



THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20202

April 30, 2010

Ms. Anne D. Neal
President
American Council of Trustees and Alumni
1726 M Street, NW, Suite 802
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Ms. Neal:

Thank you for your letter in which you request that the Department of Education undertake a study of transferring credits. As you note in your letter, there are financial and human costs associated with restrictive college credit transfer policies. We share your interest in learning more about the extent of the problem and identifying conditions and interventions that advance student success. I am sending a similar response to the cosigners of your letter.

As a first step, I have asked the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), working collaboratively with the Office of Postsecondary Education, to conduct a special analysis of data from the Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS:04/09). BPS:04/09 identified students who began postsecondary education in 2003-04 and is tracking their progress through college and into the workforce. A significant portion of the students in BPS:04/09 attended more than one postsecondary institution. Because BPS:04/09 has been collecting transcripts from all students in the sample for all institutions they attended, it will be possible to address issues related to movement between institutions, including the transfer of credits between institutions, with these transcript data. This provides a rare opportunity for the study of successful credit transfers and multiple enrollments without credit transfer.

To investigate unsuccessful credit transfer attempts, NCES expects to conduct additional analyses of a subset of transcripts provided by institutions that list both the number of credits students attempted to transfer to the institution and the number of credits accepted by the institution. A more in-depth analysis will be done of student and institution characteristics. NCES expects to release a report summarizing the analyses within a year.

Thank you for your interest in this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Arne Duncan".

Arne Duncan