation of the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965 opened the gates to continued and expanded federal intervention into various areas in higher education. Congress designed the HEA to increase public access to higher education and marked the first federal requirements regarding admissions procedures.

As a result, colleges and universities and the federal government expanded their relationship beyond just a financial transaction. As the government began to rely on colleges and universities to provide the entire public with an opportunity for education, the institutions relied on the financial support of the federal government.¹¹

The creation of the Federal Financial Aid system strengthened the symbiotic relationship. Further developments included the rise of the Department of Education and the Division of Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility to oversee expanding federal requirements for eligibility in funding programs. Each reauthorization of HEA sparked debate and further legislation. Likewise, the authorization of the federal Title IX program in 1972 led to an increase in demand for

¹¹ *Higher Education Act of 1965*, Public Law 89-329, 89th Cong., 1st sess., (November 8, 1965), Section 101.

student assistance for women and minorities and had a profound impact on intercollegiate athletics.

The next three decades marked continual increases in federal regulations and requirements for accrediting agencies and their member institutions. Other federal legislation affected postsecondary education: the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1986, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The accreditation and listing system came under question in the debates surrounding the reauthorization of HEA in 1992 and 1998.

The George W. Bush Administration authorized the Commission on the Future of Higher Education in 2005. Representatives from both the private and public sectors served on the commission and produced a report after conducting numerous meetings and national forums. Known as the Spellings Report, for the Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings, and published in 2006, it only precipitated further debate, rather than consensus, on the future of higher education and the role of voluntary accrediting organizations.

The Spellings Report proposed to integrate the role of the federal government in higher education not only in admissions and financial aid, but also in tracking students

and assessment of student outcomes. These discussions included transferring credits regardless of an institution's accreditation. The report raised the possibility of mandating testing, similar to tests in secondary schools, in order to gain the confidence of the federal government and public in the achievement of student learning. Both political and academic leaders made strong arguments for both federal regulation and the need for less government interference. Both sides agreed that with federal funding comes accountability, and that students needed data to compare institutions and the level of student success in schools.

CHAPTER THREE

"THE BEGINNING"

The close of World War II brought unprecedented prosperity for Americans, which led to larger families. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the birth rate rose from 2,314 per 10,000 of the population in 1936 to 3,104 by 1943 and 3,817 in 1947. It continued to fluctuate until reaching an all-time high in 1957 of 4,308.¹ Movement from the cities to the suburbs, the growth of families, and record purchases of new homes dominated American culture. Americans demanded consumer items after struggling through almost a generation of depression and war. The 1950s saw a boom in the sale of appliances and furniture, a surge in the housing market, and a high demand for automobiles. Drivers benefited from the expanded national highway system. Veterans, like other Americans, hoped to reap the benefits of this age of consumerism and take advantage of the educational prospects made available by the Veterans

¹ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Colonial Times to the Present: Historical Statistics of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1976), 379.

Readjustment Act of 1944. This revolutionary law allowed veterans to avail themselves of the opportunities of the 1950s by improving their education.

The VRA ranks among the most significant laws passed following the New Deal because it provided service men and women with opportunities to ease the process of readjustment into civilian life. Through educational improvement veterans could live a life of prosperity with expanding opportunities. As the act provided millions of dollars of assistance for these Americans, it established a strong relationship between the federal government and institutions of higher education. This one piece of legislation produced an impetus for government involvement that led to the Higher Education Act of 1965. The Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act further created the financial catalyst that brought greater increases in federal funding and involvement in the accreditation process.

The federal government addressed previous failures to support veterans from prior wars with the passage of the Veterans Readjustment Act. Upon their release from the military following World War I, veterans received only a train ticket and a sixty dollar allowance. The economic depression of 1921 and Depression of the 1930s created difficult circumstances under which soldiers needed to find

employment. In an effort to assist servicemen, Congress passed the World War Adjusted Act of 1924, also known as the Bonus Act. In 1932 this law led to an intense confrontation, known as the Bonus Army incident, between the National Guard and servicemen. Veterans marched on the national capital in protesting the delay on bonuses to be paid twenty years later.² In order to avoid a similar incident, Congress passed immediate benefits to servicemen with the VRA in 1944 to demonstrate a renewed commitment to veterans. As President Franklin D. Roosevelt pointed out upon signing the law, the VRA provided benefits due to the members of the armed forces for they "have been compelled to make greater economic sacrifice and every other kind of sacrifice than the rest of us."³

Government anticipated the need to ease the transition to civilian life through planning by the National Resources Planning Board. Among the first suggestions to provide veterans with assistance came from the board's report,

² U.S. Veteran's Bureau, *Annual Report of the Director United States Veterans' Bureau for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1924* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1924) 665-672. Additional comparisons may be made not only to the Bonus March, but also to Shays' Rebellion of 1786 when veterans of the Revolutionary War also found debt and overwhelming taxes with few economic opportunities following their return from service. In this instance, actions of the veterans reflected the feelings of many rural Americans of the period and the event served as one of many factors leading to the Constitutional Convention, where Daniel Shays was a delegate.

³ Franklin D. Roosevelt, *Remarks on Signing the Veterans's Readjustment Assistant Act* (Washington, D.C., GPO, 1944).

"Demobilization and Readjustment of Civilian and Military Personnel" of 1943. The Board advocated broad based social provisions, but funding for the panel ceased later that year.⁴ When Congress discussed the VRA of 1944, Democrats and Republicans disagreed over measures pertaining to education and hospitalization. They could not further agree on unemployment provisions. Republican John Gibson of Georgia cast the tie-breaking vote in support of the measure. This law elevated the Department of Veterans Affairs and gave it priorities in personnel, equipment, supplies, and materials second only to the War and Navy Departments.⁵ Former sailors and soldiers received the same treatment and respect as current ones for the first time in American history.

Congress passed other measures "to provide federal government aid for the readjustment in civilian life of returning World War II veterans" through the VRA. The Act provided for unemployment benefits, housing benefits, and education and training benefits for returning soldiers.⁶

Similar to the population increase during the period, the housing market experienced a tremendous boom with the

⁴ National Resources Planning Board, *Demobilization and Readjustment of Civilian and Military Personnel* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1943).

⁵ *Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944*, Public Law 550, 82nd Cong., 2nd sess., (July 16, 1952), Sec. 100.

⁶ *Ibid.*

G.I. Bill. Much like the Homestead Act of 1862 that encouraged the settling of the West, the bill created and filled the suburbs.⁷ The Veterans Administration financed mortgages for over one-third of new homes from 1945 until 1950, representing approximately five million homeowners. The following chart demonstrates the increases in mortgages approved by the Veterans' Administration during this period.⁸

Table 3.1 VA Mortgages

Year	Number of VA Approved Mortgages
1945	43,000
1946	412,000
1947	542,000
1948	350,000
1949	277,000
1950	498,000

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics*, 639-641.

Veterans received thirty year mortgages with a maximum interest rate of 4 1/2 percent. The government guaranteed up to 60 percent of the loan up to a maximum of \$7,500. Veterans could also use the loan at any point within ten years from the end of the war. About 29 percent of veterans took advantage of the loan program. First time

⁷ Homestead Act of 1862 set up land-grants to small farmers. Any adult citizen could qualify for 160 acres for a nominal registration fee and living on the land for five years. After the Civil War, fifteen thousand homestead claims had been established and more followed.

⁸ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics*, 639-641.

veteran home owners peaked in the late 1940s and early 1950s.⁹ The introduction of thirty year loans caused the United States to have the most home owners in the world. Citizen soldiers escaped their pre-war circumstances and joined the burgeoning middle class.

A housing boom swept across the country. One writer concluded, "If the first great business figure of the 20th century was Henry Ford, the second, arguably, was William J. Levitt."¹⁰ Levitt, a Long Island homebuilder, developed an assembly line system for rapidly building low cost homes, while providing amenities that allowed for a suburban atmosphere. VA loans required no down payment and the bank had the assurance of the federal government to back the mortgages, thus removing much of the fear and complication in applying for and granting a mortgage. By 1955, the Levitt subdivisions accounted for 75 percent of all new homes. The surge of construction caused by the G.I. Bill produced a revolution in consumer society, resulting in the expansion of the furniture, appliance, supermarket, and restaurant industries.¹¹

⁹ President's Commission on Veterans' Pensions, *Veterans' Benefits in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1956), 301; Suzanne Mettler, *Soldiers to Citizens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 101.

¹⁰ David Halberstam, *The Fifties* (New York: Villard Books, 1993), 132-143.

¹¹ Michael J. Bennett, *When Dreams Came True: The G.I. Bill and the Making of Modern America* (Washington: Brassey's, Inc., 1996), 24-25.

Most importantly, the G.I. bill provided soldiers with educational opportunities. Congress granted veterans that had ninety days of service and a discharge of any status other than dishonorable with educational assistance. A serviceman received one year of education or training, if the beneficiary had served for at least ninety days. For each additional month of service, a veteran received an additional month of education or training with a maximum of forty-eight months. Veterans also obtained all tuition and fees up to \$500 per year and an additional monthly subsistence payment. Single veterans received a monthly subsistence payment of \$75, while veterans with at least one dependent collected \$105, and for two or more dependents the assistance totaled \$120 a month.¹²

Participation in the education assistance provided by the Veterans Readjustment Act surpassed anticipated levels. In a survey conducted by the military of white enlisted men in the U.S. Army in 1943, only 7 percent expected to return to school full-time following the war and 17 percent part-time.¹³ As a result, Washington leaders expected even fewer

¹² President's Commission on Veterans' Pensions, 275, 300 - 304; Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, *Final Report on Educational Assistance to Veterans: A Comparative Study of Three G.I. Bills*, 93rd Congress, 1st Session, September 20, 1973, 29.

¹³ U.S. Department of Education, "Soldiers' Attitudes Toward Post-War Education," *Education for Victory: Official Bi-Weekly of the United States office of Education* 2, 17 (1944): 1-6.

soldiers to attend college under the VRA. According to the Office of War Mobilization, only 15,000 veterans had enrolled in a college or university within fifteen months after the enactment of the bill in September 1945. By 1946 over 200,000 veterans had used educational and training benefits from the VRA.¹⁴ Three years later the figure reached two million. At the same time, overall enrollment in postsecondary degree-granting institutions reached an all-time high. For the 1939-1940 academic year, enrollment had reached 797,000 in public institutions and 693,000 in private institutions. Following the implementation of the G.I. Bill, enrollment in the 1949-1950 academic year swelled, however, to 1,355,000 in public institutions and 1,304,000 in private schools. The total number of bachelor degrees conferred during 1939-1940 numbered 186,500, but increased to 432,058 in 1949-1950.¹⁵ High participation rates led to substantial government expenditures.

¹⁴ House Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, *Report on Education and Training Under the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, as Amended, from the Administrator of Veterans' Affairs*, 81st Cong., 2nd sess., January 2, 1951, 34 - 35; Mettler, *Soldiers to Citizens*, 41.

¹⁵ U.S. Department of Education, *Digest of Education Statistics, 2005* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 2006) Table 3 and 246.

Table 3.2 G.I. Bill Expenditures from 1944 to 1950

Fiscal year Ending	Enrollment	Subsistence Expenditures	Tuition Expenditures	Total Expenditures (including equipment, supplies, materials, and counseling)
1945	44,027	\$7,802,860	\$1,480,205	\$9,515,179
1946	557,030	317,905,345	25,314,503	350,560,871
1947	977,607	1,550,796,114	496,320,111	2,122,202,439
1948	858,607	1,623,907,830	769,611,853	2,505,895,775
1949	741,200	1,865,801,490	735,360,304	2,702,825,900
1950	506,376	1,824,111,965	682,039,504	2,599,234,535

Source: U.S. House, *Investigating the Educational and Training Program Under the G.I. Bill*, 1951

The education benefits served as one of the most successful parts of the VRA.¹⁶

The bill proved a success by the sheer number of veterans that found new opportunities through federal funding. American Legion publicist, Jack Cejnar, called it "the G.I. Bill of Rights" since it offered aid in hospitalization, assistance in purchasing homes and businesses, and financial support for education. From 1944 to 1951 over eight million servicemen received benefits through the Veterans Readjustment Act. Approximately 2.3 million veterans attended institutions of higher education

¹⁶ House Committee, *Report on Education and Training Under the Servicemen's Readjustment Act*, 4-6.

and by 1955 the government had spent \$14.5 billion on educational and training benefits for veterans. Concurrently, veterans received \$2.4 million in home loans which resulted in the purchase of over four million homes. Approximately 200,000 veterans also bought farms or businesses through the VRA. By 1955 the Department of Veterans' Affairs backed one-third of new housing loans in the United States. The law's unemployment benefit allowed for twenty dollars per week up to one year and the average veteran only used 19.7 weeks worth of the "52-20 Club." Only 14 percent exhausted their full entitlement.¹⁷

Interestingly, the issue most debated in Congress, the unemployment benefits, became the least used resource. Indeed, veterans spent less than 20 percent of the funds set aside for unemployment benefits. These GIs took full advantage of the booming economy. In subsequent years, 2.3 million Korean War era veterans and eight million Vietnam War era veterans took advantage of the education assistance established by the VRA.¹⁸

¹⁷ The "52-20" Club was named for the number of weeks a veteran could qualify for receiving unemployment benefits and the twenty dollars they could receive each week. President's Commission on Veterans' Pensions, 275, 300 - 304; Mettler, *Soldiers to Citizens*, 6.

¹⁸ Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, *Final Report on Educational Assistance to Veterans*, 20 and 29; U.S. Veterans' Bureau, *Annual Report* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1956), 259-264.

Uneducated servicemen could now acquire education to participate in countless professions through the help of the G.I. Bill. When asked in an interview in 2002 about the changes in higher education over the past fifty years, Cameron Fincher, Director of the Institute of Higher Education from 1969 to 1999, replied, "I would start at the beginning (for me) because, being a veteran of World War II, I entered college in 1946 and graduated in 1950—the largest graduating class in history up until that time." He noted that the first national movement in education was the G.I. Bill, "it was the first of many significant changes in higher education that made profound differences. . . The G.I. Bill no doubt accomplished its purposes."¹⁹

Between 1861 and 1943 the establishment of new postsecondary schools proved moderate. The mean founding rate grew to only eighteen colleges per year. Following the G.I. Bill, the rate increased to thirty-two foundings per year and continued to rise in the following two decades.²⁰

¹⁹ Cameron Fincher, "Institute of Higher Education, An Oral History, 1964 - 2002," *The University of Georgia Institute of Higher Education* (2002): 4.

²⁰ Jennifer Ann Adams, "The G.I. Bill and the Changing Place of U.S. Higher Education after World War II," A paper presented at the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) annual meeting, Sacramento, November 18, 2000, 10.

Table 3.3 Colleges Established 1636-1994

Era	Years	Colleges Established	Number of Years	Mean Number Established Per Year
Pre-1861	1636-1774	14	139	.1
	1775-1819	56	45	1.2
	1820-1860	319	41	7.8
1861-1943	1861-1929	1281	69	18.6
	1930-1943	209	14	14.9
After 1944	1944-1959	407	16	25.4

Source: Jennifer Ann Adams, "The G.I. Bill and the Changing Place of the U.S. Higher Education," 2000.

With approximately 2.3 million students attending colleges or universities through government assistance following the passage of the G.I. Bill, the number of degrees awarded by these institutions between 1940 and 1950 improved. Not only did students enroll for bachelor degrees, but the number of advanced degrees during this period increased, as well. Degrees conferred during the ten years following the G.I. Bill doubled. In 1946 alone, colleges and universities awarded 157,349 degrees, in 1948 316,607, in 1950 496,874 degrees, and in 1951 schools conferred 454,960 degrees. G.I. Bill veterans also showed a preference for institutions with high academic standards and reputations. Former service personnel most often

selected private schools, which had a higher cost than state ones. In fact, World War II veterans preferred these institutions almost two to one.²¹

Unlike the New Deal and government social programs established during World War II, Americans did not view the Veterans Readjustment Act as a sweeping social program. Likewise, the measure did not require the federal government to win over public opinion to back a government solution because Americans proved extremely supportive of government funding that allowed for choice as well as opportunity. The writers of the G.I. Bill had found a balance to the social programs of the New Deal in creating a federally supported program that allowed for choice and benefit.²²

Many of the experts in higher education remained unconvinced that the economy or society could absorb the 2.3 million soldiers that now joined the traditionally upper class educated. "We must not be surprised [if] this great experiment in socialized education, sponsored and financed by a paternal government, in an area heretofore traditionally and jealously a state preserve" could "overturn the social and economic structure as it exists,"

²¹ Bennett, 241- 243; Keith W. Olson, *The G.I. Bill, the Veterans and Colleges* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1974) 71-72.

²² Bennett, 74-75.

wrote Byron Atkinson, coordinator of Veterans Affairs at the University of California at Los Angeles. "This *social experiment* has gone too far or not far enough." He continued to argue that the legislation brought more graduates than needed in any particular field in 1948.²³ James Conant, President of Harvard University, had also warned that the G.I. Bill could flood campuses with the least capable of the war generation. In his memoirs, written decades later, he concluded the measure had succeeded in raising the college performance levels while allowing those who would not have been part of the white, Protestant, educated elite to obtain new knowledge and position. He went on to state that "the mature student body which filled our colleges in 1946 and 1947 was a delight to all who were then teaching undergraduates."²⁴

The rush of veterans onto college campuses and in college classrooms solidified the social changes brought on by the G.I. Bill. In many instances, institutions claimed that the experience of veterans also provided improvements to the level of higher education being taught. New perspectives from a variety of backgrounds enhanced the student body and thus the level of interest and input

²³ Byron Atkinson, "Waltzing Me Around Again, Willie," *School and Society* (July 17, 1948): 1-15.

²⁴ James Conant, *My Several Lives: Memoir of a Social Inventor* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 373, 622-623, 663.

brought to classrooms. For example, the Education Testing Service (ETS) surveyed 10,000 students on sixteen campuses in the late 1940s and found that the cumulative grade point average between veteran students and non-veterans students differed only from a C to a C plus. ETS also noted that veterans concerned themselves less with grades than did non-veterans. In 1947 the University of Minnesota, however, reported that only 0.5 percent of veterans failed to pass enough courses to stay in school, compared with the normal civilian rate of 10 percent. Education for these seasoned students provided a means to broader opportunities.²⁵

The diversity of the student body changed following the G.I. Bill. With a preference for the Ivy League among former GIs, these institutions began admitting not only Anglo-American Protestants from the working class, but also Irish Americans, Italian Americans, Polish Americans, Hungarian Americans, and Jews in more substantial numbers. While African American veterans also used VA benefits, segregation limited their enrollment. Nonetheless, the opportunities afforded to them resulted in a group of African Americans that would become the leaders in

²⁵ Bennett, 241-242.

challenging separation in education and would play important roles in the Civil Rights movement.²⁶

The extent to which the G.I. Bill provided assistance to minorities went only as far as the process of selective service for the military. In other words the benefits of VRA could only help draftees or volunteers. Therefore, if one minority group was underrepresented in the military, that group would still be underrepresented in the receipt of federal assistance through the law. For instance, few female veterans participated in World War II and so a smaller number of women received the benefits of the G.I. Bill. Likewise, women did not find that furthering their education or training fit into their expected roles as housewives and mothers.²⁷

Higher education for women varied throughout the country following this legislation. The view of college women as socialites had spread throughout the country from the midwest and western schools of coeducation to the more traditional schools exclusively for women in the south and northeast. By the 1930s, magazine coverage of schools, such as the University of Missouri in Columbia, contained photographs of women enjoying a leisure life of debutante

²⁶ Ibid, 244.

²⁷ John R. Thelin, *A History of Higher Education* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 267.

balls and sorority dances. Stephens College, a private two-year school for women in Columbia, Missouri, gained distinction for providing a riding academy, horse stables, and a country club. Curriculum at the institution included the "world's largest Bible class" and a "grooming clinic" for the students. One journalist noted that Stephens surpassed the activities of well known women's schools, such as Bennington and Sarah Lawrence, by taking a midyear outing to New Orleans and commandeering 262 Tulane men for a dance and then on to New York for West Point dance partners.²⁸

In coeducational institutions women often found separate rather than equal educational opportunities. At the University of California, for example, male students called female students "pelicans" in reference to their personal appearance. Despite paying campus activity fees, women were still excluded from most campus organizations. Additionally faculty discouraged women from enrolling in certain fields of study. In response, female students formed their own organizations or athletic teams.

The ridicule and separation imparted by male students did not go unnoticed by college women. In a humorous

²⁸ Ibid., 183 and 212.

counter to such actions, one woman wrote a song called "A Model College Girl" which started with the following verse:

Never broke a regulation
Never told a lie
Never want to have a vacation
When I don't know why
Always love to go to sections
Love to go to bed
Never nibble sweet confections
When I am not fed

Following several similar verses recounting the number of college regulations for women, the song concludes with:

You May gather from these data
Just how good I be!
I'm as proud of Alma Mater
As she is of me!²⁹

The women maintained a minority status on campuses even after the influx of government resources to provide access to education.

The students of the G.I. Bill reinforced the conservative nature of the American campus. From 1939 to 1940 women represented about 40 percent of undergraduate enrollment. The rate fell to only 32 percent in 1950. The sixty thousand female military veterans enrolled in higher education through the G.I. Bill constituted a small percentage of overall enrollments through this legislation.³⁰

²⁹ Ibid., 183-184.

³⁰ Ibid., 266-267.

Therefore one consequence of the law was the continual masculinization of the postwar campus. The numbers of new male students matriculating deepened the rift between typically male fields of study and those deemed appropriate for women. The overall enrollment in business and engineering soared without gains for women in these fields. Female enrollment in professional fields declined during the 1950s. The social transformation of higher education begun by the G.I. Bill enhanced opportunities across economic classes, but favored men rather than women. Not until 1970 did women regain the 40 percent proportion of postsecondary enrollment.³¹

While the G.I. Bill improved opportunities for modest-income veterans, it also had little impact on race relations in colleges and universities. African Americans participated in smaller numbers in the military during World War II. Their access to education and training through this legislation remained limited, owing to segregation and overcrowding in historically black colleges.

