Some impacts of Higher Ed Act for UH

Tuition Increase Watch List - USDOE will prepare a list of Institutions with their percentage and dollar increases in tuition & fees over the prior two years. Based on our current 5yr tuition schedule, UH campuses will almost certainly be in the top 5 percent of their categories and will be required to file additional reports with the department to explain ourselves. We have a good story to tell: our public process of tuition-setting allowed public input, our multi-year schedule provides predictability, students will pay a fair share of the cost of their education and we’ll still have a moderate net cost after these increases. But not everyone will read the explanation, and being on the list will be unhelpful in recruiting and PR.

Illegal Downloading - There are potentially onerous new requirements relating to illegal downloading, primarily of music and video, imposed at the request of big media. In addition to some relatively harmless policy disclosure requirements, we will need to: (1) promulgate a "plan" to combat illegal file sharing including through technological deterrents; and (2) offer alternative downloading services "to the extent practicable." The extent to which this will incur new costs and interfere with legitimate research & education will be determined by how the details shape up in the regulations. Our higher ed organizations will be gearing up to try to help mitigate the damage during that process.

Emergency Response - Institutions must report campus policies on immediate emergency response, evacuation procedures and procedures to immediately notify the campus community upon confirmation of a significant emergency. These procedures must be tested annually. This is much less onerous than earlier language. There is also a new matching grant program for emergency-related infrastructure.

Some other tidbits noted so far:

Required Textbook Data - Institutions will be required, "to the extent practicable," to make available to the public via the Internet information about the course materials, such as International Standards Book Numbers (ISBNs), author(s), title, publisher, and copyright dates in a proactive manner. Exposing this data will likely change the dynamics of Bookstore textbook sales.

Alumni Tracking - Institutions will be required to keep track of their alumni with respect to their employment and pursuit of graduate education by seeking illustrative examples. No formal information system is called for, but this could also influence our thinking about UHAA and its relationship to UH, UHF and our college alumni groups.

Technology Grants for Minority-Serving Institutions - There’s a new (matching) grant program to be established at the Department of Commerce for technology upgrades at colleges serving blacks, Native Americans, Native Hawaiians, Hispanics, and Native Alaskans. No dollar amount is specified.

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