



Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges

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## Memorandum to ACCSC-Accredited Institutions

**To:** ACCSC-Accredited Institutions  
**From:** Michale S. McComis, Ed.D., Executive Director  
**Subject:** Senate Hearing on For-Profit Schools  
**Date:** August 6, 2010

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On Wednesday, August 4, 2010, I had the opportunity to provide testimony before the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee at a hearing entitled [For Profit Schools: The Student Recruitment Experience](#). This hearing focused on the findings of a [Government Accountability Office \(GAO\) Report](#) that highlighted significant student recruiting issues and potential violations of law, regulation, and accreditation standards at 15 for-profit institutions, including institutions accredited by ACCSC. My testimony before the Senate HELP Committee focused on the important role that accreditors play in establishing and enforcing rigorous standards in the areas of recruitment, advertising, and admissions practices and in ensuring that schools are held accountable for the types of practices found by the GAO. The goal of my testimony was to show the Senate HELP Committee that ACCSC does have rigorous standards in these and other areas related to institutional quality and does in fact rigorously enforce those standards. During the hearing it was clear that several of the Senate HELP Committee members have significant concerns regarding the oversight of for-profit schools and expressed ire over the findings of the GAO and the recruitment activities of for-profit schools.

In many ways, this hearing was reminiscent of the hearings of 1990 conducted by Senator Nunn, which exposed many unacceptable practices of for-profit schools and required accrediting agencies to take a far more prominent role in school oversight and student protection. Today, we again find the entire community of for-profit higher education institutions being held accountable for those institutions that have chosen to elevate their own interests above the interests of students. In order for the significant success of our accredited institutions to have an opportunity to be showcased, those institutions that fail to put student interests first and that fail to follow ethical practices must be held to account.

As our member schools know, ACCSC has long had a commitment to students and continues to have the highest expectation for each of its accredited institutions to comply with accrediting standards in all areas. ACCSC will continue to assess its accreditation policies, procedures, and standards, particularly relative to those issues called to attention by the GAO report and the recent Senate HELP Committee hearing, as a means to enhance the Commission's review and evaluation processes. ACCSC-accredited institutions must do the same internal assessment, work to maintain the highest standards for quality, and have as their primary focus full compliance with standards and zero tolerance for non-compliance.

The Commission and staff look forward to working closely with our accredited institutions to eliminate, together, the concerns raised in the Senate HELP Committee hearings. In its place, we all must focus on our primary goal—high-quality education that leads to student success and achievement. To do anything less is simply unacceptable.