African Americans that did enlist in the military took advantage of the opportunities provided through the Veterans Readjustment Act. Anecdotal information from an

³¹ Ibid., 267.

interview conducted with Celeste Torian, wife of a 92nd Infantryman was that "every black we knew used the G.I. Bill."³² A survey conducted by the Veterans Administration in 1950 verified that higher proportions of nonwhites than whites used the education and training benefits. In fact, 49 percent of nonwhite veterans had used the benefits by 1950 compared to 43 percent of white veterans. African Americans often received fewer years of elementary and secondary education prior to enlistment. As a result, black veterans less often attended a college or university under the VRA, but used federal assistance to enroll in a professional postsecondary program. Nonetheless, these veterans attending institutions of higher education caused enrollment increases and overcrowding at historically black colleges. Despite segregation and obstacles, they took advantage of openings in education and training as a result of the G.I. Bill. These opportunities helped African Americans confront segregation and obstacles in the 1960s.³³

Enrollment in historically black institutions paralleled the rise in white attendance. From fall of 1946 to fall of 1947 white enrollment increased generally by 13 percent while black institutions grew by 26 percent,

³² Mettler, 55.

³³ Ibid., 56 - 57.

demonstrating increased enrollment from 19,000 in 1940 to 58,000 in 1946 and then 73,174 in 1947.³⁴ Veterans composed 41 percent of the student population at historically black colleges and white servicemen represented 52 percent of the student population at other institutions.³⁵

Even though numerous veterans benefited from the assistance provided by Congress through the Veterans Readjustment Act, an investigation into the oversight of the VRA found several problems, particularly with trade schools. A committee established by the House of Representatives "found personnel lacking the education and experience necessary to qualify them as administrators of an educational program."³⁶ In one instance the committee found that a chief of training facilities received \$1,000 and a 1946 Buick sedan from a school operator. In another case they discovered over \$5,000 in loans made by school operators to a former Veterans Administration contract supervisor for institutions. In similar incidents the report described former VA employees that received \$4,000 in loans from the owners of a chain of seventeen schools.

³⁴ George N. Redd, "Present Status of Negro Higher and Professional Education: A Critical Summary," *Journal of Negro Education* 27 (1948): 401-402

³⁵ James A. Atkins, "Negro Educational Institutions and the Veterans' Educational Facilities Program," *Journal of Negro Education* 27 (1948): 144-146.

³⁶ House Committee, *Report on Education and Training Under the Servicemen's Readjustment Act*, 7 and 24.

In two other cases, an employee received two \$1,000 loans from school operators that were not repaid and two former training officers owned one-third interest each in a trade school while employed by the VA. In many instances, the administrators had little or no college experience.³⁷

The report continued, "schools mushroomed overnight offering any course imaginable, attempting to break into the educational and training field for the purpose of securing the G.I. dollar." As a result "veterans responded to these fly-by-night ventures as it was an easy path for them to pursue to establish eligibility for the generous subsistence payments made available to them under law." Some institutions offered courses in trades extending over a period of two years that well established schools offered for only one year. The result prolonged tuition payments without providing appropriate training.³⁸

Legitimate educational institutions expanded to include vocational, technical, and business schools, but experienced a shortage of qualified administrative and instructor personnel. Existing regulations did not question the background or qualifications of any individual opening a school. The report also noted complaints by

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 8.

veterans: "There is no doubt that veterans' education has been an extremely lucrative and profitable enterprise for certain types of businessmen. . . In spite of these regulations and the best possible application of them, the Government is spending huge sums of money for the education and training of veterans for which honest value is not being received."³⁹

Problems in the application of the Veterans Readjustment Act resulted from a failure to establish standards for approval of schools until July 13, 1950, with the passage of Public Law 610.⁴⁰ Among other suggestions, the House committee advised that the question of federal versus state authority over the operation of the educational and training program be further explored, as well as its supervision. The report noted that the criteria for the approval of educational institutions needed strengthening in order to "regulate unethical

³⁹ Ibid., 8, 9 and 11.

⁴⁰ Public Law 346 was passed on June 22, 1944, and made education and training available to most veterans for up to one year and additional education or training to veterans whose education or training had been impaired, delayed, interrupted, or interfered with by reason of entrance into service. This law did not establish any requirements for the organization and operation of State approving agencies. Public Law 610 was passed on July 13, 1950, and established requirements of 30 clock-hours for trade and technical courses to be considered full-time and 25 clock-hours where classroom instruction predominated. Educational institutions were held liable for overpayments of subsistence to veteran trainees when negligent in reporting lack of attendance or interruptions of the program. U.S. House of Representatives, House Select Committee to Investigate Educational and Training Program under G.I. Bill, *Investigating the Educational and Training Program Under the G.I. Bill*, 10.

advertising and to provide for the enforcement of educational standards with regard to admission requirements, hours of training, and similar matters."⁴¹

These issues led to federal reliance on accrediting associations. The Department of Veterans Affairs had the primary role in the expansion of higher education, but the Office of Education continued to hold a minor role until they agreed on a compromise in 1952. Widespread ambiguities over qualifying courses under the VRA and a confusing clearance system by state approving agencies led Congress to use the accreditation of postsecondary institutions to eliminate fraud. Legislative mandates empowered state agencies to approve courses at accredited institutions for federal funding. The Office of Education, with essentially an administrative role, simply listed such accrediting organizations. As a result of this federal enumeration, both national and regional voluntary associations experienced increased recognition and importance.⁴²

The passage of a new VRA in 1952 proved one of the most significant developments in education during the post war era. The first act of 1944 had created widespread

⁴¹ House Committee, *Report on Education and Training Under the Servicemen's Readjustment Act*, 29.

⁴² Harclerod, 25.

abuses over the question of which institutions qualified for payment through the Veterans Administration. Before passing the VRA of 1952, Congress proposed a new role for the Office of Education in approving institutions to receive benefits, but the Veterans Administration contested this proposal. As a result, both offices reached a compromise by allowing state approval agencies to authorize and approve courses offered by an institution that had received accreditation by a nationally recognized organization or association. The Commissioner of Education received the authority to list such accrediting agencies. Thus the Compromise of 1952 allowed the Veterans Administration to fund the VRA and the Department of Education to list those agencies capable of authorizing institutional participants "for the purposes of this Act the Commissioner shall publish a list of nationally recognized accrediting agencies and associations which he determines to be a reliable authority as to the quality of training offered by an educational institution."⁴³

Regional association listings gained even more importance with the Office of Education due to the demand for higher education. In 1948 presidents of major

⁴³ Matthew W. Finkin, *Federal Reliance on Educational Accreditation* (Washington, DC: Council on Postsecondary Accreditation, 1978), 2.

universities established the National Commission on Accrediting to eliminate the overwhelming bureaucratic burden of new, specialized associations for individual programs. That same year, regional accreditors joined together to form the Federation of Regional Accrediting in an attempt to provide leadership and a national voice to the accreditation process. New specialized accrediting agencies appeared in health administration, psychology, social work, and respiratory therapy in the late 1940s and 1950s. Additional national groups that organized during the same period were The Association of Independent Colleges and Schools formed in 1952 and the National Home Study Council followed in 1955.⁴⁴

The National Defense Education Act of 1958 further solidified the role of voluntary accreditation in acquiring federal funding. This legislation noted that challenges to the country in "science, industry, government, military strength, and international relations stems from the forces of totalitarianism."⁴⁵ In addition the bill stated that "it is no exaggeration to say that America's progress in many fields of endeavor in the years ahead—in fact, the very survival of our free country—may depend in large part upon

⁴⁴ Harclerod, 25.

⁴⁵ *National Defense Education Act of 1958*, HR 13247, 85th Cong., 2nd sess., July 15, 1958, 1-2.

the education we provide for our young people now."⁴⁶ Congress enacted this bill to improve the educational system at all levels and encourage students to continue education beyond high school through federal scholarship, loan programs, grants in science, mathematics, and modern languages, establishment of language institutes, expansion of graduate education, use of guidance counseling, further research and experimentation, and improved statistical services in state education agencies.⁴⁷ In creating this legislation for the benefit of the country and institutions of higher education, the federal government required that colleges and universities gain accreditation as part of their qualifications to participate in this program.⁴⁸

The new perception of accreditation as a solution, marked by the passage of the Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1952, and again in the National Defense Education Act of 1958, rested on three assumptions. First, the "nationally recognized accrediting agencies" existed and state governments could rely on them in its own approval of courses. Second, dependence upon private determinations of quality would solidify the role of regional and national accreditors in the eligibility

⁴⁶ Ibid., 2.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 1.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 26.

process. Last, the role of the Commissioner of Education remained ministerial as reflected in the language that merely directs the Commissioner to publish a list.⁴⁹

Thus the legislation of the 1950s defined this relationship between the Veterans Administration, the Office of Education, the states, and the voluntary accrediting associations. While the tie to federal funding only enhanced the standings of the accrediting agencies, especially the regional associations, this partnership nonetheless provided the foundation for current federal goals to increase federal regulation of accreditors. In the history of the North Central Association, the organization acknowledged that endorsement of regional associations came from both private and public agencies following this legislation. When the Ford Foundation made a half billion dollars available for grants to colleges and universities in the mid-1950s, the first stipulation required that applicants must gain accreditation. Other philanthropic organizations for the first time observed the same rules when funding schools. The endorsements for

⁴⁹ Finkin, 2. Bennett, 26.

accreditation increased as federal funds and private donations grew in the coming decades.⁵⁰

The readjustment benefits provided to servicemen following World War II marked a new era in federal cooperation and regulation of postsecondary institutions. The opportunities created for veterans allowed them to return to civilian life with the potential for even greater earnings than they had experienced prior to serving in the military. Many veterans that did not choose to utilize educational or vocational training, but managed to own homes, farms, or businesses through the support of the VA. Veterans of the Second World War found themselves not only appreciated, but rewarded for their service, an unprecedented development for soldiers in the United States.

Countless studies and discussions have considered the social and economic impact of the G.I. Bill on daily life in the United States, and some even examined the relationship between higher education and the federal government. Few, however, considered the increasing control of the federal government over higher education that resulted from the G.I. Bill and ensuing reenactments.

⁵⁰ Bennett, 27. Lewis G. Geiger, *Voluntary Accreditation* (Chicago: North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, 1970) 56.

The Veterans Readjustment Act of 1944 decidedly relied on state approving agencies in higher education, and even its subsequent legislation in 1952 recognized the need for separation between federal regulations and higher education. While the initial role for the Office of Education proved ministerial in nature, growing regulations and abuses within federal, state, and private oversight promoted increasing federal intervention in the accrediting process.

Federal funds made available to veterans returning from World War II changed the role of the federal government in higher education. The financial resources dedicated to readjustment into civilian life and the emphasis placed on higher education by the federal government demonstrated a belief in the value of education and an understanding that education encouraged economic improvements, social mobility, and greater consumerism. The millions of soldiers participating in the program also reinforced the role of higher education as one of the most accessible means to better economic conditions and social mobility. As a result of higher education's participation in the improvement of the economy and quality of life for many individuals, the federal government became increasingly involved in the services and opportunities

provided by these schools. No longer did colleges and universities serve only the economically advantaged, but provided a catalyst for many veterans to improve their standing in the economy and society.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Nose of the Camel in the Tent

The passage of the G.I. Bill substantially strengthened federal involvement in postsecondary education in the United States, a relationship that further expanded through the Higher Education Act of 1965. Through the latter measure the federal government increased assistance programs for veterans to all citizens with need and interest in the pursuit of further education. The newer legislation not only reflected the social goals of the era, but the federal government's increasing desire to foster higher education for all citizens. The 1960s solidified the role of education as a national resource for economic, military, and social improvements.

The influx of the baby-boomer generation entering colleges, universities, and vocational training in the mid-1960s characterized the decades to follow. Cameron Fincher, Director of the Institute for Higher Education from 1969 to 1999, stated that they "called national attention to student rights and privileges." He further

remarked that "baby boomers were not sent to college in order to break away from home as much as they were sent to become working, employed, contributing self-sufficient adults. Colleges were increasingly recognized as renewable public resources." The baby boomer generation challenged colleges and universities to continually restore capabilities and increasingly contribute to society in substantial ways. Not surprisingly, accreditation gained increasing importance as a means to ensure quality.¹

The 1960s marked an era of federal involvement in the extension of opportunities to previously unrecognized and underprivileged citizens. African Americans launched numerous demonstrations against discrimination and segregation. The 1957 creation of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, associated with Martin Luther King, provided leadership for many black students in the South. On February 1, 1960, four students at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College started a series of student sit-ins designed to end segregation at Southern lunch counters. As protests spread, more black students became involved and founded the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee in April of that year. These

¹ Cameron Fincher, interview by Delmer D. Dunn, 2002 "Institute of Higher Education: An Oral History (1964-2002)," Athens, Georgia: Institute of Higher Education, The University of Georgia: 5-6.

demonstrations provided the framework for which other college students would later protest the Vietnam War on campuses across the nation.

Meanwhile the transition to desegregation and the outbreak of anti-government activities proved difficult for many colleges and universities. Upon registration of the first black students at the University of Georgia and at the University of Mississippi, riots broke out. In 1962 the federal government intervened when the first black student, James Meredith, enrolled at the University of Mississippi under the protection of U.S. Marshals. Additionally, Students for a Democratic Society delivered its manifesto in its Port Huron Statement in 1962, and the free speech movement grew strong at the University of California Berkley in 1964. Following United States involvement in South Vietnam that same year, anti-Vietnam protests appeared on campuses across the country, including a conflict that temporarily closed Columbia University in the spring of 1968. The event presaged a cycle of violent confrontations between students and police that shaped campuses for the next decade. Students viewed colleges and universities as extensions of the federal agenda and used

campuses to express their distrust of federal government and disagreement with federal policies.²

While students demonstrated against the federal government, the United States continued its efforts to limit communist expansion. In addition to concern over the rights of the individual citizen and especially the underrepresented, the federal government, led by Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, focused on growing international and domestic pressures. The Cold War that began in 1945, followed by the Korean War, intensified as the Soviet Union developed nuclear weapons. The threat of nuclear war arose over incidents in communist Cuba and the effort to save South Vietnam from Communist rule. America's international policy proved a catalyst for increasing federal involvement in domestic issues such as funding for higher education.

This period of turbulence in foreign and domestic affairs led to some of the most important legislation of the century. Concern over Soviet expansion of its military spurred the United States to promote economic activity, along with a stronger emphasis on military preparation. In the area of domestic policy, President Lyndon Johnson's

² For further discussion of the 1960s, see David Burner's *Making Peace with the Sixties* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).

plan for improved domestic policy, called the "Great Society," sought to bring opportunities to the less privileged in the nation. Through this program, and with the impetus of Kennedy's assassination in 1963, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and a series of measures to aid education. The sum of these activities marked not only reactions to the issues of the day, but turning points in the relationship between the federal government and institutions of higher learning.

Following the reauthorization of the G.I. Bill in 1952 and the endorsement of the National Defense Education Act of 1958, federal interest in higher education continued to rise just as dependency on the voluntary accreditation process increased. Congress renewed the National Defense Act in 1964 as a reaction to advancements in the Soviet space program. The measure provided funding for low-income students to attend college and specialize in math, science, or other technical fields. The National Defense Act solidified the use of voluntary accreditation through its dependency on the same process previously established by the G.I. Bill. Likewise, the Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963, which created funding for educational facilities, used similar language and expanded the authority of the Commissioner of Education. Following this

law, Congress created an advisory committee to deliberate on institutions not eligible for accreditation by existing agencies, thus strengthening the federal government's dedication of national resources to supporting the role of voluntary accrediting agencies in the eligibility process.³

Congress took further steps to furnish aid to students, but each measure reflected the dependence of the government on voluntary accrediting agencies. The efforts of the federal government to expand funding for postsecondary education included: Health Profession Assistance Act of 1963, Vocational Education Act of 1963, Civil Rights Act of 1964, Nurses Training Act of 1964, State Technical Services Act of 1965, Higher Education Act of 1965, and the Allied Health Professions Act of 1966. Each bill added to the importance of the voluntary accrediting process and represented the growing role of postsecondary education in the federal agenda while expanding Johnson's Great Society.⁴

The Health Profession Assistance Act of 1963 offered loans to students pursuing degrees in health services and

³Michael Boone, "Lyndon Baines Johnson and the Presidential Election Campaign of 1964: A Case Study of Presidential Leadership for Education," (paper presented at the 1992 Conference of the Southern History of Education Society, Kennesaw State College, Marietta, Georgia, March 20, 1992), 8-10.

⁴Gene I. Maeroff, "After 20 years, educational programs are a solid legacy of Great Society," *New York Times*, September 30, 1985, late city final edition.

provided funds for the building or improvement of medical schools. Two years later, Congress also expanded the program to include grants for these students. The Nurse Training Act, passed in 1964, furnished aid for nursing students. The Allied Health Professions Personnel Act of 1966 made grants available to colleges and universities for improving undergraduate and graduate programs in medical technology, optometry, dental hygienist, radiology, medical records librarian, dietician, occupational therapy and physical therapy. Grants for programs at the two-year college level in similar areas under this program included x-ray technicians, medical records technicians, inhalation therapy, dental technicians, dental hygienists, dental assistants, ophthalmic assistants, occupational therapy assistants, and food service assistants. In each legislative act eligibility depended partially on nationally recognized accrediting agencies.⁵

Federal funding in vocational training also expanded during this period. The Vocational Education Act of 1963 provided grants for trade schools and financial assistance for students with disadvantages or special needs.

Amendments to the Vocational Education Act in 1968

⁵ Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 87th Cong., 1963, Vol. 19:194-196; Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 89th Cong., 1965, Vol. 21: 294-297 and 333-335.

established a specific budget for this area. The measure with its amendments increased the aid available to veterans and other citizens for vocational training in numerous fields.⁶

Johnson maintained that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 surpassed all his efforts in terms of importance. Almost one hundred years after the elimination of legal slavery in the United States, Congress passed a monumental bill to protect not only African Americans, but all citizens. This bill established that discrimination in the United States based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin with regard to public facilities, government or employment was illegal. The bill also authorized the U.S. Attorney General to bring suit against states allowing segregation in public schools. This law created a foundation for allowing all other education legislation to expand opportunities for a postsecondary education to the underprivileged and disenfranchised citizens. In addition, the measure empowered the federal government to withhold funds from any public institution that practiced discrimination. Since most colleges and universities received federal funding through education appropriations,

⁶ Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 89th Cong., 1965, Vol. 21: 294-297 and 333-335.

the threat of removal of these funds brought changes to the practices of these institutions.⁷

The Higher Education Act of 1965 followed the Civil Rights Act and served as a hallmark of President Johnson's Great Society. At the annual commencement exercise for the University of Michigan, in the midst of his campaign for the presidency, Johnson accepted an Honorary Doctor of Civil Law Degree. During this ceremony he gave his Great Society speech, detailing specific areas that he wished to improve. Johnson identified education, in particular, as an area where each year more than 100,000 high school graduates, with proven ability, could not enter college because they could not afford it. Hailing from a modest background, the president identified with young people in need of educational opportunities. He went on to state that poverty should not be a barrier to learning and that education offered an escape from poverty. At the dedication of the University of California at Irvine he returned to the subject after his election to the presidency in 1964.

You will not be alone. Education is a national need and I want to assure you that as long as I am President, the education of

⁷ U.S. Congress, House, Civil Rights Act of 1964, H.R.7152, 88th Congress, 2nd session, 1964.

your children is going to receive top priority by the men who lead your Nation.

All our hopes for peace depend on the kind of society we build here in the United States. And that, in turn---the kind of society we build---rests on our system of education. I do not intend for us to settle for an uneasy peace for the world, or an inferior society for America, or an inadequate education for our children.⁸

Francis Keppel assisted Johnson in expanding educational opportunities through federal policy. According to Keppel, senior lecturer at Harvard Graduate School of Education and the Commissioner of the Federal Office of Education under Johnson, "The legislation put the poor and the minorities on the educational agenda and kept them there. Until 1965, the focus was not on trying to adjust the schools to serve the needy, but on requiring the needy to adjust to the schools."⁹

Congress declared that the Higher Education Act sought to assist citizens in the solution of problems such as housing, poverty, government, recreation, employment, youth opportunities, transportation, health, and land use by enabling the Commissioner to make grants to strengthen programs in colleges and universities. The government appropriated \$25,000,000 for the fiscal year ending in June

⁸ Lyndon B. Johnson, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Lyndon B. Johnson, June 20, 1964* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1966); Boone, 13-14.

⁹ Maeroff, September 30, 1985.

1966 and another \$50,000,000 for the following year. The legislation included a provision to prohibit federal control of education by stating that "nothing contained in this Act shall be construed to authorize any department, agency, officer, or employee of the United States to exercise any direction, supervision, or control over the curriculum, program of instruction, administration, or personnel of any educational institution, or over the selection of library resources by any educational institution."¹⁰ HEA set up a system of financial aid for college students which provided \$267 million each year in aid in its initial appropriations. Federal spending in the 1960s on higher education had quadrupled in an effort to promote the building of the Great Society and doubled in the percentage of the gross domestic product.¹¹

¹⁰ U.S. House, Higher Education Act of 1965, H.R. 9567, 89th Congress, 1st Session, January 4, 1965, Sec. 101 and 804.

¹¹ U.S. Department of Education, *Digest of Education Statistics: 2005* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 2005), Table 25.

