

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 29, 2014

The Honorable Arne Duncan  
Secretary  
United States Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan:

We are writing to ask that you include university president salary and compensation as well as that of the top three personnel as required fields in the National Center for Education Statistics's (NCES) yearly Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) survey.

As you may know, IPEDS provides valuable, publically available data on postsecondary education. This includes information on students enrolled, staff employed, dollars expended, and degrees earned. What is not included, however, is data on the pay and benefits of the highest compensated employees at these institutions.

Including pay and compensation for these few school employees in IPEDS studies would help paint a picture of an institution's priorities. This, in turn, would assist students in making an educated decision about whether the school shares their values. Moreover, this would help ensure taxpayer dollars provided to and for students are spent wisely – for the benefit of students. Lastly, it also would allow policy makers and the public to detect trends over time.

Additionally, there is reason to be concerned that higher compensation levels may be increasing the cost of education for students. A May 2014 Institute for Policy Studies report examined the 25 public universities with the highest executive pay. What it found was that this executive pay and student debt, along with resources for faculty, “are closely related and should be addressed together in the future.” With over one trillion dollars in current student debt, more than what is owed on credit cards, we should be looking for ways to address this problem. Understanding the extent to which administrator compensation could be one of many causes of increased student debt is the first part in finding a solution.

Therefore, as the NCES works on future IPEDS surveys, we request that it ask for the salary and benefits of the school president and top three highest compensated paid personnel at each institution. For the reasons stated, doing so would provide valuable information for students, parents, and policymakers. Considering NCES already surveys these colleges and universities, this is also a cost-effective and common sense way to increase our knowledge in this area.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,



Eric Swalwell  
Member of Congress



Marcy Kaptur  
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



Maxine Waters  
Member of Congress