

**Oral Remarks of Mark B. Dreyfus  
President, ECPI College of Technology  
and  
Chairman, Career College Association**

Thank you Mr. Chairman, Representative Kildee and members of the Subcommittee for giving me this opportunity to speak about some of the access barriers to higher education. I speak to you in both my capacity as President of ECPI College of Technology and affiliates, with 14 regionally and nationally accredited campuses in Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina, and as Chairman of the Career College Association Board of Directors.

CCA's 1,100 members educate and support more than a million students each year for employment in over 200 occupational fields. Our institutions cover the full gamut of postsecondary education, from short-term certificate and diploma programs up to and including doctoral programs.

It is in this capacity I addressed three issues in my written testimony that pose significant barriers to students seeking postsecondary education. I will speak briefly on three and refer you to my written testimony for the full set of recommendations that we would hope that you would consider during the reauthorization process.

Obstacles to transfer of credit;  
Current restrictions to providers of distance education; and  
Limitations in the federal investment of postsecondary education.

Nearly 50% of the current postsecondary student population is non-traditional students. Non-traditional being defined as the adult learner, non-residential, or members of the military or transfer students. Unfortunately, most Title IV aid programs and regulations were designed for the typical 4-year residential student.

One access barrier is the limitations on transfer of credit. A study by the National Center for Education Statistics, shows almost ½ of all postsecondary students will attend more than one institution. Currently the higher education community has no incentive to accept credits from other schools. In fact, I believe there is a disincentive since evaluating credits is time consuming and credits transferred reduces the courses taken at the receiving school.

During the 1998 Amendments to the Higher Education Act, Congress instructed the Department of Education to conduct a study on the Transfer of Credit issue. To date, this study has not been completed.

Therefore, the Career College Association's Foundation commissioned the Institute for Higher Education Policy to study the experiences of students who attempt to transfer credits. The study found significant barriers against transfer of credit from nationally accredited institutions to regionally accredited institutions.

When a student is not permitted to transfer credits, he or she must repeat courses, which costs both time and money to the student and to federal and state taxpayers.

I strongly believe colleges should be allowed to preserve their academic freedom but not at the expense of the student.

I would also ask Congress to continue to make significant investments in Postsecondary Education and modify regulations to improve options for non-traditional students.

CCA strongly supports federal programs that allow students to achieve their highest educational goals without excessive debt. The Congress should continue its efforts to make significant funding increases to the Pell Grant program and to explore proposals such as the concept of “front-loading” federal grant aid to increase assistance during the first two years of postsecondary education. Additionally, the Pell Grant program should be modified to allow students who participate in year-round programs to obtain additional grant funding as they complete each academic year, without regard to whether they have crossed over into a new award year. This would help students who are trying to complete their educational programs in the minimum calendar time.

CCA also supports an increase to the subsidized and unsubsidized student loan limits, with special emphasis given to students who are in years one and two where assistance is often most needed. Equalizing loan limits across all four years and providing access to a federal loan program for independent students similar to the parent loan program. Currently, if independent students need to borrow additional funds beyond the current loan limits, the only option is private loans at higher interest rates.

And finally, the current restrictions to providers of distance education The Congressional Web-based Education Commission recommended a full review and, if necessary, a revision of the 50% rule to reduce barriers. However, I share this Committees concern that any expansion of this rule needs to ensure a quality education through accreditation and other requirements.

Thank you again for this opportunity to speak with you. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.