Table 4.1 Federal Expenditures on Higher Education
1959 - 1969

Year	Federal Expenditures on Colleges And Universities	Percent of gross Domestic Product
1959	\$5,601,000	1.1
1961	\$7,155,000	1.3
1963	\$9,178,000	1.5
1965	\$12,509,000	1.7
1967	\$16,481,000	2.0
1969	21,043,000	2.1

Source: U.S. Department of Education, *Digest of Education Statistics*, 2005.

The Higher Education Act sought to broaden opportunities to all citizens through postsecondary institutions. This statute established higher education programs that received federal funding, defined types of students and institutions eligible to participate, outlined procedures for distributing the funds, and set annual limits on federal spending for each program. Eligibility for federal dollars remained the most fundamental aspect to the relationship between the federal government and higher education.

Accredited institutions met minimum requirements to receive aid or enroll students that might receive aid. First, an institution satisfied general standards such as type, length of programs, and legal operating procedures.

Second, the college, university, or vocational school met any special requirements established by a program administrator. Finally, the school worked to achieve qualitative success, typically judged by the accreditation process.¹²

In particular, the Higher Education Act of 1965 increased the responsibilities and duties of the Office of Education. The G.I. Bill required oversight from the Veterans Administration, but little participation from the Commissioner of Education. The passage of HEA and the growing number of students and institutions reliant on federal aid augmented the Commissioner's authority. This act set forth the requirements that an institution needed to meet in order to receive funding. The HEA required that colleges and universities admit only students with a high school diploma or equivalent, provide programs authorized by the state and beyond the secondary education level, award a two-year or bachelor degree, be a public or a nonprofit institution, and be accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency. The legislation further allowed for the

¹² David A. Trivett, *Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility* (Washington, D.C.: The American Association of Higher Education, 1976), 5.

Commissioner to approve some unaccredited schools and publish a list of nationally recognized accrediting agencies. The Higher Education Act expanded the responsibilities of the Commissioner by allowing exceptions to the accreditation process.¹³

The number of students and degrees conferred continued to increase through the 1960s as federal appropriations to students soared. Enrollment almost doubled in the United States with the greatest increases occurring in public institutions due to the rise of community colleges. Degrees conferred tripled during this period. For the first time in 1967 over one million Americans graduated from a two-year, four-year, or graduate program.¹⁴

The Higher Education Act placed the Office of Education in a position of designating accrediting associations that required institutions to meet appropriate requirements, compiling that information, and listing those agencies or associations. As a result of the growing number of schools and accrediting associations and agencies, in 1968 the Commissioner established the Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility Staff (AIES) to serve as an advisory committee in regard to the

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ U.S. Department of Education, *Digest of Education Statistics: 2005* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 2005), Table 246.

effectiveness of accrediting agencies. This committee served "to advise the U.S. Commissioner of Education in fulfilling his statutory obligations to publish a list of nationally recognized accrediting agencies and associations which he determines to be reliable authorities concerning the quality of training offered by education institutions and programs."¹⁵ AIES also assisted in the publication of the agencies deemed reliable authorities concerning the quality of public postsecondary vocational training. The fifteen members of the committee represented educational institutions, various levels and types of accreditation, professional associations, state departments of education, the general public, and the student population and typically met four times a year to make recommendations to the Commissioner.¹⁶

According to the provisions set by Congress, AIES considered several criteria for institutional eligibility for federal funds. Thus, an institution's accreditation did not necessarily constitute eligibility for federal funding. Based on the HEA of 1965, the Commissioner or the

¹⁵ U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, Bureau of Higher and Continuing Education, Division of Eligibility and Agency Evaluation, Advisory Committee on Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility, *Annual Report 1976*, (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1976), iii.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

AIES examined seven requirements before determining eligibility of an institution in addition to accreditation. The first criterion simply required an institution enroll only high school graduates or the equivalent for admission. Second, every institution needed state authorization to offer postsecondary instruction. The AIES examined compliance of programs that might be part of baccalaureate degrees, six-month programs, or graduate studies. The public, private non-profit, private for-profit, or proprietary status of institution also determined eligibility. The advisory committee considered religious or sectarian exclusions, Civil Rights compliance, and, later, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act compliance.¹⁷

Traditionally the federal government relied on accreditation to verify the quality of an institution. Therefore, accrediting agencies provided all qualitative assessment of higher education. Some provisions enforced by AIES, however, allowed for non-accredited schools to

¹⁷ "The Federal Eligibility System as Administered by the Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility Staff, Office of Education, Office of Education," (proceedings of the National Invitational Conference on Institutional Eligibility, Arlington, Virginia, April 30 - May 2, 1975), 39-49; David Trivett, *Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility* (Washington, D.C.: The American Association for Higher Education, 1976), 5-6. FERPA, also known as the Buckley amendment, was passed in 1974 and called for, among other things, the withholding of federal funds from any institution denying parents or students, 18 years or older, access to student education records.

receive eligibility for federal funding. These exceptions allowed for a non-accredited school to be recognized by the federal government if three accredited colleges accepted its transfer of credit, an advisory committee for schools without access to a nationally recognized accrediting association granted interim approval, or, in some categories, recognition by state agencies. In none of these exceptions did the AIES directly consider the quality of an institution, despite the elimination of the appointed guardians of quality from the process. Thus, the federal government eliminated quality as a priority when eligibility requirements circumvented the accreditation process.

The establishment of institutional eligibility, a process still used today, relied on a tenuous relationship often described as a triad. The three parts of the arrangement consisted of the federal government, state government, and the accrediting agencies. Ideally the state initiated the process by establishing minimum legal and fiscal standards for operation of an institution. Federal laws created oversight for the state and for the accrediting agencies. Then the accrediting agencies provided a peer evaluation process that guaranteed the academic standards of the institution. Failure of any of

these components to follow through in their role compromised eligibility.¹⁸

At the same time, however, the triad placed limits on all three parties. The power of the federal government to influence education related to its ability to provide funds. If no institution accepted any federal money or enrolled students receiving federal money through loans, then federal regulations would have considerably less meaning. Likewise, states could have claimed any power not restricted to the federal government, which included regulation of higher education. The federal government's control over all commerce between the states, however, limited state authority. For their empowerment, private voluntary accrediting agencies depended on the participation of institutions, recognition by the states, adherence to public policy, institutional funding from the federal government, and public demand and expectations. If colleges and universities chose not to participate in accreditation, these agencies and associations held no place in the triad.¹⁹

Accreditation proved one of the most unique requirements in qualifying for federal funding. It was the

¹⁸Trivett, 7.

¹⁹Ibid., 7-9.

only component of the eligibility process that took place outside the jurisdiction of federal or state government. Recognition varied in style and substance from one region to the next and from one profession to another. As a result, the federal government failed to grasp the complexities of accreditation.

This process, while paving the pathway to further federal involvement in higher education, represented the traditional independence of colleges and universities. Higher education lacked any consistent system of government control and the states exercised widely varying amounts of authority in public institutions. Accreditors often argued that the voluntary method represented the most ideal and democratic of processes. Postsecondary schools considered peer evaluation the only acceptable method of quality assessment.

Since Congress required the Office of Education to determine qualitative aspects of institutions and programs before granting eligibility to them, the Commissioner depended on these voluntary accrediting organizations. Unless the Office of Education undertook efforts to develop its own system of quality assurance in higher education, no legitimate alternatives existed. Since the G.I. Bill and HEA did not provide for long term options in the

determination of qualifications, the federal government bound itself to accrediting agencies. The Commissioner declined to use any alternative means in establishing the eligibility of institutions.

During the 1960s the voluntary nature of participation changed. In 1968 the Office of Education defined accrediting as "the voluntary process whereby an agency or association grants public recognition to a school, institute, college, university, or specialized program of study that meets certain established qualifications and educational standards, as, determined through initial and periodic evaluations." Congress dropped the "voluntary" only six years later and the clause, "the use of accreditation to determine eligibility for government funds and other public benefits [had] lent an involuntary and public character to accrediting activities once regarded as an entirely 'voluntary' and 'private'" process.²⁰

Thus the 1960s marked one of the last eras of the perceived voluntary accrediting process. As schools submitted to increasing federal control in the hopes of acquiring funding from an expanding federal budget, they became vulnerable to federal intrusion and the

²⁰ Harold Orlans, *Private Accreditation and Public Eligibility* (Lexington, Mass: D.C. Heath and Company, 1975), 2.

accreditation system. Accrediting agencies lacked cohesiveness as regional agencies and national organizations confused university and college presidents by increasing their demands on institutions just as the government required more of the accreditors.

Kennedy's Commissioner of Education, Sterling M. McMurrin, described the era as a time of "providing federal funds for education enterprises that were of importance to the nation as a whole."²¹ No longer would higher education be a privilege to the educated hereditary class or even just for those who served their country in war. The creation of community college districts at taxpayer expense during the era indicated this trend.

The 1960s solidified higher education's role as a renewable resource used by all Americans for economic, military, and social improvements. President Dwight D. Eisenhower's Secretary of Agriculture and a veteran in agriculture aid, Ezra Taft Benson, had correctly noted the future of higher education when he expressed the danger inherent in additional aid packages maintaining that "Federal aid to education was a case of letting the camel get his nose under the tent; if we permitted it, the time

²¹ Stephen Chambers, "Is American Higher Education Knocking on the Door of Federal Control?" (paper presented at the Thirty-Fifth Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research, Boston, Massachusetts, AIR Forum Publications, 1995), 17.

would surely come when the whole camel would be inside the tent."²² The reactions to the Cold War, Vietnam, and the Civil Rights movement, combined with billions of dollars in federal appropriations for higher education, opened the door for the camel's intrusion.

²²Ibid., 13.

CHAPTER FIVE

"THE CONSCIENCE OF EDUCATION"

Turbulence rocked colleges and universities in the spring semester of 1970 when conflict on campuses across the nation reached its zenith. Higher education provided the most frequent venue for student protests against federal policy on the Vietnam War. On May 4, 1970, Ohio National Guardsmen killed four students at Kent State University following a protest against the Vietnam War. Not only did colleges and universities become the battlefield for federal involvement in Vietnam during this era, but also for federal policies concerning discrimination.¹

The Office of Education implemented congressionally mandated social policies in higher education during the 1970s. The decade marked still further expansion in the responsibilities of accrediting bodies and institutions of higher education owing to further federal funding programs.

¹ For further reading on the Kent State Massacre, see Scott Bills, *Kent State/ May 4: Echoes through a Decade* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1988) or Thomas R. Hensley, *The Kent State Incident: Impact of Judicial Process on Public Attitudes* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981).

Congress approved increased appropriations for postsecondary studies, along with its requirements of accrediting agencies and organizations.

To receive funding in the 1970s colleges and universities had to comply with federal requirements for eligibility. Thus, the accrediting agencies and schools gained comfort with more prescriptive standards in certification largely due to the increased financial tethering. As the number of accrediting bodies increased, questions arose surrounding the concern that accreditation would become a means to federal funding rather than a process designed to foster academic programs and promote quality. Accreditors feared, too, that new agencies or organizations typically found in professional fields would succumb to the monotony of establishing eligibility rather than promoting maturity and development in a particular field.

In 1969 the Office of Education published the first revision of the criteria for eligibility. Changes included the adoption of portions of the National Commission on Accrediting and required that an accrediting body must ensure due process or many opportunities for correction before removing an institution from accreditation, regularly review its standards, demonstrate fiscal

soundness, and define accreditation standings including a candidacy status. This status provided an official position for organizations waiting on accreditation in the private sector in hopes of gaining temporary eligibility with the government. Newly founded institutions accepted the conditions as they worked towards accreditation and gaining eligibility through the Office of Education. In response to these concerns, the Commissioner amended the requirements to include two years experience in accrediting a particular field.²

Following further regulations instituted by Congress in 1969, the Office of Education no longer limited itself to enforcing statutory requirements for eligibility, but started to act as an arbiter of accreditation practices. These new regulations ended the voluntary and private nature of the accrediting process used by most agencies. The Office of Education listed nationally recognized accrediting bodies and determined the essential components of a successful and appropriate accreditation agency or organization. This shift amounted to still more expansion of federal oversight.

² Kenneth E. Young, Charles M. Chambers, H.R. Kells, and Associates, *Understanding Accreditation: Contemporary Perspectives on Issues and Practices in Evaluating Educational Quality* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1983), 256-258.

Congress reauthorized the Higher Education Act in 1972 and added funding for specific programs. One program, referred to as Title IX, eliminated federal aid to any public college that discriminated against women. The provision provided that "no person in the United States may, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."³ The provision against sex discrimination resulted in a continued rise in the enrollment of women and, eventually, an increase in participation in women's sports.⁴

³ Senate Conference Report, *P.L. 92-381 Education Amendments of 1972*, 92nd Cong., 2nd sess., 1972, S. Rep. 92-798, 52-53.

⁴ U.S. Department of Education, *Digest of Education Statistics: 2005* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 2005), Table 188.

Table 5.1 Total Undergraduate Fall Enrollment in Degree-Granting Institutions, 1969-1979 in thousands

Year	Men Full Time	Male Part Time	Male Total	Female Full Time	Female Part Time	Female Total	% Male	% Female
1969	2,952	1,056	4,008	2,039	837	2,876	58.2	41.8
1970	3,097	1,157	4,254	2,183	939	3,122	57.7	42.3
1971	3,201	1,217	4,418	2,311	1,014	3,325	57.1	42.9
1972	3,121	1,308	4,429	2,367	1,145	3,512	55.8	44.2
1973	3,135	1,403	4,538	2,445	1,278	3,723	54.9	45.1
1974	3,191	1,574	4,765	2,535	1,498	4,033	54.2	45.8
1975	3,459	1,798	5,257	2,710	1,712	4,422	54.3	45.7
1976	3,242	1,660	4,902	2,788	1,739	4,527	52.0	48.0
1977	3,188	1,709	4,897	2,906	1,914	4,820	50.4	49.6
1978	3,072	1,694	4,766	2,895	2,030	4,925	49.2	50.8
1979	3,087	1,734	4,821	2,933	2,185	5,178	48.2	51.8

Source: Table 188, Digest of Education Statistics, 2000

Enrollment by part-time female students substantially increased until 1976 when they outnumbered their male counterparts. The number of full-time male students remained slightly greater than the female full-time population during most this period. By 1978, however, females represented a larger percentage of the student population in degree-granting institutions.⁵

Furthermore, the Higher Education Act of 1972 set forth new forms of funding for students. The law established the Basic Educational Opportunity Grants (BEOG). These grants later earned the name Pell Grants in

⁵ Ibid.

honor of Senator Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island, who supported education. While BEOG grants payments went directly to the student from the federal government, other funding required the distribution of individual financial aid offices at each institution. Campuses awarded Supplementary Grants, National Direct Student Loans, and College-Work Study.⁶

In the area of eligibility the amendments of 1972 set forth some additional changes. The Senate authorized the Commissioner to regulate and require "fiscal audit of lending institutions with regard to any funds obtained from a student borrower." Likewise, the legislation sought to establish "reasonable standards of financial responsibility and appropriate institutional capability for the administration of a student loan program." Additionally,

⁶ Chester E. Finn, Jr., "Federalism and the Universities: The Balance Shifts," *Change* (Winter 1975-1976): 26-27; Senate Conference Report, *P.L. 92-318 Education Amendments of 1972*, 92nd Cong., 2nd sess., 1972, S. Rep. 92-798, 8-13. BEOG grants allowed students at colleges and universities a basic grant of \$1,400 less the amount the student or family of the student could be expected to contribute to the cost of education. The value of the grant, however, could not exceed one half the actual cost of attendance. Colleges and universities did not administer BEOG like other federal student aid. Instead, schools relied on its distribution from the Office of Education directly to the student. The Office of Education created its own needs-analysis tables in order to distribute the funds. Congress established the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG) with an appropriation of \$170,000,000 for fiscal year 1972 and \$200,000,000 for the following three fiscal years. The legislation also included a maximum of \$1,500 per year and a total of \$4,000 in Educational Opportunity Grants during the undergraduate education. Furthermore, Congress established \$1.4 billion in the Insured Student Loan program with an increase of \$200 million each year for the following three years.

Congress granted the Commissioner the authority to implement "the limitation, suspension, or termination of the eligibility of the lender whenever the Commissioner has determined, after notice and opportunity for a hearing, that such institution has violated or failed to carry out any regulation prescribed under . . . Title IV."⁷ The amendments increased the administrative burden of eligibility and the opportunity for federal discretion under the direction of the Commissioner and, as a result, colleges and universities also felt the growing needs for more personnel, training, and expenditures in this area.

Until the 1970s, accrediting agencies had maintained a remarkable degree of influence over the procedures and requirements associated with federal money. Senator Pell, arguably the federal official with the most influence over education laws remarked, "There is a great deal of truth in the old adage, 'He who pays the piper calls the tune.'" Although Yale's Kingman Brewster retorted that Washington had adopted a "now that I have bought the button, I have a right to design the coat" approach to higher education.⁸ The expansion of regulations concerning federal financial

⁷ Senate Conference Report, *P.L. 92-318 Education Amendments of 1972*, 14-15.

⁸ Finn, 24.

aid began to limit the influence of accrediting agencies as institutions became even more reliant on federal dollars.

The amendments of 1972 also established the Student Loan Marketing Association (Sallie Mae) which created a secondary market for student loans and allowed public trading of these accounts. Under this program a federally established company bought student loans from colleges and universities and then sold them to investors. This process allowed Sallie Mae to provide financing to companies issuing student loans. For the Commissioner, Congress appropriated \$5,000,000 to establish the association.⁹

Two years later new requirements protected the rights of students and families in higher education. The Buckley Amendment, referred to as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), called for withholding federal funds from any postsecondary school denying parents or students, eighteen years or older, access to student education records. The Office of Education denied eligibility if institutions provided third parties with personally identifiable material in released records without the consent of the parent or student. As a result of these measures, schools found themselves vulnerable to lawsuits and in need of an enlarged staff to administer

⁹ Ibid., 15-16.

federally sponsored student aid.¹⁰ Other amendments in that year excluded social fraternities and sororities and other specified organizations from the Title IX section of the Education Amendments of 1972.¹¹

In May 1974 the *Boston Globe* ran a series of articles on malpractice in proprietary vocational schools. The newspaper revealed that twelve of the twenty-one institutions investigated received federal funds through approval by a national accrediting agency. The *Globe* reported that a number of schools failed to provide the expected training, that they enrolled students more than once in the same course, and that the schools did not withdraw students from classes when appropriate.¹² Their eligibility precipitated an investigation by the Office of Education.¹³

The abuses that plagued the funding of higher education proved no different than any other program of

¹⁰ House Committee on Education and Labor, *Hearings before the Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education*, 95th Congress, 1st session, August 2, 1977, pages 89-95. FERPA also included provisions for primary and secondary education.

¹¹ Senate Conference Report, *P.L. 93-568 White House Conference—Library and Information Services*, 93rd Cong., 2nd sess., 1972, S. Rep. 93-1409, 4. The YMCA, YWCA, Girl Scouts, Campfire Girls, and Boy Scouts were also included in this exclusion from Title IX regulations.

¹² Schools failed to remove students from courses even when the student had withdrawn from a class. This allowed the institution to maintain a higher level of attendance and keep federal money allowed for an artificially high level of credit hours.

¹³ David A. Trivett, *Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility* (Washington, D.C.: The American Association for Higher Education, 1976), 62.

such magnitude. Still, the affirmative action and student consumer movements of the 1960s and 1970s exacerbated the reactions to school abuses and led to numerous conflicts between students and institutions. So much so that regional accreditors adopted a statement claiming that matters of social policy, considered important by the government, should be handled by the government. Accrediting bodies argued that agencies could indeed testify to quality, but could not police or enforce federal social policy.¹⁴

Increasing concerns about civil rights, public accountability, and integrity of management characterized business, education, and politics of the 1970s, and higher education experienced increasing demands from the federal government as Title IV funds continued to expand. According to the *Federal Register*, Congress in 1974 expected accrediting bodies to be protectors of quality and reliability in postsecondary studies. The government implemented standards for accreditors to demonstrate ethical practice through nondiscrimination and equitable tuition refunds, encourage innovative programs, consider the concerns of a variety of constituents, and provide due

¹⁴ Young, *Understanding Accreditation*, 260.

process for institutions. The Commissioner no longer simply regulated education, but emerged as the "conscience of education."¹⁵

During the same year the Office of Education published an enlarged set of criteria and new definitions for nationally recognized accrediting agencies and associations. According to the *Federal Register*, accreditation meant, "the process whereby an agency or association grants public recognition to a school, institute, college, university, or specialized program of study which meets certain established qualifications and educational standards as determined through initial and periodic evaluations." Congress also defined the purpose of accreditation as a process "to provide a professional judgment as to the quality of the education institution or program(s) offered and to encourage continual improvement thereof."¹⁶ Only five years earlier, the Office of Education defined accrediting simply as a "voluntary process."¹⁷ In fact, the voluntary process relied upon by the federal government in the 1950s no longer existed. Instead, federal mandates and a large bureaucracy to

¹⁵ U.S. Congress, *Federal Register* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, August, 20, 1974), 30042-30043; Young, 259.

¹⁶ U.S. Congress, *Federal Register* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, August 20, 1974), 30042-30043.

¹⁷ U.S. Congress, *Federal Register* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, January 16, 1969), 643-644.

administer federally sponsored programs replaced that process.

Criteria for recognition by the Office of Education expanded during this period. For instance, the Commissioner no longer deemed qualified and experienced examiners acceptable, but enumerated more specific requirements in selecting participants to evaluate institutions or serve on decision-making committees within an accreditation agency. Likewise, expectations for the on-site evaluation increased through the addition of a qualitative self-analysis of the school and expanded the institutional participation by insisting on representatives from the college's administration, faculty, students, and governing body. The Office of Education compelled accreditors to account for "the rights, responsibilities, and interests of students, the general public, the academic, professional, or occupational fields involved, and institutions."¹⁸ Colleges and universities no longer simply joined in a voluntary effort to protect the reputation of higher education or promote the quality of various academic fields amongst peers, but banded together in an attempt to respond to the federal government,

¹⁸ U.S. Congress, *Federal Register* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, August 20, 1974), 30042-30043. By establishing more specific criteria for evaluators, Congress created yet another area of the accrediting process that could be regulated by the federal government.

students, and the general public as equally important constituents.

The Office of Education further defined requirements for accreditors to provide institutions with due process in the 1974 amendments. These standards included: discussion during on-site visits between the visiting team and members of the college community, a written report from the on-site visit, an opportunity for the institution to file supplemental materials in response to the on-site report, allowing for the withdrawal of accreditation only for cause, after review, or when an institution did allow reevaluation. Congress also included the creation and implementation of published rules for an appeals process in the 1974 amendments. This process included no changes in the accreditation status of a school until it completed the appeals process, the right to a hearing before the appeal body, and a written decision of the appeal body with a statement of specifics for the chief executive officer.¹⁹ Therefore, the Office of Education no longer simply listed recognized accrediting agencies, or even required the accrediting agencies to abide by federal policy, but mandated organizations implement federal protections and due process. Accreditors now enforced federal policy and

¹⁹ Ibid.

served, to some extent, as a judicial system for higher education. They also experienced a decrease of authority in determining qualifications for membership and had essentially lost all ability to remove an institution from eligibility except through the process set forth by the federal government.²⁰

In an effort to stem the tide of federal regulations regarding higher education, the National Commission on Accrediting (NCA) and the Federation of Regional Accrediting Commissions in Higher Education (FRACHE) combined to form the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) in 1975. The council sought to join traditional and vocational accrediting agencies and private and public organizations, as well as non-profit and for-profit schools in order to provide leadership in the accreditation process and maintain a position against further federal infiltration into that area.²¹ COPA served as a "balance wheel for accreditation" in its attempt to merge the interests of the public, general and specialized accrediting agencies, national associations, and institutions accredited by these organizations. The board identified five priorities for the organization: dealing

²⁰ Young, *Understanding Accreditation*, 260.

²¹ Harold Orlans, *Private Accreditation and Public Eligibility* (Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1975), 27.

with the problems associated with the proliferation of specialization; evaluating quality and measuring outcomes; coping with the role of federal and state government; developing a national program on accreditation; and selecting, training, and evaluating volunteers for the process.²²

COPA worked to limit the number of accrediting agencies through recognition of fewer specialized organizations and attempting to avoid multiple accrediting bodies in a given field. Despite these efforts by COPA, the Office of Education furthered the complications caused by the increasing numbers of accreditors through listing agencies that had not necessarily been recognized by a national organization such as COPA.

COPA increased awareness and information concerning the accreditation process. Through a series of newspapers and pamphlets concerning topics in legal issues, evaluation, and confidentiality, COPA served to educate and inform its constituents. The organization also promoted cooperation among institutional and programmatic accrediting agencies, created a network of designated accreditation liaisons from each institution, and developed

²² Kenneth E. Young, "New Pressures on Accreditation," *Journal of Higher Education* 50 (March-April 1979): 132-144.

tools to evaluate educational quality and measuring outcomes.²³

In 1976 Congress passed additional amendments in its reauthorization of the Higher Education Act and extended the program through September 30, 1982. In the new legislation, the federal government broadened the definition of an institution of higher education to include public or private non-profit institutions that "admit as regular students those beyond the age of compulsory school attendance in the state in which the institution is located," rather than simply high school graduates. The change provided an opportunity to recognize that states allowed students that had not completed the requirements for high school graduation to participate in various postsecondary education programs.²⁴

Furthermore, Congress required that institutions share information concerning student federal financial aid. Schools submitted semi-annual reports describing the number of loans in default for at least 120 days in some cases and 180 days in others. Institutions provided required information to prospective and enrolled students concerning

²³ Fred F. Harclerod, *Accreditation: History, Process, and Problems* (Washington, D.C.: American Association for Higher Education, 1980), 32-33.

²⁴ U.S. House, PL 94-482, Education Amendments of 1976, H.R. Conference Report 94-1701, *Congressional Record*, Volume 122, 94th congress, 2nd session, September 27, 1976, 28.

data on the availability and eligibility of student aid, the costs of attendance, the refund policy, and academic programs.²⁵ Congress required postsecondary schools to regularly notify a lender or insurer of loan information concerning the borrower's enrollment status and last known address.

Despite a Congressional investigation of financial aid irregularities, the Office of Education continued to endorse traditional accrediting bodies. The office maintained that these groups could still be relied upon if the Commissioner held the authority to determine their reliability not only on quality, but educational or institutional probity. The Commissioner defined probity to encompass all social action areas or anything else that constituted the integrity of the institution.²⁶ The efforts to include probity in the Commissioner's responsibilities proved the first challenge for the newly formed COPA. Through lobbying congressional members and gaining the support of administrators and faculty members, Congress did not allow the inclusion of integrity in consideration of eligibility. Instead, Congress authorized the Commissioner to "limit, suspend, or terminate" an institution's

²⁵ House Conference Report, *P.L. 94-482 Education Amendments of 1976*, 20.

²⁶ Young, *Understanding Accreditation*, 262-263.

participation when they lacked administrative control, financial capabilities, or needed an equitable refund policy.²⁷ Congress worked to eliminate abuses in postsecondary education funding while responding to the national organization of accrediting agencies.

At the same time Congress included provisions for felony penalties regarding illegal activities with federal financial student aid programs. The Higher Education Act of 1976 maintained, "[A]ny person convicted of embezzlement, fraud, theft, forgery in the program, and misdemeanor penalties for those supplying false information in connection with a determination of institutional eligibility or loan assignment" under the Guaranteed Student Loan Program.²⁸

As the number of accrediting bodies increased, so did the bureaucracy in governmental oversight of higher education.

²⁷ House Conference Report, *P.L. 94-482 Education Amendments of 1976*, 10 and 21.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 17.

Table 5.2 Recognized Accrediting Bodies for Colleges and Universities, 1952-1976

Year	Regional Accrediting Agencies	National Professional Accrediting Agencies	Other
1952	6	22	0
1969	6	30	1
1972	6	42	4
1976	6	53	12

Source: *Criteria and List of Recognized Accrediting Agencies 1952 and 1969* from the Federal Register and *The Annual Report of 1973 and 1977* from the Advisory Committee on Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility

The Office of Education re-organized the Accrediting and Institutional Eligibility Staff to the Division of Eligibility and Agency Evaluation. Under the leadership of Commissioner Ernest L. Boyer in 1978, the office went back to a strict constructionist interpretation of the responsibilities of the Commissioner. Boyer diligently worked to remove federal oversight in areas other than listing; he attempted to remove agencies from the list that had no direct involvement in an institution's eligibility status. These organizations lobbied Congress to put a stop to such actions and Boyer's efforts ceased.²⁹

In October of 1979 Congress continued an expansion of bureaucracy by creating the Department of Education. According to Congressional findings, the dispersion of

²⁹ Young, *Understanding Accreditation*, 266.

education programs across numerous federal agencies resulted in inconsistent policies relating to education. Likewise, they noted the lack of a single, full-time federal education official allowed for poor organization and inability to properly support education. Congress declared that the establishment of the Department helped ensure access to equal education opportunities for every individual, while increasing the accountability of federal education programs. Still, the legislation stated that "no provision of a program administered by the Secretary or by any other officer of the Department shall be construed to authorize the Secretary or any such officer to exercise any direction, supervision, or control over the curriculum, program of instruction, administration, or personnel of any educational institution, school, or school system, over any accrediting agency or association, or over the selection or content of library resources, textbooks, or other instructional materials by any educational institution or school system, except to the extent authorized by law." The establishment of the department, justified by protecting public interest, allowed for further oversight and intrusion into the halls of higher education.³⁰

³⁰ U.S. Senate, Committee on Governmental Affairs, *Legislative History of Public Law 96-88: Department of Education Organization Act, 96th Congress, 2nd session* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1980), 2-4; Trivett, 27.

As federal programs and bureaucracy expanded, funding to students for postsecondary opportunities followed.

Table 5.3 Federal Funding for Postsecondary Education 1965-1980 in millions of dollars

Year	Appropriated Federal Funds in dollars	Non-Federal Funds Generated by Legislation* in dollars	Total	% Of GDP
1965	1,197.5	23.7	1,221.2	1.7
1970	3,447.7	832.6	4,280.3	2.3
1975	7,644.0	1,403.4	9,047.4	2.4
1980	11,115.9	4,856.0	15,971.9	2.3

*This includes Federal Family Education Loans (Guaranteed Student Loans), Perkin Loans, Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnerships, and work study.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, *Digest of Education Statistics*, 2000 and 2005

Appropriations continued to increase in the 1970s, growing by over 100% from 1965 to 1970 and by almost the same percentage from 1970 to 1975. Congress followed the amendments to HEA with federal support for students across the nation.³¹

The 1970s marked a prosperous period for national funding in higher education. As the social goals of Congress found a vehicle in postsecondary institutions,

³¹ U.S. Department of Education, *Digest of Education Statistics: 2005* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 2005), Table 25; U.S. Department of Education, *Digest of Education Statistics: 2000* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 2000), Table 188.

appropriations flowed. With the responsibility of increasing Congressional money, the federal government and institutions of higher education shouldered the burden. The federal government increased its own bureaucracy creating the AIES, the Division of Eligibility and Agency Evaluation, and the Department of Education. Meanwhile the proliferation of specialized and national accrediting associations also continued. Congress required institutions to hire full-time employees to oversee the administration of student aid programs, manage refunds and disseminate information important to familiarizing students and families with their educational rights.³²

The symbiosis between higher education and the national government balanced the expansion of educational opportunities with needs of a previously underrepresented population. Colleges and universities, however, heavily relied on the federal appropriations for increased funding as well as direction in social and educational policy. The oversight and regulations that existed as a result of expanding federal funding augmented the authority of the Commissioner and solidified the position as the conscience of education. Institutions remained leery of further federal entanglements, but the lure of benefits from

³²House Conference Report, *P.L. 94-482 Education Amendments of 1976*, 21.

enrollment and funding growth proved stronger. The balanced approach that had worked in the accreditation process began to falter in the 1980s as enrollments declined, the economy stagnated, funding decreased, and regulations continued to expand.

CHAPTER SIX

"Get on with the Job"

The 1980s presented myriad challenges for institutions of higher learning. Double-digit inflation coupled with rising energy costs threatened the viability and security of many schools. The relationship between higher education and the federal government faltered just as funding and student enrollment waned. Financial support taken for granted in the 1950s became essential to survival three decades later. The mission of higher education, as determined by federal legislation, moved from providing education and training to a source of social welfare and mobility. Students came to expect not only an education, but financial aid and an experience to prepare them for success beyond college.

Following the peak of financial support for research in 1968, the federal government had reduced spending for infrastructure improvements on campuses, as well as phasing out assistance for graduate education. Direct funds for research, however, remained at high levels and grew

throughout the decade. Congressional members strove to keep research appropriations for their home states. Declining Pell Grants reduced student relief when tuition rates increased, all of which reinforced the importance of Stafford Loans. Yet, the public expectation rose for colleges and universities as students accumulated debt to pay for college.¹

A Carnegie Report released in 1982 sparked debate over the burdensome relationship between government and higher education. *The Control of the Campus* considered the new pressures of regulations on higher education and examined institutional governance and performance. The report recognized the concern over the decline of faculty participation in campus policy that seemed to create a void in leadership. The report challenged schools to closely monitor and assess their performance through specific academic standards. Likewise, the document supported the role of regional accrediting agencies in approving eligibility requirements for federal funding and noted that colleges and universities had little choice but to embrace the changes that determined eligibility for aid. The

¹ Roger L. Geiger, "The Ten Generations of American Higher Education," in *American Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century: Social, Political, and Economic Challenges*, ed. Philip G. Altbach, Robert O. Berdahl, and Patricia J. Gumpert (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 64.

Carnegie Foundation stated that institutions, for the most part, tolerated and recognized the need for federal regulations in order to expand opportunities for a diverse student population. The report further argued that postsecondary education, much like medicine, law, and business, seemed unwilling or unable to maintain high standards. It argued that as competition for money and students grew more intense, colleges might be less willing to impose specific principles on themselves. "Yet, if the integrity of higher education is to be preserved, the strengthening of regional accreditation is urgently required. If higher education cannot or will not regulate itself, then public agencies, commercial college guides for students, and the courts will move in to fill the void."²

Schools found more opportunities to criticize government oversight as federal incentives to cooperate expanded. In a publication reaffirming the college community's perspective on federal funding and eligibility requirements, Derek Bok, president of Harvard University, invoked Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter's commentary in 1957. The judge had explained that four essential freedoms remained in institutions: who teaches,

² Carnegie Foundation, *The Control of the Campus: A Report on the Governance of Higher Education* (Princeton, New Jersey: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1982), 3-7, 15-20, and 27.

who is taught, how it should be taught, and who is admitted. Bok argued against further legislative requirements and guidelines as a means for universities to gain compliance with federal regulations. Instead he supported incentives and subsidies for schools and students. He argued that most social and financial policies pertaining to higher education could have been implemented without tying student aid to federal requirements.³ Despite his observations, the enticements garnered widespread submission from university leaders.

The Regan Revolution brought changes in the upper levels of education. In 1981 Republicans gained control of the Senate for the first time in twenty-eight years. The well-established relationship between Senator Robert T. Stafford, Republican of Vermont, and Senator Claiborne Pell, Democrat from Rhode Island, remained strong during the shift in power. Pell had long served as chairman of the Labor and Human Resources Subcommittee on Education, Arts, and Humanities. With the new Republican majority in the Senate, Pell stepped down to become the ranking minority member while Senator Stafford ascended to chairman. When questioned about the change in leadership,

³ Derek C. Bok, "The Federal Government and the University," *Public Interest* (Winter 1980): 80-101.

Stafford joked, "We hardly noticed anything except now I have to be there when the meetings start," Stafford said, "and [Pell] can be a little late."⁴

Such congeniality between parties proved unusual in the Reagan years, but in their case it stimulated support for education. The similarity of two legislators' views on higher education encouraged consensus on education policy. They both vigorously opposed efforts to cut funds and fought a plan to roll all education programs into one large block grant to the states. "We try to get on with the job and not talk about it too much," said Pell, "we just worry about results."⁵

The Reagan Revolution ushered in an abridged role for government, but thanks to the efforts of Pell and Stafford federal funding remained in tact, though reduced. The administration did not alter this policy, but insisted on a decrease in federal spending. Such diminishment in federal funding (with the exception of the military) became a hallmark of the Reagan years and led to a decrease in government activity.

The new Administration focused on the scope of the federal role in the eligibility process. In response to a

⁴ Leslie Maitland Werner, "Washington Talk: Congress; Stafford and Pell, the New England Team," *The New York Times*, August 17, 1986, late city final edition.

⁵ Ibid.

new federal agenda promoting state's rights and concerns raised by the Carnegie Report, for example, Congress held hearings in 1983 on the reduction of federal requirements pertaining to the approval of accrediting agencies. When asked how to change the Higher Education Act to minimize federal involvement, Secretary of Education Terrel H. Bell replied, "I would possibly add to the statute in giving more direction to the Secretary. If I wanted to be certain as heads of the Department or a successor entity would come and go, I would give further statutory direction that would limit what you could require and what you could not require for approval to be on the accrediting list."⁶ He nonetheless supported federal oversight of the process when he maintained, "As long as we are going to be spending \$7 billion in higher education on the Federal level, we need to have some kind of quality assurance."⁷ Ernest I. Boyer, President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, agreed that further clarification on the intent of the eligibility process would be beneficial as the federal government sought to "figure out a means by which

⁶ U.S. House of Representatives, *Hearings before the Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education of the Committee on Education and Labor* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1984), 18.

⁷ *Ibid.*

we eliminate those who might be untrustworthy in handling Federal money.”⁸

Other testimony supported the role of regional accreditation in ensuring the quality of higher education while maintaining its separation from the policing efforts of the federal government. According to Gordon W. Sweet, Executive Director of Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, “We are at present holding colleges responsible for good management, not only of human resources, but of physical and financial resources as well.” He continued by stating “The most desirable consumer protection we can provide is to help insure that students receive a quality education and that institutions accurately describe to students the nature of the college and what is to be expected of both parties to the educational process.”⁹ Sweet reaffirmed that it “would be impossible for regional accrediting associations to become involved in the intricacies of enforcing the multitude of government regulations and guidelines.”¹⁰ He went on to state that “there are few in postsecondary education who would desire to see regional accrediting

⁸ Ibid., 23-24.

⁹ Ibid., 115.

¹⁰ Ibid., 116.

associations become a policing arm of government."¹¹ Few legislative amendments resulted from the hearings and minimal changes occurred in the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act in 1982 and 1986.

Stagnant enrollment concerned schools and defined the decade as much as changes in federal regulations and declining funds during the period. After 1975, student enrollment numbers ceased to grow and only marginally improved by 1995, rising by twenty percent.¹²

¹¹ Ibid., 116.

¹² Geiger, 64.

Table 6.1 Total Undergraduate Fall Enrollment in Degree-Granting Institutions, 1980-1989 in thousands

Year	Total Enrollment	Male Total	Female Total	% Male	% Female
1980	10,475	5,000	5,475	47.7	52.3
1981	10,755	5,109	5,646	47.5	52.5
1982	10,825	5,170	5,655	47.8	52.2
1983	10,846	5,158	5,688	47.6	52.4
1984	10,618	5,007	5,611	47.2	52.8
1985	10,597	4,962	5,635	46.8	53.2
1986	10,798	5,018	5,780	46.5	53.5
1987	11,046	5,068	5,978	45.9	54.1
1988	11,317	5,138	6,179	45.4	54.6
1989	11,743	5,311	6,432	45.2	54.8

Source: Table 188, *Digest of Education Statistics*, 2000

Declining birthrates had led to numerous predictions that college enrollment would drop during the period. Overall attendance at undergraduate institutions slowly climbed in the 1980s, however, with small setbacks in 1984 and 1985. Only after 1987 did colleges and universities experience a return to growth in student population. Female enrollment continued to increase compared to male enrollment except in the fall of 1982. Despite the

generally slower growth in attendance, attempts to promote gender equity showed significant progress by the end of the decade.¹³ In 1975 male students represented 55 percent of the student population, but, twenty years later females represented 55 percent.¹⁴

Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act in 1972 prohibited discrimination in educational programs. Title IX funding served as a catalyst for increases in female students during the 1980s. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) had initially opposed any ties between sports and Title IX, but the organization added women's championships and teams to its jurisdiction in 1981. Numerous court cases resulted in conflicting verdicts during the 1980s, and the application of Title IX to collegiate sports remained unresolved until *Brown v. Cohen* in 1997. This Supreme Court decision firmly established statistical criteria by which a college could demonstrate compliance with the law and included documentation of women's athletics. The application of Title IX to athletics thus became the acceptable norm during the 1980s. This federal requirement for eligibility

¹³ U.S. Department of Education, *Digest of Education Statistics: 2000* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 2000), Table 188.

¹⁴ Geiger, 64.

remained an important part in the attainment of gender equity in higher education.¹⁵

With the passage of Title IX came new controversies about federal involvement in higher education. Between 1972 and 1979 Congress and accrediting agencies provided little enforcement or showed serious concern about the new regulation. The only tests of the criteria during this period tended to be an examination of the number of sports teams for women and number of coaches. No discussion or demand for parity funding occurred regarding athletic departments. Women student-athletes noted markedly different funding in regards to uniforms, scholarships, facilities, lockers, travel, and recruiting. During this period, men's athletic grants-in-aid for all varsity sports included football, basketball, baseball, swimming, wrestling, tennis, gymnastics, lacrosse, water polo, and golf. By the end of the decade, the non-scholarship athlete in Division I programs became obsolete or a curious exception. Many of these sports were no longer regional sports or casual activities, but a means to a college education for many new male student-athletes.¹⁶

¹⁵ John R. Thelin, *History of American Higher Education* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2004), 347.

¹⁶ John R. Thelin, "Good Sports?" *The Journal of Higher Education* (July/August 2000): v. 71, no. 4, 391-393.

By 1980, before any significant implementation of the budget requirements to carry out Title IX, many institutions already eliminated some men's sports as a result of monetary constraints. The University of Colorado eliminated men's varsity baseball, swimming, wrestling, and tennis. Likewise, the University of Washington ended well established and nationally ranked programs in gymnastics and wrestling. School presidents and athletic directors proved reluctant to acknowledge that sports geared toward spectators had become decreasingly self-supportive. Therefore the arguments by many institutions regarding the budget constraints and burden of implementing Title IX demonstrated only a small fraction of the monetary issues athletic departments faced at the beginning of the 1980s. Budgets from 1977 demonstrated that schools made little efforts to support women's athletics with any monetary parity. Division I-A women's athletics programs averaged an annual budget of \$97,000 compared with a total athletic budget of \$3,003,000. In addition, men's teams had long benefited from receiving proceeds from mandatory student fees paid by both men and women. In fact, upon examination of revenue sources in NCAA Divisions I-AA, II, and III in

1977, established men's programs contributed less than 20 percent of the budget to operate women's programs.¹⁷

Academic leaders made several arguments against the need for Title IX and its expansion to include required reporting of athlete graduation rates and athletic budgets. The President of the American Council on Education, Robert Atwell, testified that the NCAA should be allowed to enact its own requirements to collect data regarding athlete academic performance and budgets. During the same period, the Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander defused a report from the Education Department that stated, "If the educational budgets of colleges and universities are covering intercollegiate athletic program deficits, then the academic program suffers and the academic program is the principal function of colleges and universities." Lamar wrote to Congress, "I believe it is not advisable for Congress to require institutions to report information on revenues and expenditures for intercollegiate athletics and athletic departments." While he concluded there was serious concern over financial integrity in intercollegiate athletics, college sports had little involvement with federal student aid dollars. Harvard President Derek Bok also argued that government intervention forced

¹⁷ Ibid., 393.

universities to "spend substantial sums complying with federal regulations. At times, these expenditures result from costly renovations to help the handicapped, or to equalize athletic opportunities among men and women, or to alter laboratories to conform to changing safety requirements." He went on to note, "More often, the burdens take the form of added staff and effort required to fill out forms, compile data, cope with onsite investigations, and meeting the many procedural requirements."¹⁸

Bok's argument was weakened by the inclusion of intercollegiate athletics, especially at the Division I-A level. Schools continued to buy out coaching contracts and spend exorbitant amounts in men's athletic programs. There appeared to be no shortage of private funds from boosters and donors for some program expenses, but none available for regulatory compliance. The rise of the full-time Sports Information Director to compile endless data on athletic performance also left little excuse for collecting information on budgets and academic performance. The legal and financial accountability required of athletic departments in the 1980s indicated a major shift in the relationship between the federal

¹⁸ Ibid., 397-399; Bok, 85.

government and higher education. Congress increasingly viewed colleges and universities as a mature industry with a sufficiently large and well-established enterprise able to comply with reporting requirements and regulations.¹⁹

Even though Title IX provided federal funding for the elimination of discrimination in institutions and athletic programs, other sources of federal aid diminished in the 1980s. In fact, federal aid, while continuing to increase in small amounts during the decade, did not keep pace with the rising costs of postsecondary education. According to Dolores Cross, President of New York State Higher Education Services, the cost of attending schools increased 12 to 26 percent from 1980 to 1985, while overall financial aid for higher education decreased 19 percent. The phasing out of Social Security benefits for education began in 1982, and many federal financial aid programs received no budget increases.²⁰

By 1983 significant economic recovery had occurred in the general economy, but the rising costs of education continued to burden many American families. Inflation dropped, the economy began to slightly rebound, and congressional appropriations for higher education followed.

¹⁹ Thelin, "Good Sports," 401.

²⁰ Dolores E. Cross, "How Student Financial Aid has become a Barrier to Education," *New York Times*, October 18, 1986, late city final edition.

Tax reductions initiated by Reagan assisted in the recovery of higher education, but failed to alleviate the strain on middle class families with college-aged dependents.

Escalating costs of college education, estimated at an annual average of \$3,600 for public colleges and \$6,200 in private colleges, exerted pressure on Congress to provide aid to middle class students. In 1978, the Middle Income Student Assistance Act extended eligibility for opportunity grants to students from families with incomes up to \$25,000. This cap marked a tremendous jump from the \$13,800 annual income required only two years earlier. All students, regardless of family income, now qualified for Guaranteed Student Loans, known as Stafford Loans. Thus the legislation made federal subsidies an entitlement for higher education and characterized the funding of student loans in the 1980s. The net effort changed primarily federal grants to federally guaranteed loans for students.²¹ Progressively more students relied on loans. In fact, the 1980-1981 academic year marked a record period totaling \$7.8 billion in guaranteed student loans.²²

²¹ Gene I. Maeroff, "Education Congress Tries to Compromise on Student Aid," *The New York Times*, June 3, 1980, late city final edition.

²² Joseph Michalak, "Education; Interest Rate Dip expected to Fuel a Dramatic Rise in Student Loans," *The New York Times*, September 6, 1983, late city final edition.

Table 6.2 Federal Education Expenses 1970-1989
in millions of dollars

Year	On-Budget Support	Guaranteed Student Loans	Total
1970	3,447.7	1,233.0	4,680.7
1975	7,489.2	4,598.0	12,087.2
1980	10,939.5	7,433.0	18,372.5
1981	12,084.8	5,597.0	17,681.8
1982	10,872.8	6,582.0	17,454.8
1983	10,753.4	7,520.0	18,273.4
1984	10,163.2	8,467.0	18,630.2
1985	10,956.5	8,142.0	19,098.5
1986	11,065.6	9,272.0	20,337.6
1987	10,077.5	10,380.0	20,457.5
1988	10,419.1	10,938.0	21,357.1
1989	13,014.3	10,826.0	23,840.3

Source: Office of Education Research and Improvement, *Federal Support for Education*, 1991, Table A.

During the 1980s the funding for higher education drastically differed from that of the previous decade. As a result of continued Congressional support, colleges and universities came to expect and rely upon increases in federal on-budget funding to accompany onerous governmental regulations of higher education.²³ On-budget appropriations included grants for programs and students. Unlike the rise in appropriations for higher education each year in the

²³ On-budget refers to programs that are included in the accounting of the federal deficit. Spending on programs with dedicated taxes is off-budget. The largest program that is off-budget is Social Security. Regan requested that Congress place strategic petroleum reserve spending off-budget in 1982. This action made the federal deficit to appear smaller.

1970s, the Reagan years experienced a peak in 1981 and declined for the remainder of the decade. During the contraction of financial support in the early part of the decade, non-federal funds generated by federally sponsored programs blossomed. These areas included guaranteed student loans, Perkins loans, income contingent loans, and supplemental educational opportunity grants. Each one continued to rise as more students qualified for participation in the student financial aid programs. Guaranteed Student Loans substantially increased. In fact, these loans represented almost 50 percent of total government support for education by 1988 and provided some relief to the middle class.²⁴

Therefore a shift from federally funded grants to loans marked the major change in student financial aid for the 1980s. Immediate results of this trend included greater federal funding through non-budgeted support that brought growth in college enrollment because loans allowed more students to attend schools. It gave them more options in determining which institution they might attend, and, not surprisingly, promoted growing consumer expectations for educational services.

²⁴ U.S. Department of Education, Office of Education Research and Improvement, *Federal Support for Education: Fiscal Years 1980-1991* (Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics, December 1991), 33.

Interest rates on student loans remained lower than commercial loan rates, which encouraged participation. The annual student loan volume jumped from approximately \$1.7 billion in 1977 to \$7.2 billion by 1981, as other federal funding for education declined.²⁵

As tuition, fees, room, and board increased, the level of federal funding failed to keep pace.²⁶

Table 6.3 Average Undergraduate Tuition, Fees, Room, and Board for Full-Time Students 1980-1989 in Dollars

Year	Tuition, Room, And Board for Public Institutions	Tuition, Room, And Board for 4 year Private Institutions	Tuition, Room, and Board for 2 year Public Institutions	Tuition Room, and Board for 2 year Private Institutions
1980	\$2,550	5,594	2,027	3,498
1981	2,871	6,330	2,224	3,953
1982	3,196	7,126	2,390	4,439
1983	3,433	7,759	2,534	4,851
1984	3,682	8,451	2,807	5,315
1985	3,859	9,228	2,981	5,789
1986	4,138	10,039	2,989	6,316
1987	4,403	10,659	3,066	6,988
1988	4,678	11,474	3,183	7,461
1989	4,975	12,284	3,299	8,147

Source: Table 319, *Digest of Education Statistics*, 2006

²⁵ Arthur M. Cohen, *The Shaping of American Higher Education: Emergency and Growth of the Contemporary System* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 403.

²⁶ U.S. Department of Education, *Digest of Education Statistics: 2006* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 2006), Table 319.

By the late 1980s grant money had fallen to 13 percent of the cost of attendance and veterans' aid and the college work-study programs dropped from 20 percent in 1975 to 2 percent. At the same time, loans increased from 7 percent of the total cost of attendance in 1975 to more than 15 percent in the early 1980s.²⁷ Students relied heavily on loans from the federal government to attend colleges and universities, so that postsecondary institutions found themselves reliant on federal funding through student participation in the program. With the loan program, however, schools faced additional regulations.

Few institutions argued, however, for their separation from national funding and oversight. A federal court ruled in 1984 that federal restrictions applied to a school even if it did not accept federal funding or student aid. After the Commissioner for Education issued a letter to each college and university in the nation requesting a formal signature as to the "assurance of compliance" that schools must adhere to Title IX and other civil rights statutes one college, Hillsdale located in Hillsdale, Michigan, sent the form back unsigned. The institution argued that since it did not accept direct aid from the federal government, it

²⁷ A. M. Hauptman, *The Tuition Dilemma* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institute, 1990), 12-13; Cohen, 403-404.

had no obligation to sign the form or divulge proprietary information. Not until two years later did the Office of Education discover that Grove City College in Pennsylvania also had not signed the assurance form. Hillsdale and Grove City escaped accusations of discrimination. In 1982 the Sixth Circuit Court found that Hillsdale did not have to sign the assurance form, but that federal rules still pertained to the school as a "recipient institution." This status applied to Hillsdale upon the discovery that some students had individual federal grants and loans. Two years later, the Supreme Court ruled in *Grove City College v. Bell* that the economic effect of direct and indirect assistance was indistinguishable and therefore the entire college was considered a "recipient institution." If a single student participated as an individual in the federal student aid system, the entire school must comply. In 1992 Hillsdale successfully raised \$1.4 million from private sources to replace federal student assistance.²⁸ These two institutions remained exceptions to the growing number of schools subject to regulations by accrediting agencies and the federal government.

²⁸ Stephen Chambers, "Is American Higher Education Knocking on the Door of Federal Control?" (paper presented at the Thirty-Fifth Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research, Boston, Massachusetts, AIR Forum Publications, 1995), 26-27.

The 1986 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act increased borrowing power for students and regulations for institutions. The bill raised the total amount students could borrow through loans, but required all student borrowers to demonstrate family financial need. Previously, regulations only applied to those families whose income exceeded \$30,000 per year. Expanded requirements for proof of eligibility placed an even greater burden on school financial aid offices as the paperwork for student loans mounted. For the first time, schools certified that they had programs to discourage drug abuse, another Reagan priority, for students qualifying for federal aid. The government also incorporated graduation rates and student loan default rates into the eligibility process.²⁹

Colleges and universities not only labored under the burden of student financial aid during the 1980s, but also the expectations of students and the public regarding resources and performance. Between 1976 and 1994, institutional expenditures per student climbed by 30 percent. In particular, per-student expenditures in four-year institutions rose by 34 percent while those in two-

²⁹ Leslie Maitland Werner, "Congress Nears Approval of New Student Aid Bill," *The New York Times*, September 24, 1986, late city final edition; Bill Hogan, "Financial Aid: Uncle Sam Changes the Rules," *The Washington Post*, August 9, 1987, Final Edition.

year schools grew by 18 percent. Public colleges and universities increased expenditures by 27 percent while private four-year schools augmented their spending by 40 percent for each student.

The anxiety of personal debt incurred by the costs of education made students and families demand more from colleges and universities. In order to remain competitive and attract a diverse student body, many private institutions made scholarships and fellowships more widely available. Meanwhile, the Higher Education Price Index (HEPI), set at 4 percentage points lower than the Consumer Price Index in 1960, had reached parity in 1966. In the early 1980s the HEPI was two points greater than the Consumer Price Index and seventeen points higher by 1994. Thus the costs of higher education rose more rapidly than the consumer prices during this period.³⁰

Other reasons for increased expenditures emerged from campus improvements in facilities and expanding academic and social resources to remain competitive. Large universities led the way with tremendous expansions in student life or on-campus activities for students. The 1980s witnessed the birth of the concept of an enriched student life experience. Colleges and universities worked

³⁰ Expenditures in constant 1994 dollars. Cohen, 405-406.

to create social, economic, and academic support for students. They sought to help students adjust to college, to improve study habits, to keep students enrolled in a program, and ultimately to boost graduation rates. Many universities found that just providing these resources failed to satisfy students, who wanted choices. For instance, many universities developed several options for room accommodations, such as themed dormitories for studying or participation in athletics. Another change marked a departure from the traditional dormitories for exclusively male or female to co-educational housing.³¹

As a result of their increased spending, schools initiated statistical tracking of student progress and expanded staff positions to support the campus life activities. The requirement to provide graduation data for accreditation purposes, combined with concerns in the retention of students and freshmen attrition rates, supported the expansion. This trend, coupled with increasing default rates by students failing to maintain satisfactory academic progress, led higher education institutions to devote more resources to keeping students once they entered a program. The decade further witnessed the rise of professional advising for students to navigate

³¹ Thelin, *History of American Higher Education*, 328-329.

through expanded curriculum offerings and requirements. Advisors also assisted students in applying for jobs following graduation. Colleges and universities opened teaching and learning centers (staffed by non-faculty members) to provide individual tutorials. This service also eased student transition to the pressures of college. These programs improved the chances for freshmen to continue their studies and overall graduation rates consequently improved. Assistance for students satisfied parental concerns, while bolstering retention.³²

These measures by colleges and universities helped to improve the use of federal financial aid and the efficiency of how institutions applied their own scholarship funds. Undergraduates dropping or failing courses and then re-enrolling in the same courses cost the university money by requiring increased course offerings and sections--potentially driving up the number of faculty and classrooms. Institutions also had to squander the aid appropriated to defray the cost of a particular course when the student had to take the course again. Universities found that they needed to increase course slots and classrooms for underachieving freshmen. As a result, schools spent more money in support services for students

³² Ibid., 329-330.

to enhance their chances of completing a college degree. Matriculation helped ensure a student's ability to obtain a job, thereby avoiding defaulting on student loans. Both graduation rates and default rates for individual institutions factored into the accreditation and eligibility processes. What had been left to chance in the 1950s was a matter of investment and survival for institutions by the 1980s. The mission of higher education, as determined by federal legislation, moved from providing education and training to a source of social welfare and mobility. Students came to expect not only an education, but an experience to prepare them for success beyond graduation.³³

Colleges and universities had seemingly traded places with big business during the twentieth century in the following respect. Institutions of higher education experienced tremendous regulations by the federal government, while private business enjoyed subsidies and incentives. The Regan administration also began the process of deregulating many industries. During President Theodore Roosevelt's trust-busting days in the early 1900s, postsecondary schools received exemptions from social security taxes, workmen's compensation, or even the

³³ Ibid., 330-337.

requirement to provide employees with clean drinking water. Following the Regan administration, however, eligibility requirements and procedures created bureaucracy and expense for postsecondary institutions and the federal government.³⁴ And the inflation and rising energy costs of the early 1980s impacted institutions as much as private business. Cautious federal funding and slow growth in enrollment exacerbated the problems.

Secretary Bell warned that despite efforts to curtail further federal influence in higher education, the future held no guarantees for the autonomy of higher education. In the hearings of 1983, he predicted that while schools, and not the federal government, controlled accrediting agencies, the Department of Education "could start to coerce if you had a Secretary of Education that decided that he would change that procedure, and he has broad discretion now to do that if he wants to."³⁵ His concerns came to fruition with the turn of the century.

³⁴ Nathan Glazer, "Regulating business and the universities: one problem or two?" *Public Interest* (Summer 1979): 43-66.

³⁵ U.S. House of Representatives, *Hearings before the Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education of the Committee on Education and Labor* (GPO: Washington, 1984), 18.

CHAPTER SEVEN

"Conspiracy against the Laity"

The continuous dedication of Congress to expanding opportunities in higher education propagated the problems that would plague colleges and universities during the 1990s and through the turn of the century. The Great Society that sought to provide equal access and equal opportunity for all underrepresented and underprivileged groups ultimately created an expansive bureaucracy in colleges and universities. This system ushered in a slow, sustained demise in the integrity of American higher education and the federal financial aid system. Politicians, academics, and the public grappled with the difficulties created by a growing bureaucracy that had accompanied the thrust for inclusion of all citizens for a college education. The last decade of the twentieth century foreshadowed the challenges to come for schools throughout the country as higher education tried to meet the demands of a new century.

The last push of the Great Society included the extension of civil rights to people with disabilities, which made colleges and universities face the challenge of costly upgrades to physical facilities. Likewise, schools expanded academic resources to satisfy a growing student population with special needs. Greater requirements for personnel, training, and specialized technology to assist these students burdened the budgets and resources of many schools. In response to the escalating needs of disabled students, institutions created partnerships with private industry in the development of learning technology to allow fulfillment of student and public expectations for accommodations.

In addition to the Higher Education Act of 1992, Congress passed stringent new requirements for institutions to maintain eligibility for federal aid. The Student Right-To-Know and Campus Security Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act expanded the personnel and reporting necessary to prove compliance for eligibility in the federal financial aid program.¹ The Student Right-To-Know and Campus Security Act demonstrated growing concerns among citizens, educators, and public officials regarding

¹ The Student Right-To-Know Act was also known as the Student Athlete Right-To-Know Act.

academic performance of student-athletes in higher education. While acknowledging that the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) had instituted eligibility standards for incoming freshmen, Congress complained that the rules did not impact current freshmen or sophomores with less than a passing grade point average. The federal government also maintained that prospective students should be informed about the education commitments an institution made to its athletes, as well as graduation rates. Therefore Congress mandated that schools submit separate annual reports in basketball, football, baseball, cross country/track, ice hockey, and then a final report combining data on all other sports at the institution. Information in the documents included the number of students at the institution by race and sex, graduation rates for students receiving athletically related student aid in basketball and football, and graduation rates for the general student population by race and sex. The Secretary of Education then compiled data and published a report containing the information.²

The new law further required colleges and universities to report annually on issues concerning campus safety.

² U.S. House of Representatives, *Student Athlete Right-To-Know Act*, 101st Cong., 2nd sess., March 15, 1989, Sec. 101 and 103.

Institutions now had to prepare, publish, and distribute to all enrolled students and employees, as well as any applicant for enrollment, a report containing campus policies on reporting criminal actions, security of campus facilities, housing security, and statistics for the occurrence of murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, and arson on campus. School administrators also recorded and made available arrest statistics for liquor law violations, drug abuse violations, vandalism, weapons possessions, and disorderly conduct.³

Colleges and universities had long sought to preserve the safety of students on campus, but the expectation that negative publicity might impact enrollment and retention often caused institutions to conceal crime statistics. While many institutions already implemented safety policies prior to the passage of the Student Right-To-Know and Campus Security Act, schools that had not reported crimes soon followed suit. As a result, the legislation drew significant attention to campus crimes. D. Joseph Griffin, Director of Public Safety at Northeastern University in Boston and President of the International Association of

³ Ibid., Sec. 203.

Campus Law Enforcement Administrators argued in favor of the policy, "Because this way everyone understands what the policies are and what they are intended to do. If more people are able to recognize what is going on in their environments, the better off they will be."⁴ Griffin noticed initial reluctance from institutions because of traditional concerns for lowered enrollment and a lack of uniform participation across academics.⁵ Some campus security administrators complied with the law, but remained nonetheless disgruntled with the scope of it. "The intent of the act is positive," maintained John Megerson, District Director of Security for Miami-Dade Community College, "but publishing a report will not reduce crime, it will just cause an increase in paper flow."⁶ He went on to argue that the reporting process was quite expensive for institutions. "The legislature imposed the law without funding it. Schools will wind up spending money on the reports that might have otherwise been spent on actual crime prevention."⁷

The expense of the legislation proved detrimental to compliance. According to William E. Whitman, Director at

⁴ Judy Sutton, "Getting into the Act," *American School and University* 65 (February 1993): 36B.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

the Campus Safety and Security Institute in Thorndale, Pennsylvania, the majority of problems seemed to rest with small, private schools. Not only did expense deter compliance, but Whitman postured that small, private institutions thought "that if information gets out, they'll be seen as no different from non-denominational schools, and therefore they may be criticized for not doing their jobs or be frowned upon by the churches."⁸ Colleges and universities nonetheless witnessed an escalation in federal requirements for maintaining campus safety in order to remain eligible for federal funding.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 raised the expectations for higher education. Prior to 1973, the only federal law that provided protection for persons with disabilities was the fourteenth amendment. The 1990 law required that States provide equal protection of persons within their jurisdictions and give due process whenever state action could adversely affect life, liberty, or property. Not until the passage of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 did Congress stipulate that no person could be denied participation in, benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination due to disability under any

⁸ Ibid.

program receiving financial assistance.⁹ By these standards, all schools enrolling recipients of federal financial aid fell under this mandate. In response to the Rehabilitation Act, colleges had to file an assurance of compliance, provide notice to participants, assign a specific employee to coordinate compliance, conduct a self-evaluation, and voluntarily correct any limitations for disabled persons. Increasing legislation and the rising expense of compliance continued for institutions across the country.¹⁰

In 1990 Congress expanded the Rehabilitation Act requirements with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The law prohibited all public entities from denying qualified persons with disabilities the right to participate in or benefit from their services, programs, or activities, and from subjecting such individuals to discrimination due to a disability. Enforcement of the legislation rested with the Office for Civil Rights. Title III of the ADA prohibited entities that operated places of public accommodation from discriminating against persons with disabilities by denying them full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services,

⁹ Rehabilitation Act of 1973

¹⁰ Stephen B. Thomas, "College Students and Disability Law," *Journal of Special Education* 33.4 (Winter 2000): 248.

facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations they provide. Private colleges, including non-recipient institutions, had to comply since they operated places for public use. In the case of Title III, the Department of Justice had responsibility for enforcement and oversight.¹¹ As a result, not only public entities or all recipients of federal funding, but all private recipients and even private non-recipients of federal aid had to act in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Table 7.1 Federal Laws Requiring Accommodations for Americans with Disabilities

Federal Law	Compliance By Public Recipient Required	Compliance By Public Non-Recipient Required	Compliance By Private Recipient Required	Compliance By Private Non-Recipient Required
Fourteenth Amendment	Yes	Yes	No	No
Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504	Yes	No	Yes	No
Americans with Disabilities Act Title II	Yes	Yes	No	No
Americans with Disabilities Act Title III	No	No	Yes	Yes

Source: Stephen B. Thomas, "College Students and Disability Law," 248.

¹¹ U.S. Congress, *Americans With Disabilities Act*, 1990; Stephen B. Thomas, "College Students and Disability Law," *Journal of Special Education* (Winter 2000): 248.

Before 1990 access to higher education consisted of admissions, financing, and, to some extent, social support of students belonging to disadvantaged groups. Previously schools focused on providing access for people from a particular race, ethnicity, or class, which made enrollment of the disabled a lesser priority. New legislation during the decade pushed schools to make campuses physically accessible to disabled students and to provide employee trained personnel to work with them.

During the decade, more students with a documented disability attended college. This trend resulted from increased testing and diagnoses of physical and mental disabilities. In 1996, 140,142 freshmen, representing 9 percent of the total freshmen population, reported having a disability. The number of students climbed substantially from the 1978 figure of almost 3 percent.¹² Enrollment of students in colleges and universities had clearly demonstrated the usefulness of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. With the approval of ADA in 1990, however, institutions that had made little or no progress in making buildings and programs accessible renewed their efforts. An emboldened interest in helping students resulted from the proliferation of students requesting such services, as

¹² Thomas, 248.

well as an increase in the number of administrative appeals and lawsuits.¹³

Despite advances in the physical accessibility of colleges and universities, new demands for technology caused institutions to fall behind, once again, in providing disabled students with services. As campuses became reliant on the Internet during the 1990s, technology ushered in new requirements for assistive tools. Assistive technology consisted of information and media oriented equipment designed specifically for communication with disabled individuals. According to Maria Roll, Director of the Assistive Technology Resource Center at Colorado State University, "In higher education, access problems tend to revolve around the computer. Typically, disabled students have their mobility issues worked out."¹⁴

The growth of students recognized by physicians to have learning disabilities created new challenges for higher education. Over 35 percent of the freshmen who reported to have a disability in 1996 purported to possess a learning disability. This figure represented an increase from just under 25 percent in 1991. Since the

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ronald Roach, "Assistive Technology Comes Into Focus: With the Push from Federal Legislation, Colleges and Universities Enhance Learning for the Disabled," *Black Issues in Higher Education* 19.11 (July 18, 2002): 21.

Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which first addressed disability issues, professors resisted instruction methods, particularly if such modifications came about to accommodate a student with a mental, rather than a physical disability. Most teaching techniques required students to meet a set of specific requirements, within the same time period and in the same way, and did not address individual needs of students or identify appropriate, fair, and reasonable accommodations for taking tests.¹⁵

In response to the growing requirements by the federal government to meet the needs of disabled students, many colleges and universities established Student Disability Services or similar administrative units. These groups typically reviewed documentation provided by students and determined the eligibility of a student for appropriate accommodations. These offices, however, usually remained inadequately funded and seldom had experts on staff knowledgeable about the wide range of disabilities that schools encountered.¹⁶

Further changes in the accommodations for students with disabilities included the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. This legislation proscribed increased standards for

¹⁵ Thomas, 248.

¹⁶ Ibid.

six areas of technology: software applications and operating systems, web-based information or applications, telecommunication products, video or multimedia products, information appliances like fax machines or kiosks, and desktop or portable computers. While larger institutions gained experience during the 1980s in making hardware and physical resources accessible to students, small private schools remained much less experienced with creating web sites that could be interpreted for the disabled by special devices. According to campus technology specialists, the decentralized web publishing in higher education presented significant obstacles for schools attempting to make sites accessible to students. Typically, institutions allowed web development through individual faculty members or departments with little oversight and without the standardization necessary to apply equipment, such as screen readers, for the students. Not only hindered by a lack of experience in applying assistive technology, schools and colleges suffered shortages in personnel with experience to implement such tools and coordinate them with disability officers.¹⁷

Some schools found new solutions to the financially burdensome responsibilities of providing accommodations for

¹⁷ Roach, 22.

disabled students by distinguishing themselves in technology research for the disabled. For example, the University of Pittsburgh developed strong ties to the wheelchair industry through its research. California State University at Northridge established a Center on Disabilities and sponsored annual conferences on Technology and Persons with Disabilities. In the meantime, George Mason University launched educational programs and services for the disabled and the people that worked with them. The school's Helen A. Keller Institute for Human Disabilities created products, services, and programs for the disabled. The University also worked closely with other Virginia schools to train staff and provide expertise on disability issues.¹⁸

The reauthorization of the Higher Education Act in 1992 served as another important development in postsecondary education. The passage of the legislation did not change the debate around eligibility for colleges and universities nearly as much as the controversies surrounding drafts of the 1992 law. For the first time, Congress required specific structure, operating procedures, and standards for accrediting agencies, which further limited the independence of these voluntary associations.

¹⁸ Ibid., 21.

Meanwhile, the ever growing federal financial aid efforts to increase educational opportunities brought scandal to the field of higher education.

Student loan default rates prompted congressional concerns about the education eligibility process. According to David A. Longanecker, Assistant Secretary of Education for Postsecondary Education during reauthorization, politicians and the public equated high default rates with poor educational quality. After all, the government and public had benefited from previous measures like the G.I. Bill and the public bore the burden of paying for students that failed to repay loans. In some cases Congress had recognized programs, typically at private for-profit institutions, that failed to provide meaningful education with short terms or others longer than necessary for students to obtain a job or a license in a particular field. The availability of federal loans to students in such programs often resulted in the growth of default rates. The Senate identified schools with unacceptable completion rates, as well as institutions that claimed to prepare students for employment in a specific field without adequate job placement rates to support such assertions.¹⁹

¹⁹ Michael Winerip, "Billions for School are Lost in Fraud, Waste, and Abuse," *New York Times* (February 2, 1994).

Following several hearings on abuses in higher education funding, Senator Sam Nunn, a Democrat from Georgia and chairman of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations noted, "Some of the biggest abuses with the Pell grant program are being perpetrated not so much by dishonest students, but dishonest schools."²⁰ The 1990 Senate hearings on federal student-aid abuses centered on the American Career Training Corporation (ACT), a residential and correspondence school based in Pompano Beach, Florida. The school trained travel agents and secretaries. Students, employees, and investigators testified that the institution's owners primarily sought to maximize federal student loan revenue. The school employed twenty-three instructors, seventy loan processors, and 109 commissioned salespeople. School personnel often recruited interested students amongst people visiting the welfare and food stamp offices, knowing they would seek and qualify for federal benefits. Before qualifying for federal loans, ACT lost \$91,000 one year. The three years after their accreditation, the school collected \$46 million in federal loan money each year for approximately 18,000 students. Unfortunately, only 10 to 20 percent of ACT students actually found jobs in their fields. Owners Joseph

²⁰ Ibid.

Calareso and James Calareso also paid themselves over one million dollars in salaries each year. When the guaranteed student loans came due, regulators could not find a significant percentage of the students because many loan forms listed incorrect or fanciful addresses, like "403 Cant Read, Pritchard, Alabama."²¹ Four years later, the school lost the required state license to operate and the case still produced no charges filed by an overwhelmed and backlogged Department of Education.²²

Many postsecondary institutions also received scrutiny during Senate hearings concerning financial aid abuses. For instance, an administrator in the highly successful University of Miami's athletic department, Anthony Russell, falsified Pell grant applications worth \$220,000 and spent the money on an almost two hundred dollar a day drug habit. Russell pleaded guilty to federal fraud charges and sixty-three student athletes performed community service projects for their role in falsifying applications. In another instance, Gerardo Tirado Torres, owner of Advanced Business College in Puerto Rico, and his administrators used the school's federal identification number to make at least seven improper Pell grant withdrawals totaling \$3.3 million

²¹ Ibid.

²² David Conyers, "Miami", *St. Petersburg Times (Florida)*, (April 27, 1990), City Edition.

and then bought several Mercedes-Benz cars, a Volvo, a Peugeot, several businesses and real estate. Miguel Predes, owner of Michigan Paraprofessional Training Institute, used some of the institution's \$1.1 million in Pell and loan money to travel to Miami, Mexico, and Europe.²³

Fraud against the government and public also occurred in other types of schools. In 1994 federal prosecutors investigated two dozen Jewish religious schools in New York. At the Senate hearings critics decried these institutions as "Pell mills" that siphoned off student-aid revenue to pay for the Orthodox Hasidic sects' religious operations in the United States and Israel. These examples convinced Senate members that fraud and abuse existed in all sectors of higher education financial aid. Likewise, testimony by students from colleges and universities revealed more benign forms of fraud in shortened periods of instruction, the low priority afforded to teaching in some institutions, and the indifference by some faculty to student outcomes. Debates following the Senate hearings allowed accreditors to maintain a gate-keeping role to

²³ Winerip, February 2, 1994.

federal funds, but at a price of greater regulation of the accrediting agencies.²⁴

Traditionally, accreditors assessed the quality of education in schools. The Higher Education Act of 1992 expanded this requirement under the Program Integrity Triad section of the new law. The effort mirrored governmental actions following the Vietnam War and Watergate scandal designed to restore accountability. Congress mandated that accrediting agencies have standards with reliable indicators of educational quality in each of the following areas: curriculum, faculty, student services, finances, facilities and equipment, advertising, refunds, and delivery of instructional programs as described in catalogs. The law additionally compelled accreditation agencies to implement standards requiring institutions to demonstrate attainment of learning outcomes to gain approval. Previous laws had only obligated accrediting agencies to review outcomes in the process of accreditation.

Most organizations viewed examination of outcomes as a useful antidote in measuring educational quality at a school, but the new law placed even greater emphasis on student outcomes as a measure of accountability. The

²⁴ Ibid.

regulations did not specify the content of outcome standards, but the law emphasized the use of outcomes in determination of an institution's ability to receive federal funds. As a result, Congress solidified the role of student learning outcomes in measuring educational quality for the purpose of accreditation. The lack of specificity regarding what the measures should include, how they should be judged, and the level of attainment to be expected from institutions remained a point of contention between the government and accrediting agencies and among academics for the following decades.²⁵

The Higher Education Act of 1992 moved beyond traditional requirements to include some specific measures to prevent abuse in student federal financial aid. The statute directed accrediting agencies to consider default rates, Title IV compliance, tuition and fees, and the number of clock hours required to receive credit hours counted towards graduation. Importantly, the act authorized unannounced inspections of for-profit schools.²⁶

The creation of State Postsecondary Review Entities (SPRE) also illustrated the demand to examine financial aid programs and prevent exploitation of federal funding.

²⁵ Public Law 102-325, 102nd congress, 2nd session, Jan. 3, 1992, 194-204; David Longanecker, "The New Federal Focus on Accreditation," *Academe* (July-August 1994): 13-15.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

States established such organizations and reviewed each postsecondary education institution with high default rates. Most colleges and universities viewed these agencies as further usurpation of government in higher education and failed to take into account that these agencies sought to deal with only the worst default loan situations and not every institution in a given state. Succeeding Congresses did not fund SPREs, but the inclusion of such an organization in the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act indicated even further expectations that accreditors fully participate in implementing government standards. Congress continued to create government agencies to complete the task.²⁷

The role of the accrediting organizations shifted further from a voluntary peer-review system to a more quasi-governmental function. The agencies had become an arm of the federal government in determining compliance with federal regulations. Subsequently, higher education sought new representation in the accreditation process after the debates surrounding the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act in 1992. Following the union of the Federation of Regional Accrediting Commissions of Higher Education and the National Commission on Accrediting in

²⁷ Public Law 102-325, 102nd congress, 2nd session, Jan. 3, 1992, 194-204

1974, institutions formed the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA). Institutional leaders established the new agency with the purpose of promoting and ensuring the quality of the accreditation process. Tensions among members regarding the accrediting standards in the Higher Education Act of 1992 forced the dissolution of COPA the next year.²⁸

Following the controversies surrounding the passage of the Higher Education Act in 1992, colleges and universities reacted by blaming COPA and non-degree granting, for-profit schools. Most institutions argued that vocational and technical schools alone caused most financial aid fraud and high default rates. Educators also blamed COPA's ineffectiveness in communicating the importance of accreditation to Congress. Colleges and universities hoped to distance themselves from high default rates and for-profit schools that damaged the reputation of accreditation and its ability to assure quality. Initially, academic leadership established the Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation (CORPA) to continue the recognition of accrediting agencies on a provisional basis. A temporary organization, CORPA became the nucleus of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

²⁸ Longanecker, 15.

In 1996, CHEA organized to coordinate the accreditation process.²⁹ The group played a vital role in facing a period of rapid transformation according to Stanley O. Ikenberry, the tenth President of the American Council on Education. "We are in a period of extraordinary change, not just on our campuses, but in the society at large. The forces are economic, technological, and social, and they touch us all. As a result, we are being asked to rethink many of the basic assumptions on which higher education has operated for years."³⁰

Federal mandates of the 1990s challenged the resources and abilities of higher education. Lengthened reporting requirements on students, campus crimes, and the availability of accommodations for students resulted in greater costs, training, and personnel to cope with the demands of the federal financial aid system. At the end of the decade, not only did pressures from Congress dishearten higher education, but the fraud and corruption revealed to the public left the academy crestfallen. Thus, an internal struggle began in an effort to restore the reputation of colleges and universities. The culmination of these efforts produced a new branch of leadership and

²⁹ Robert Glidden, "Accreditation at a Crossroads," *The Education Record* (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education), 1.

³⁰ Wendy Bresler, "ACE's New President: The Challenge Is Change," *Education Record* V. 77, No. 4 (Fall 1996), 7.

representation for schools in the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. The strength of this organization provided the foundation for institutions to meet the ever-expanding requirements of the federal government in the twenty-first century. George Bernard Shaw once stated that "all professions are conspiracies against the laity."³¹ Economic, social, and political forces mandated that accreditors protect the public interest as much as they served the academy.

³¹ Ralph A. Wolff, "The Challenges Facing Accreditation," *The Chronicle of Education* (1993), 4; Stephen Chambers, "Is American Higher Education Knocking on the Door of Federal Control?" paper presented at the Thirty-Fifth Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research (Boston, Massachusetts: AIR Forum Publications, 1995), 13.

CHAPTER EIGHT

"The Era of Enron, The Era of Disclosure"

The George W. Bush Administration ushered in a period of crisis for the American academy. Decades of unfettered intrusion from the federal government in the accreditation process culminated in the establishment of the Future of Education Commission in 2005. Under the leadership of Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings, the federal government pushed for more specific standards by accreditors.

The assault on the academy did not go unnoticed. Mark G. Yudof, Chancellor of the University of Texas system warned, "This is the era of Enron, this is the era of disclosure." The administrator concluded the additional federal scrutiny created a tipping point. "This wave has already come over the public schools," Yudof noted, "and now its coming over higher education. Either you help to

shape this accountability revolution so it's done in an intelligent way, or you're going to get run over."¹

In 2002 leaders in postsecondary education grew concerned following the release of the Department of Education's strategic plan. Upon entering office, Bush sought to fulfill his campaign promises and pressed for increased accountability in education. Building on his gubernatorial success, he started with primary and secondary schools. The Texan built on the 1992 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act in which the Department had already added proof of "success with respect to student achievement" as a requirement for accrediting agencies. This addition to the policy demanded that accreditors consider course completion rates, state-licensing exam results, and job placement patterns. The change typified a pattern of increased federal involvement in the accreditation process and demands for concrete measurements of quality.²

Academics, aware of the shifting winds, worked to develop better measures of student achievement in response

¹ Stephen Burd, "Bush's Next Target," *Chronicle of Higher Education* (July 11, 2003).

² As Governor of Texas, Bush received widespread praise for his efforts to provide additional oversight to public schools. His measures found support from both parties and helped make him a national figure. Ironically, the issue that proved successful and without critics at a state level, found opposition at the on the federal level from postsecondary professionals who believed the measures ill-suited.

to public concerns. Judith Eaton, president of CHEA observed that the traditional measures of student learning, one basis for accreditation, no longer satisfied employers, lawmakers, or the public. "Government and business," Eaton maintained, "want to know more specifically what kind of competencies students have."³ She released a policy paper acknowledging that the public desired better information about higher education. A lack of data on specific institutions, however, remained a common problem. The most comprehensive compilation of data available to the public remained the *U.S. News & World Report* issue ranking institutions of higher education. She also promoted increased communication from accreditors to the public regarding their process. A survey by CHEA of the general public revealed that 37 percent of respondents did not know who conducted accreditation reviews, and even more striking, many thought that accreditation signified only that a school met a minimum standard of quality. In a news conference held by Eaton and Governor Tom Ridge of Pennsylvania, the National Governors Association promoted a project examining college costs, curricula, and research. They also maintained opposition to applying a universal

³ Beth McMurtrie, "Colleges Urged to Find Ways to Gauge Learning," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 2, 2001.

standard to measure student achievement. Instead, the association encouraged higher education to work more closely with private enterprise to prepare students for the workforce.⁴

College leaders remained concerned about the federal government's expansion of oversight. Government efforts to discourage tuition increases more than 2 1/2 percent also concerned higher education leaders. In the 2001 academic year, private tuition increased over 5 percent, while public education costs grew almost 8 percent.⁵ "The quality of higher education is the responsibility of institutions [and] accrediting agencies, and for public institutions, state governments, and this approach has served the nation well," according to Terry W. Hartle, Senior Vice President for government and public affairs at the American Council on Education.⁶

The Department of Education sought to establish a plan of action in higher education. In the strategic plan released in February 2002, they revealed the Bush Administration's new efforts to monitor college graduation rates. These directives hoped to protect public interests

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Stephen Burd, "Colleges Catch a Glimpse of Bush Policy on Higher Education, and Aren't Pleased," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 8, 2002.

⁶ Ibid.

by holding down college costs. Secretary of Education, Roderick R. Paige explained the expansion of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) to postsecondary schools. Previously, the initiative had only addressed improvements in elementary and secondary education.⁷ He argued that greater accountability and performance would guide the Administration's legislative proposals. The report called for institutions to delineate graduation rates by race, gender, ethnicity, and federal financial aid status. Additionally, the measure required two-year schools to report transfer rates to four-year colleges.⁸

Some postsecondary organizations and Republican legislators called for a complete end to the link between accreditation and federal aid. The American Council of Trustees and Alumni released "Can College Accreditation Live Up to Its Promise," concluding that accreditation should not be mandatory for federal aid because the process proved costly and meaningless for measuring educational

⁷ The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 was proposed and signed into law by President George W. Bush with the purpose of improving the performance of primary and secondary schools through establishing high standards and measuring student achievement. Schools were required to administer a standardized test each year and demonstrate improvements in test scores. NCLB did not put in place a national standard which would violate the tenth amendment. The law also reauthorized Lyndon B. Johnson's Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. For further information, see *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, Public Law 107 - 110, 107th Congress, (January 8, 2002).

⁸ U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Deputy Secretary, Planning and Performance Management Service, *U.S. Department of Education Strategic Plan* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government, 2002), 56-69.

quality. Representative Thomas E. Petri from Wisconsin introduced a bill to separate the link between accreditation and access to federal aid.⁹ While few politicians or academics expected to sever the two, the proposals revealed the depth of disenchantment with the current process.¹⁰

Education Department officials and college administrators reached a consensus that the accreditation process needed revision. According to Lawrence J. Denardis, President of the University of New Haven and a member of the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity stated, "Reform is in the air, and higher-education leaders must embrace it. I think we have a good foundation to build on, and it would be a mistake to just smugly declare that the U.S. has the best system of higher education in the world. We have to all work together to improve the system."¹¹

Regional and national accrediting agencies worked to find ways to increase accountability, but disagreed on the

⁹Lynne V. Cheney, a senior fellow at American Enterprise Institute and wife of Vice President Richard B. Cheney, served as a founding member of The American Council of Trustees and Alumni. Anne D. Neal, wife of Representative Thomas E. Petri, served as the Executive Director of the Trustees and Alumni Council.

¹⁰Elizabeth F. Farrell, "A Common Yardstick?" *Chronicle of Higher Education*, August 15, 2003.

¹¹ Ibid. The National Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity was charged with reviewing all of the federally recognized accrediting agencies on behalf of the Education Department.

use of uniform and quantifiable data across the country. The six regional accreditors opposed applying standardized measures of student learning to their member institutions. They argued that unfair comparisons among community colleges, liberal-arts colleges, and research universities would develop. "It would be a disaster if institutions have to rely on testing, or some other absolute number, to evaluate their education," stated Steven D. Crow, Executive Director of the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. "Every college feels that it is putting a slightly different imprint on its students. And across a variety of institutions, you have to measure student learning in consideration of their mission."¹²

National agencies also faced challenges in gaining the confidence of the public and business professionals. The reputation of these organizations remained tainted from high student-loan default rates that averaged over 40 percent in the early 1990s. Under heavy criticism by the Education Department that proprietary colleges evaded

¹² Ibid. The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools is a nongovernmental, voluntary organization that accredits almost 1,000 postsecondary institutions in nineteen states. Institutions are evaluated according to adherence to their mission, educational effectiveness, educational programs, institutional integrity, and institutional organization. The organization describes the "patterns of evidence" it looks for, but does not assign numerical values.

monitoring, these associations worked hard during this period to follow the Department's recommendations and restore the reputation of national accrediting. In later meetings, their efforts succeeded. Sally L. Stroup, the Department's Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education, commended for-profit institutions for doing a "great job cleaning up their act." She also noted that the accreditors' standards proved "better than the big regional commissions."¹³ National accreditors found that quantifiable data such as graduation and job-placement rates fit with the trade and technical colleges that constituted their membership. The Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges of Technology, the largest national accreditor, devised equations for member institutions to calculate course-completion and job-placement rates for its schools. The commission required that schools remain within "one standard deviation of the average rate" to maintain accreditation status.¹⁴

National and regional accreditors remained under the scrutiny of the Department of Education during the Bush

¹³ Before the appointment to the Education Department, Stroup worked as a lobbyist for the University of Phoenix, a for-profit institution accredited by the North Central Association. Deputy Assistant Secretary Jeffrey R. Andrade was a consultant to the Career College Association, the largest Washington lobbying group for proprietary colleges.

¹⁴ Farrell, August 15, 2003.

administration. The Department conducted audits of national and regional accreditors during 2002 and 2003. The audit of the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges of Technology recognized that the commission defined quantifiable standards for its member institutions, including completion and placement rates. At the same time, the review of the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association, by contrast, concluded that their criteria for recognition remained vague. Therefore, they could not apply them objectively, rendering the agency and the standards useless. Crow noted that the auditors "spent two weeks here and they kept on coming back and asking for numbers to back up our findings, and we didn't have the numbers. So the conclusion was that because we didn't have numbers, we don't have standards."¹⁵

The debates surrounding the accreditation process and the effort to expand No Child Left Behind to higher education prompted the resignation of Education Secretary Paige in November 2004.¹⁶ He said that he had taken the job to improve the nation's elementary and secondary schools

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Paige had drawn criticism for job performance and for once referring to the largest teacher's union, the National Education Association, as a "terrorist organization." Academic leaders criticized Margaret Spellings for her lack of experience in education. She received a bachelor's degree in political science and worked for Texas Governor William Clements on an education reform commission. She also worked as an Associate Director of Texas Association of School Boards before becoming a senior advisor to Governor Bush.

and "to help establish a culture of accountability in American education." Margaret Spellings, Bush's domestic-policy adviser replaced him. Spellings first worked for Bush in 1994 as the political director of his first gubernatorial race. She also served as one of the chief contributors to the No Child Left Behind law. While the nomination drew praise from lawmakers across the political spectrum, college leaders remained unmoved on how the change would impact higher-education policy. Jack Jennings, director of the Center on Education Policy and a former Democratic Congressional aide argued, "Ms. Spellings has been put in the position to preserve that No Child Left Behind Act, and other areas, such as postsecondary education, will be far down her list of priorities."¹⁷

Other college lobbyists warned that Spellings would extend the Administration's meddling in the Higher Education Act. They cited a speech she made at the University of Texas at Austin regarding higher education in which she called herself an "accountability hawk." While some academic leaders hoped that the Administration would bring more attention to issues affecting their constituents, Edward M. Elmendorf, Senior Vice President

¹⁷ Stephen Burd, "A New Face for Education in a Second Bush Term," *Chronicle for Higher Education*, November 26, 2004.

for Government Relations and Policy Analysis at the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, correctly warned of too much interest. "But there could be attention of the wrong kind," he wryly noted. "They could try to mirror No Child Left Behind into a template for higher education, which would be vigorously opposed by the higher education community."¹⁸

The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education produced one of the first attempts to measure learning with comparative results across the country and published it as a national report card.¹⁹ In the first two reports of *Measuring Up*, all fifty states received an "incomplete" in learning when no similar data allowed for state-by-state assessments. In 2004 Illinois, Kentucky, Nevada, Oklahoma, and South Carolina developed the first comparable learning measures. These procedures included: a cluster of indicators examining adult literacy, the number of graduates ready for advanced practice through professional licensure or graduate study in a state, and performance results on the Collegiate Learning Assessment for four-year graduates or the ACT Work Keys assessment for

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that conducts policy research on issues concerning postsecondary education. The center was established in 1998 and produced its first report in 2000.

two-year colleges. Researchers then used this data to create a learning profile for each state in an effort to develop a pattern of results from which to draw conclusions. In *Measuring Up 2004*, the study found that despite the increased enrollment of high school students in courses that prepared them for college, only modest gains in the rates of associate and baccalaureate degree completion occurred. Additionally, the rising cost of attending college outpaced the growth in family income. Thus the majority of states failed to keep college affordable for most families. The report card also noted widening gaps in college enrollment between affluent and poor students.²⁰

In October 2005 the Bush Administration clarified its position on higher education with the establishment of the Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education. The charter argued that the United States must "maintain a system of higher education that meets the needs of our diverse population, and in particular the needs of traditionally underserved communities." The body also sought to provide enhanced opportunities for lifelong

²⁰ The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, *Measuring Up 2004: The National Report Card on Higher Education* (San Jose, California: The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2004) 8, 13-14.

learning, while addressing the economic and workforce needs of the country. The document affirmed, "As the need for highly skilled workers continues to grow, institutions of higher education must assess whether they are providing the necessary coursework and incentives that will enable American students to compete in the new global economy."²¹

The commission conducted meetings across the country to gain public comment on the issues. They labored to determine how state and local governments could better align secondary and higher education. Likewise, the commission examined ways to make higher education affordable and accessible to students, while promoting, sustaining, and enhancing world-class research. Finally, the commission remained committed to preparing students to compete in the global economy.

Meanwhile, other politicians within the federal government also pushed for deregulation of higher education. For example, Senator Lamar Alexander introduced the Higher Education Simplification and Deregulation Act of 2005. He hoped to help students gain access to available financial resources, reduce the burden imposed by federal regulations on colleges and universities, and ensure the

²¹ U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Secretary, *A National Dialogue: The Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education* (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Education, September 29, 2005), 1.

autonomy and independence of postsecondary institutions. Senator Alexander relayed a conversation he held with David Gardner, President of the University of California. He asked Gardner, "Why is the University of California so good?" Gardner replied, "First, autonomy. When California created the university—they created four branches of government really: legislative, executive, judicial, and then the University of California." He went on to argue that autonomy promoted high standards. Finally, Gardner noted that the availability of federal funds to follow a student to the educational institution of their choice provided an important resource for the student. Alexander emphasized autonomy, excellence, and choice as a model for success in higher education.²² He proposed to streamline forms for federal grants and loans, provide students with the ability to qualify for federal aid year round, and give students clear financial information about colleges and universities. The Higher Education Opportunity Act later incorporated the principles.

Alexander claimed to see a demise of college and university independence under federal regulations. Though respected by colleagues for his opinions, he chastised

²² Lamar Alexander, *Floor Remarks of U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander, Introduction of the Higher Education Simplification and Deregulation Act of 2005* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Lamar Alexander, 2005), 1-3.

fellow lawmakers under the burgeoning yoke of federal oversight. For example, he noted that when DuPont produced a fifty-five gallon container of hazardous waste, the federal government required the company to report the disposal method of the waste materials. The same regulation applied to colleges with a chemistry class that might produce half a test tube of the same substance. According to the senator, 7,000 regulations governed college grants and loans. Stanford University, a private institution, spent an alarming seven cents out of every tuition dollar to pay the cost of adhering to government regulations. He also noted that at one institution, during a visit from the Environmental Protection Agency investigators found a bottle of dishwashing soap near a sink. The institution received a fine for improper management of hazardous waste because the label had not remained affixed to the bottle. Furthermore, the institution had to pay to have the soap analyzed to document that it did not contain hazardous substances.²³

During the same period, the Commission on the Future of Higher Education held numerous public meetings and negotiating sessions to determine the final recommendations

²³ Ibid., 8-10.

of their report. The Department of Education pushed forward with a plan to require American institutions of higher education to demonstrate student learning in order to gain eligibility for more than \$90 billion in federal student aid. Following the last negotiating session, accreditors still refused to accept the department's plan for introducing new measures of student outcomes into the federal rules that governed the process of accreditation.²⁴

Personal rivalries hindered any efforts at compromise. A decision by the Department of Education's lead negotiator, Vickie L. Schray, to contact the leading critic on the negotiating panel, Judith S. Eaton of CHEA upset the negotiations. Eaton maintained that Schray had presented a clear message to resign from the panel and thereby allow the group reach a consensus. Other advocates for colleges and universities both on and off the panel criticized the ultimatum as political interference. "It's a highly unusual and ill-advised pressure tactic," said Becky Timmons, Assistant Vice President for Government Relations at the American Council on Education. According to Cynthia A. Littlefield, Director of the Federal Relations at the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, "This

²⁴ Paul Basken, "Education Department to Push for Accreditation Changes After Negotiators Fail to Reach Consensus," *The Chronicle for Higher Education* (April 27, 2007).

sounds like high school, and to a certain extent it is. I am personally appalled that this occurred." Not surprisingly neither Timmons nor Littlefield served on the panel.²⁵ Still, the discussion served to taint the report and the negotiations.

The statement from the Spellings report raised questions concerning the issues of accessibility, quality, affordability, and accountability. The group deemed education a mature enterprise, and "risk-averse, at times self-satisfied, and unduly expensive." The report argued that higher education failed to address the needs of a global economy, changing technology, and a diverse population. According to the commission, "History is littered with examples of industries that, at their peril, failed to respond to—or even to notice—changes in the world around them, from railroads to steel manufacturers." The report warned that "without serious self-examination and reform, institutions of higher education risk falling into the same trap, seeing their market share substantially reduced and their services increasingly characterized by obsolescence."²⁶

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ U.S. Department of Education, *A Test of Leadership: Charting the Future of U.S. Higher Education* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2006), xii.

The commission readily recognized that higher education might not "easily accept either our diagnosis or our prescriptions." Thus, the Spellings report set forth the problems and solutions in the four key areas. In the matter of accessibility, it maintained that constrained access to postsecondary education remained compounded by inadequate preparation, a lack of information about college opportunities, and financial barriers. To solve this problem, institutions needed to closely align expectations with state graduation standards and employer expectations through collaborative efforts.²⁷ The Spellings report wanted to build upon No Child Left Behind by holding high schools accountable for results and making them increase access to college preparatory classes.

The commission also recognized the "inexorable" increases in the cost of attending schools.²⁸ From 1995 to 2005, the average tuition and fees at private four-year colleges rose thirty-six percent while those at public institutions increased fifty-one percent. Meanwhile, even costs at community colleges grew by thirty percent.²⁹ As a result, they recommended that Congress do away with the

²⁷ Ibid., xii, 1.

²⁸ Ibid., 2.

²⁹ The College Board, *Trends in College Pricing*, (Washington, D.C.: The College Board, 2005).

Federal Financial Aid System and start over with a more streamlined approach, a shorter application process, and notification to students about aid eligibility earlier than the spring of their senior year to help families make financial plans.³⁰

The last areas of concern for the commission centered on accountability and quality, including student learning. The report maintained that evidence revealed "the quality of student learning at U.S. colleges and universities is inadequate and, in some cases, declining." It noted that the percentage of college graduates deemed proficient in prose literacy had declined from 40 to 31 percent from 1992 and 2003. The commission further argued that traditional measurements, such as institutional quality through financial inputs and resources, no longer sufficed. They encouraged the use of data concerning student access, retention, learning and success, as well as educational costs, including the growth in administrative expenses such as executive compensation. Likewise, the commission provided examples of acceptable student learning assessment tools: the Collegiate Learning Assessment, the National Survey of Student Engagement and the Community

³⁰ "Spellings: Commission Is the Beginning of 'Long Overdue Reform'," *Chronicle of Higher Education* (October 6, 2006).

College Survey of Student Engagement, and the National Forum on College-Level Learning.³¹ The commission focused on compiling this student-level data similar to the information assembled in primary and secondary schools. By creating a privacy protected, consumer-oriented system of higher-education data, the federal government sought to combine the efforts of forty states already collecting information. These results, according to the panel, would help potential students understand the actual cost of attendance and length of time to complete a degree.³²

The Commission on the Future of Education made specific recommendations to accreditation agencies. They maintained that agencies should make "performance outcomes, including completion rates and student learning, the core of their assessment as a priority over inputs or processes." They further posited that accreditors should

³¹ U.S. Department of Education, *A Test of Leadership*, 13, 23. The Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) measures how much students learn at different campuses through an exam in critical thinking, analytic reasoning, and written communication using performance tasks and writing prompts. It is typically administered to freshmen and seniors and compares national norms of the value added between these years. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) measure the time and effort students put into educational activities in and out of the classroom, from meeting with professors to reading books not assigned in class. These questionnaires compile data on the student experience. The National Forum on College-Level Learning was a collaboration between Illinois, Kentucky, Nevada, Oklahoma, and South Carolina to gather data on student learning through the National Adult Literacy Survey, the Collegiate Learning Assessment, and graduate admissions exams to compare across states.

³² *Ibid.*, 22-24.

establish standards to allow comparisons among institutions in learning outcomes. The reformers encouraged continuous improvement, while requiring institutions to report measurable progress in relationship to their national and international peers. Following these accomplishments, the panel suggested accreditors disclose more information regarding the process of recognition to the public.³³

After the release of the Spellings report, the Secretary of Education spent much of her time assuring colleges and universities that she had no plans to extend the No Child Left Behind law. Most importantly, she distanced the Department from standardized testing in higher education. Spellings maintained the federal government would not mandate the manner of faculty instruction, or rank, rate, or grade institutions. Instead, she argued for better information for families, taxpayers, and policymakers in order to make decisions about how to spend money. "If you want to buy a new car, you go online and compare a full range of models, makes, and pricing options," she stated. "The same transparency and ease should be the case when students and families shop

³³ Ibid., 25.

for colleges, especially when one year of college can cost more than a car."³⁴

Some higher education leaders disagreed with the car analogy and the panel's findings. Patricia McGuire, president of Trinity University in Washington, D.C., argued that selecting a college compared more favorably to choosing a spouse. Commission member David Ward, President of the American Council on Education, declined to sign the final report. "Standardized testing for the country's twenty year olds would be a very blunt instrument for achieving accountability, and it would be wildly unpopular with parents and students," according to Ward. Douglas Bennett, president of Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana, stated that the recommendation to create a database to track individuals and more calls for evidence of student learning, "leave open a set of worries" that the government would require standardized tests and similar measures.³⁵

Secretary Spellings often referred to her own frustrations as a parent when her older daughter searched for colleges two years before the release of the statement by the commission. She admitted that her daughter, Mary,

³⁴ Mary Beth Marklein, "Should government take a yardstick to colleges?; Spellings and institutions at odds over 'transparency'," November 14, 2006.

³⁵ Alex Kingsbury, "A Federal Fix for Higher Ed?" *U.S. News and World Report* (October 2, 2006); Marklein, 1A.

"seem[ed] to be doing rigorous work" as a sophomore at Davidson College, a liberal arts school near Charlotte, North Carolina. Spellings also noted that at \$40,000 for tuition, room, and board in one year, she wondered, "Why are costs so high, and what are we getting in return?" Davidson President Robert Vagt had no quarrel with such questions and even commented that the commission report brought to light some important issues. He disagreed, however, with the notion that institutions lacked accountability and effectiveness. For example, 96 percent of freshmen who entered Davidson in 2004 returned for a sophomore year and 87 percent of those who entered in 1999 graduated within six years. The school published this on its website along with financial reports and explanations for tuition increases. Vagt also maintained that as the institution finished its re-accreditation process, it had undergone rigorous assessment by outside investigators. He posited that the abundance of information available at Davidson allowed consumers to make sound decisions. "If we didn't present ourselves right to families and students," he reasoned, "they would quit coming." Davidson continued to provide a competitive atmosphere as it received 2,895 applications for 465 places in the 2006 freshman class.³⁶

³⁶ Marklein, 1A.

Accreditors remained offended by the tone and assumptions of the Spellings report. During meetings held to discuss the filing, accrediting agencies took a dim view of the findings. Critics maintained that the report ignored a major shift in standards they had inaugurated more than a decade ago. Accreditors argued they had already distanced themselves from examining elements like curricula and the number of faculty with terminal degrees to measuring student learning. In 1992, Congress reauthorized the HEA with the requirement to take into account student achievement. Six years later, the HEA expanded to include student success as a primary factor for accreditors. "I'm offended," said Steven D. Crow, Executive Director of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools' Higher Learning Commission. "I'm doing that already." Crow represented the largest of the six regional accrediting groups. He explained that Secretary Spellings held a twenty-five year old perception of accreditation "that assumes we're just counting books and square feet."³⁷

The disparate opinions ushered in an overall surge in dialogue on the merits and manner of accreditation. The

³⁷ Burton Bollag, "Spellings Wants to Use Accreditation as a Cudgel," *The Chronicle for Higher Education* (November 24, 2006), A1.

discussion often focused on the fact that the federal government more actively examined what institutions taught than what students learned. Traditionally, accreditors had worked with institutions to help them correct deficiencies discovered in the review process. In the changed climate, however, the federal government expected these professional agencies to contribute to quality improvement in cooperation with the institution.³⁸

Within a year following the Spellings report, numerous schools adopted the provisions and its vision to promote the highest possible quality of education to the most students at the lowest cost. "Something is changing out there," stated Patrick M. Callan, President of the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. He argued that after initial criticisms and yearlong deliberations, many college leaders recognized a common ground and complied with the Spellings mandates. Hundreds of colleges even implemented standardized student-achievement tests, allowing comparisons between institutions. Several major college groups prepared to include performance-related data and direct comparisons on their websites, which would greatly enhance the ability of prospective students and

³⁸ A. Lee Fritschler, "Government Should Stay Out of Accreditation," *The Chronicle for Higher Education* (May 18, 2007), B20.

their parents to evaluate institutions. Perhaps buoyed by the improvements, Congress approved the largest increase in federal student aid since the 1944 passage of the G.I. Bill.³⁹

The year following the report also made a difference in the position of colleges and universities. Higher education retreated to a defensive position upon the publication of the Spellings report. The Department of Education made preparations to write stringent standards on the way agencies should assess how well the institutions taught their students. At a meeting in December 2007, Spellings softened her tone, telling members of the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI) that, while she wanted to continue to entice schools towards enhanced accountability for what students actually learn, they should not try to require any specific methods or measures for how accreditors obtain that data.⁴⁰

NACIQI evaluated the performance of accrediting agencies and granted accreditors federal recognition for up to five years. Only a year earlier, NACIQI had confronted

³⁹ Paul Basken, "A Year Later, Spellings Report Still Makes Ripples," *The Chronicle for Higher Education*, (September 28, 2007).

⁴⁰ NACIQI was the group responsible for evaluating the performance of accrediting agencies and granted federal recognition to them for up to five years.

the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, criticizing it for not doing enough to ensure "the quality of an institution's effectiveness based on the student outcomes data it collects." They went even further with a smaller accreditor, the American Academy for Liberal Education, by recommending that the academy lose its authority to accredit new institutions for its failure to define "acceptable levels of institutional success with respect to student achievement."⁴¹ Therefore, the change in tone by Spellings provided quick relief to accrediting agencies, as the shift hindered the arm of the Department of Education charged with implementing new requirements.

By the time NACIQI met in December 2007, it endorsed the renewal applications of all but two of the seventeen accrediting agencies that came before them. The two that failed to receive endorsement, the Liberal Education Academy and the Midwifery Education Accreditation Council, received deferrals that gave them continued authority to accredit colleges while they resolved concerns. The four larger regional agencies under review at that time did receive some criticism from the committee concerning their

⁴¹ Paul Basken, "Colleges and Their Accreditors Escape Tougher Scrutiny, for Now," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, (January 11, 2008), A20.

lack of willingness to force member colleges to measure student performance.

In all four cases, however, the criticism came primarily from one member. Anne D. Neal, founder and president of the American Council of Trustees and Alumni and recent Spellings appointee to NACIQI, repeatedly asked the agencies to explain what bottom-line level of student achievement they expected from their members. The agencies responded that they held no single standard. She argued that most people "believe that federal accreditation signifies quality. That has been the understanding. And I think what the NACIQI hearing showed is that understanding is fundamentally incorrect." She maintained that schools had succeeded in controlling the accreditation process, "They're writing the test, they're taking the test, and they're grading the test. And so they all pass."⁴²

Despite the thwarted efforts of further federal regulation in the accreditation process by Spellings, the reauthorization of the HEA in 2008 continued the expansion of federal requirements for higher education. Several measures addressed the conflicts of interest in the student-loan program mandating institutions to justify

⁴² Ibid.

their choice of preferred lenders and provide more information about the terms offered by them. Other provisions included confronting the rising cost of college education by requiring schools to report detailed pricing information. Similarly, further initiatives incorporated the publication of the International Standard Book Number and retail price information for textbooks and supplies in each course. Finally, schools must publish the job placement rates and advanced school attendance rates of graduates, and report on the performance of students enrolled in traditional teacher-preparation programs and alternative certification programs.⁴³

The creation of the Commission on the Future of Higher Education brought much controversy and public discourse to the accreditation process. The Administration's proposals to implement strict accreditation standards as well as limits on the use of human embryonic stem cells in research alienated most academics. These critics failed to notice the Bush administration's overall support of postsecondary schools. The president approved extensive federal expenditures on postsecondary education. The final \$3.1

⁴³ Kelly Field, "Pending Bill Would Double Colleges' Reporting Burden, Critics Say," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (January 25, 2008), A16; U.S. Department of Education, *Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008*, <http://ifap.ed.gov/dpcletters/attachments/GEN0812FP0810AttachHEOADCL.pdf>.

trillion budget, released in January 2008, proposed significant increases for many programs such as Pell Grants and physical-science research. Like his fellow Texan, Lyndon Baines Johnson, Bush had done much to support college students, thereby fulfilling the Johnson mantra: "The kind of society we build—rests on our system of education."⁴⁴

Priorities in the last Bush budget reflected the Administration's continued support for higher education over eight years. This measure proposed an 18 1/2 percent increase in spending on Pell Grants, in an effort to continue bolstering student aid. Despite fluctuations in budgeting for the sciences, federal funds provided to fundamental research increased at a significantly faster rate than inflation every year following 2001.⁴⁵

Even critics of the Bush Administration acknowledged the president's success in the area of postsecondary education. According to an analysis by the New America Foundation, a normally critical Washington-based research advocacy group, reported, "Congress adopted nearly all of the significant higher-education funding and policy

⁴⁴ Lyndon B. Johnson, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Lyndon B. Johnson: June 20, 1964* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1966).

⁴⁵ Paul Basken, "President Bush: A Friend of Higher Education After All?" *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (February 15, 2008), A1.

proposals included in the president's budget requests from 2002 through 2008."⁴⁶

When Bush first campaigned in 2000, he emphasized support for education. The candidate mentioned it in over 38 percent of his campaign statements to the news media. While paying most of his attention to elementary and secondary education, Bush made several specific campaign promises to increase higher education funding. He promised to increase Pell Grants by \$6 billion, place \$1.5 billion in merit scholarships, and make tuition-savings plans exempt from federal taxes. He reached all of these goals. In his first year in office, Congress made withdrawals from the college-savings accounts exempt from federal taxation. In 2005, Congress increased the amount of federal loans that some graduates can have forgiven by \$5,000 to a total of \$17,500. Bush also worked with Congress the following year to create the Academic Competitiveness and National Smart Grant programs, which provided as much as \$790 million per year for tuition assistance to low-income students. Additionally, Congress, with the president's support, took \$20 billion in taxpayer subsidies from federal student loan providers in 2007 to increase Pell Grants and other student aid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Any positive support among higher-education officials for the administration, however, did not extend to Bush's record on accreditation. Spellings, in her campaign to make colleges more accountable for results, attempted to include specific measures for demonstrating student learning. Members of Congress from both parties helped colleges and accrediting agencies persuade the Secretary to suspend these attempts. While ultimately failing to include additional measures in federal law, the burden of federal regulation in higher education only expanded with the Higher Education Opportunity Act in 2008. Schools soon, though often reluctantly, implemented more specific measurements regarding student learning.⁴⁷

For all the work the commission failed to complete, it still "started to provoke a long-overdue public discussion," according to Spellings. "We have put the elephant in the middle of the dining-room table and we're starting to talk about stuff that we ought to be talking about."⁴⁸ Concerns about the camel in the tent and the elephant on the dining room table, however, left little time and resources for accreditors to assist colleges and

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Paul Basken, "Accreditation System Is Misguided Failure, Lobbying Group Says," *Chronicle of Higher Education* (July 27, 2007), A1.

universities in ensuring the overall quality of higher education.

CHAPTER NINE

Conclusion

"Harvard Taught Little and that Little, Ill."

The federal government maintains a vested interest in measuring the success of the nation's colleges and universities. Although the government provides only 10 percent of funding for all primary and secondary schools, it contributes 24 percent of all money spent on higher education. Despite this investment of public money, postsecondary institutions once escaped the accountability movement that shaped policy and curricula in the kindergarten to twelfth grade years.¹

Henry Adams, grandson of the sixth president, dealt a strong blow to the American higher education system in his autobiography. He commented on his alma mater, Harvard University, stating it "sent young men into the world with all they needed to make respectable citizens. Leaders of men it never tried to make." He argued that his college experience did not prepare him for the birth of radio,

¹ Alex Kingsbury, "The Measure of Learning," *U.S. News and World Report* (March 12, 2007).

x-rays, automobiles. "[Harvard] taught little and that little, ill, but it left the mind open, free from bias, ignorant of facts, but docile."²

The undergraduate curriculum commonly found across the United States has proven more expansive and diverse than the classics studied by Adams. The question, however, has remained the same: What should a student learn in college and do they learn it? As college costs rise for families, increasing numbers of private studies and federal inquiries have been evident. Still, colleges failed to provide an answer sufficient for students, parents, or the federal government. "Every college tries to do what it says in the brochures: 'to help students reach their full potential,'" according to Derek Bok, former Harvard president, but "most schools don't know what that means. Nor do they know who is failing to achieve that full potential."³ Quantifying the knowledge that students acquire during their college careers and then assessing each institution accordingly has proven difficult.

The government tried a new approach to colleges and universities with the creation in 2005 of the Commission on the Future of Higher Education. Low retention rates, a

² Ibid.; Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams* (BNPublishing, 2008), 49-50.

³ Kingsbury, March 12, 2007.

perceived decline in international competitiveness, and dramatically rising tuition costs prompted this change. Only 63 percent of entering freshmen graduated from college in six years and fewer than half of black and Hispanic freshmen graduated.⁴

In some instances, students were worse off than if they had not attended college at all. With rising costs and dropout rates, students sometimes found themselves without a degree and a tremendous amount of debt. Four years of tuition at Harvard cost Henry Adams \$300 dollars, nearly \$7000 in today's dollars. Four years at a public in-state, four year college in 2006 cost \$65,400. This rate has risen more than 27 percent in the past five years. And four years at a private school in the same year cost over \$133,000. College students that completed a degree in 2007 had an average debt of \$19,000.⁵

The Commission on the Future of Higher Education placed the relationships between the federal government, accreditors, and colleges and universities in the forefront of political and academic discussions. The Commission

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

set forth the problems and solutions in higher education in several key areas such as accessibility, cost of attendance, accountability and quality, and accreditation.

The report made recommendations in each area. In the matter of accessibility, the Commission failed to create any new links between state high school graduation standards and employer expectations for graduates, but arguably increased information about the variety of college opportunities through public forums.⁶ The Commission also recognized that increases in the cost of attending schools had outpaced inflation for two decades.⁷ As a result, they recommended that Congress abolish the Federal Financial Aid System and start over with a more streamlined approach, a shorter financial application process, and to provide notification to students about aid eligibility earlier than the spring of their senior year, thereby allowing families make financial plans.⁸ The financial aid system remained in place, but a shortened application process has helped students and parents face rising costs.

⁶ U.S. Department of Education, *A Test of Leadership: Charting the Future of U.S. Higher Education* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2006), xii, 1.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁸ "Spellings: Commission Is the Beginning of 'Long Overdue Reform'," *Chronicle of Higher Education* (October 6, 2006); The College Board, *Trends in College Pricing*, (Washington, D.C.: The College Board, 2005).

When considering accountability and quality, the Commission argued that traditional measurements such as institutional quality through financial inputs and resources no longer sufficed. They encouraged the use of data concerning student access, retention, learning and success, as well as educational costs. By the time the Commission released its report, each of the regional accreditors had already incorporated assessment as a requirement for a school to gain recognition as an accredited institution. Regional accreditors argued they were already implementing the Spellings recommendations, but the Commission claimed success in prompting such developments across higher education. The Commission provided examples of acceptable student learning assessment tools: the Collegiate Learning Assessment, the National Survey of Student Engagement and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, and the National Forum on College-Level Learning.⁹ Numerous schools had implemented the use of these tests in assessing student learning and many others inaugurated them after the Commission published its findings. The report focused on compiling

⁹ U.S. Department of Education, *A Test of Leadership: Charting the Future of U.S. Higher Education* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2006), 13, 23.

student-level data similar to the information assembled in primary and secondary schools. Despite the collection of this data in forty states, a compilation of the information to help potential students did not come to fruition.¹⁰

The Commission made recommendations specifically for accreditation agencies. They maintained that agencies should make "performance outcomes, including completion rates and student learning, the core of their assessment as a priority over inputs or processes."¹¹ Most accrediting organizations argued that each agency had moved away from resources and processes to consideration of actual learning assessments as part of recognition beginning in the 1990s. The Commission further posited that accreditors should establish standards to allow comparisons among institutions in learning outcomes. Accrediting agencies still failed to provide information on improvement at specific institutions, much less any comparative information regarding schools.

Following these accomplishments, the panel wanted accreditors to disclose more information regarding the process of recognition to the public. Most students and parents remained ignorant of the accreditation process. In

¹⁰ Ibid., 22-24.

¹¹ Ibid., 41.

the past these organizations refrained from releasing any information to the public regarding accreditation status unless a college lost its accreditation. In recent years, they have publicized their findings at each attempt by an institution to be re-accredited.¹²

Spellings and the Commission on the Future of Higher Education discussed a number of recommendations in their report, but most accrediting organizations began work on the suggestions over a decade earlier. One of the most severe failures sustained by the Secretary of Education was a loss of power after the release of the report. Previously, only the Secretary appointed members to NACIQI and, as a result, maintained control over the review of accreditors. After the passage of the HEOA in 2008, however, the power to make appointments to this board was distributed among several individuals.

Accreditors, however, did not enjoy complete success. Regulations for accrediting agencies and schools remained high and have only increased in the years since the commission's report. In particular, assessment has garnered much attention and debate since accreditation provides a vehicle for incorporating assessment into the daily life of colleges and universities. Assessment has

¹² Ibid., 25.

served the purpose of certifying individual student achievement, improving programs, and holding higher education accountable to its constituencies. Students, parents, faculty, administrators, and the federal government stand to benefit greatly from the quantification of some aspects of student learning.

Certification of individual student achievement supplied students, parents, and potential employers with information about what to expect from a college education. College entrance and placement exams, capstone courses, senior year exams, and licensure and admissions exams to graduate schools demonstrated how students perform relative to one another, according to established standards.

Course credits and grades likewise certified student learning. The Carnegie unit, the original model for the credit hour, began in high schools because colleges found that the abilities of entering students varied so dramatically that it was hard to determine placement just based on grades. Thus the Carnegie unit, and later the credit hour, came to signify a specific amount of academic contact that, when combined with a grade, signified what a student knew and to what level of mastery. This common currency of credit hours and grades has served higher education well and allowed dissimilar institutions to

exchange information when students transferred to other programs or schools.¹³

Assessment also provided an impetus to improve programs and provide information. Program and institutional assessment emerged in the mid-1980s, often prompted by federal and state government requirements for student aid. This development encouraged various learning goals and standards at each campus and within each program. Measurements of student learning specific to a program or campus did not necessarily allow for comparisons across campuses, but provided information that might enhance student learning within that area.¹⁴ Finally assessment provided information to hold higher education accountable to its constituencies. The federal government, students, and parents wanted to know if their investment is worthwhile.¹⁵

The heavy burden of federal regulations on accrediting agencies still remains. Senator Lamar Alexander referred to "the creeping regulation of higher education" that began in the 1980s with requirements in the Higher Education Act. Congress has since added hundreds of new reporting standards. For example, after a deadly dormitory fire at

¹³ Margaret A. Miller, "The Legitimacy of Assessment," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (Volume 53, Issue 5), B24.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Seton Hall University in 2000, Congress proposed a requirement that colleges annually disclose information about their fire safety. Much of the data required of colleges is collected in seven surveys that must be completed for the Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education System (IPEDS). While the government had no official estimate of how many standards schools must comply with, the Catholic University of America, which tracks federal regulations, estimated that there are 200 requirements. According to Peter M. Teitelbaum, Assistant Vice Provost of New York University, his school had two full-time employees working on IPEDS reporting alone.¹⁶

The passage of the Higher Education Opportunities Act in 2008 was five years overdue and the long wait justified a myriad of new regulations. In a response to investigations into the student loan industry, Congress mandated that institutions justify their choice of preferred lenders and provide more disclosures about the terms those lenders offered. Other provisions confronted the rising costs of college education and mandated that institutions provide detailed pricing information and

¹⁶ Kelly Field, "Pending Bill Would Double Colleges' Reporting Burden, Critics Say," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (January 23, 2008), A16.

further investigation when their tuition outpaced the national average. "These requirements, among others, will undermine efforts to make college more affordable," stated Robert M. Berdahl, President of the Association of American Universities. "Surely that's not what Congress wants to achieve in this legislation."¹⁷

Small colleges, in particular, struggled to maintain compliance as requirements mounted. These institutions typically had less sophisticated software systems to track data needed for accreditation and far fewer staff members than larger schools. Walter D. Broadnax, president of Clark Atlanta University, completed the process of cutting employees from 1,100 to 700 to balance the institution's budget. Following the reauthorization of the HEA, he worried that another full-time employee would be necessary to handle the new reporting requirements.¹⁸

In some instances, academic leaders argued that the link between regional accreditation and Title IV gate keeping be retained and even strengthened. Dr. Steven D. Crow, Executive Director of the Higher Learning Commission North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, testified before Congress that the accreditation process

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

remained "an effective tool to inform the marketplace because it relies on expert judgments of higher education professionals; moreover, because of that expert judgment it carries significant credibility with the institutions under review." He noted that accreditation agencies continued to submit to the federal government by responding to all new requirements and were successful in changing public policies for higher education through standards that emphasized access, equity, and assessment of student learning. Crow further argued that accreditation honored the various missions of postsecondary schools thereby increasing access to further education. Most importantly, he added that accrediting agencies provided exceptional service at no direct cost to taxpayers through private, non-profit agencies.¹⁹

Numerous requirements may be burdensome to institutions, but an insatiable appetite for information by the public, students, and parents remains. Some congressmen and academics voiced concern that the current system of accreditation might not provide that information. In a hearing before Congress concerning the effectiveness of the accreditation process, Dr. Jeffrey D. Wallin,

¹⁹ U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, Capitol Hill Hearing Testimony, "Statement of Dr. Steven D. Crow The Higher Learning Commission North Central Association of Colleges and Schools Executive Director," February 26, 2004, 2.

President of the American Academy for Liberal Education, testified about the problems. He quoted a friend, familiar with accreditation: "You want to know what the problem of accreditation is in a nutshell? I'll tell you.

Accreditation is and should be mission-driven. But what that means is this: If you go on a campus, and the campus says, 'Our mission is to turn out chicken thieves,' the only question an accreditor's interested in is, 'Well, are they stealing the chickens all right or not?'"²⁰

Academic leaders have proposed several suggestions for improving the accreditation system. Milton Greenberg, professor emeritus in government at American University, argued that the only way to solve the assessment problem as it applies to the academic skills that so many claimed were not being taught or not taught well, was through specialized assessment of general education and liberal education. He noted that these two categories are often considered the opposite of specialized education, but that specialized accreditors could now be held responsible for the general education in addition to their original area of recognition. Typically, specialized accreditors leave the general or liberal education concerns to the regional

²⁰ U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, Hearing, 21.

accreditors. Greenberg also suggested that accreditation should be reoriented away from the geographically based system, which includes the New England, Middle States, North Central, Southern, Northwest, and Western Associations, to a subject or institution based system.²¹ Wallin testified that a number of institutional accrediting agencies focusing on separate kinds of institutions, regardless of location, might provide better data and an ability to compare institutions. For example, an agency for research universities, one for liberal arts colleges, one for community colleges, and one for technical colleges would bring new expertise in the specific forms of the educational institutions.

Wallin argued that this change would turn undergraduate student assessment over to scholars in the fields being assessed and bring strengths of subject mastery to assessment. He noted that even in the case of liberal education, experts understand the liberal arts and more importantly, the relation between them and the goals that lie beyond graduation. Regional accreditation might then be allowed to concentrate on assuring the reliability

²¹ Milton Greenberg, "It's Time to Require Liberal Arts Accreditation," *AAHE Bulletin*, April 2002.

of the process and resources of institutions and eliminating diploma mills.²²

In one of the issue papers released at the request of the Commission, Robert Dickeson, a Commission member, argued for accreditation reform in a different manner. He noted that the reform of accreditation rather than elimination might prove necessary because it "has long been viewed by institutions as a key artifact of their autonomy. Yet the collision of forces beyond the institution demand more integrity in the process." Dickeson maintained that the alignment of accreditation and accountability, institutional and public purposes, investment and return might be strengthened by the creation of a new organization, operating with new standards and processes for the nation's benefit.

Dickeson recommended that Congress and the President enact legislation creating The National Accreditation Foundation as a private-public operating partnership. Responsibilities of the organization would include the creation and maintenance of rigorous and transparent quality standards, the supervision of more efficient and effective accreditation processes, communication with the

²² U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, Capitol Hill Hearing Testimony, "Statement of Jeffrey D. Wallin President American Academy for Liberal Education," February 26, 2004, 4-5.

public about the results of accreditation decisions, continue responsibilities for determining federal financial support eligibility, and create a permanent endowment from private and public sources to assure a professional level of accreditation. According to Dickeson, the Foundation would be governed by a board composed of representatives from the public, schools, business and industry, and state and federal government. A chief executive officer and professional staff would implement its purposes. Most importantly, the Foundation would "leverage its authority to seek improvement in measurement of educational outcomes, secure more uniform standards among the states in career and professional certification, advocate for a stronger, more innovative higher education system, and promote the public interest in the success of American postsecondary education." ²³

Since the G.I. Bill the population of the United States has increased by over 100 million, and during the same period the number of colleges and universities doubled. The net addition of more than 900 four-year campuses and 900 two-year campuses demonstrates a significant commitment to higher education. In particular,

²³ Robert C. Dickeson, "The Need For Accreditation Reform," *A National Dialogue: The Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education Issue Paper*, 2006, 6-7.

for-profit institutions have multiplied and gained recognition. They number approximately 908 and account for about eight percent of student enrollment in colleges eligible for financial aid. The largest, the University of Phoenix, has an online enrollment of over 100,000 students.²⁴

Student body demographics have changed significantly over the past six decades. The first push to expand access through the G.I. Bill primarily aided men. Female enrollment, however, has increased almost four times as rapidly as males and continues to increase. Female degree recipients now outnumber men at every level except the doctorate, but even there women now earn 48 percent of new doctorates. Traditionally underrepresented minority groups have also gained in representation. African-American students have grown from less than 5 percent of the freshman class at four-year schools to more than 11 percent. Asian-American and American Indian students made up less than 1 percent, but now represent 8 percent and almost 2 percent of the freshmen classes at these colleges. While there is a lack of data on the Latino student population almost sixty years ago, they now constitute 7

²⁴ Frank H.T. Rhodes, "A Chronicle of 40 Years: Opinion," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (November 24, 2006), A18.

percent of that group. Likewise, colleges and universities continue to become international with more than 500,000 international students and degree programs offered in at least forty-two other countries.²⁵

An explosion in information technology transformed higher education since the G.I. Bill. The rise of computers has benefited instruction and learning, research, student life, and communication with students and parents. Distance learning continues to grow and improve accessibility. Meanwhile, the cost of changing and expanding technology also impacts institutional budgets and tuition rates.

In the areas of concern within the Spellings report, higher education continues to make changes. American higher education institutions prove as accessible to students as any other institutions in the world, provided students can afford the tuition charges and demonstrate their competency to perform the required work. Tuition and fees continue to rise and over the last twenty-five years average costs have increased more rapidly than the per-capita personal income, consumer prices, prescription health care, and health insurance, posing a problem for continued accessibility. The unmet financial needs of

²⁵ Ibid.

students from families with an income of less than \$34,000 each year grew by 80 percent over just the past fifteen years.²⁶

Colleges and universities aptly explain that higher education proves labor intensive, requiring numerous resources. Meanwhile, state support has rapidly declined and at private institutions the fastest growing expense has been financial aid. The Spellings report, however, addresses public concerns about the growing emphasis on merit awards, the increased proportion of students taking more than four years to graduate, and growing student debt. The Commission urged institutions to make graduation rates, time to degree, and other measurements public and called for greater academic transparency. And in addressing quality, no single test can measure learning at over 4,000 schools, but employers continue to question critical abilities of recent graduates.²⁷ "We should not be afraid of a culture of self-scrutiny on campus, but only the faculty can create a culture of learning," according to Bok, who remains concerned about an imposed federal solution. "Those who say it's impossible to quantify a college education are not being honest or they are

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

disassembling. All the things you learn can't be counted, but some can. We need to get more schools interested in examining their own successes and shortcomings."²⁸

Higher education may rightly celebrate countless achievements in accessibility and accountability, particularly through the accreditation process. The national interest of a growing population with a rapidly changing demography has created a sense of urgency in addressing the problems that remain. "The task of a university," Alfred North Whitehead once declared, "is the creation of the future, so far as rational thought, and civilized modes of appreciation, can affect the issue." If schools fail to embrace this calling, the federal government will continue to increase regulations associated with higher education. Since the early 1900s the federal government's relationship with higher education has substantially changed. At the beginning of the century the government viewed colleges and universities as fragile institutions worthy of federal protection and exemptions. Now higher education receives recognition as a mature enterprise warranting monitoring and regulation as the federal government continues investing and scrutinizing spending. Ultimately, the unwilling triad of federal

²⁸ Kingsbury, March 12, 2007.

government, state legislatures, and accrediting bodies remains poised for further conflict while colleges and universities labor under the yoke of expanding regulation. As students and parents save and prepare for the transition to college life, they find little information and guidance in a maze of their own new requirements.

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VITA

Carrie Elaine Cothrum was born March 14, 1975, in Fort Worth, Texas. A 1993 graduate of Robert E. Lee High School in Tyler, Texas, she received a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in Political Science from Baylor University in 1996.

After receiving her Master of Arts degree in History from the University of Texas at Tyler in 1999, she enrolled in graduate study at Texas Christian University. While working on her doctorate, she held a Graduate Assistantship in 1999-2000 and a Teaching Assistantship in 2000-2002.

She began her professional career while still attending TCU by teaching at Hill College and Collin County Community College. She then served as Registrar and Instructor of History at Lon Morris College in Jacksonville, Texas. As the Director for Institutional Research and Accreditation at Lon Morris, she lead the re-accreditation process until reaffirmation in 2007. During this time, she became the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

She is married to Dallas Cothrum of University Park and they have two children, Cate and Grady.

ABSTRACT

ACCREDITING SOCIETIES AND HIGHER EDUCATION:
THE IMPACT OF FEDERAL REGULATION,
1944 - 2008

By Carrie Elaine Cothrum, Ph.D., 2009
Department of History
Texas Christian University

Dissertation Advisor: D. Clayton Brown, Professor of
History

The United States government has consistently initiated increased access to higher education for all citizens. From the GI Bill of 1944 through the recent debates surrounding the Commission on the Future of Higher Education, federal legislation has regulated institutions awarding advanced degrees and certifications. Mandates have occurred in every component of higher education from admissions, finances, and services to the content of higher education. The most recent debates not only extend these efforts, but threaten the regional accreditation process that has been in place for almost one hundred years. The current national discussion concerning issues related to higher education has been focused on the ideals of improving student access, student success, student learning, and the federal government's fundamental concerns

with student loan default rates. Ultimately, interference with education may not only cripple the success of the American higher education system but also artificially inhibit its ability to compete in an increasingly competitive global market.