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The Department of Education’s recently released “Dear Colleague Letter” (also known as GEN-06-20 and FP-06-16) reminds FFEL loan lenders about the department’s loan verification certificate (LVC) submission requirements. The letter states that LVCs are to be submitted within 10 working days and also lists exceptions to the rule. The department has come across reports that loan holders have not responded to LVC requests, thereby failing to comply with existing regulations. The letter also includes an update on Department of Education policy regarding the processing of Direct Consolidation loans.

McKeon reassures lenders at CBA conference

At a conference attended by student loan industry officials, outgoing Congressman and Education and Workforce Committee Chairman Howard “Buck” McKeon reassured lenders that he would fight to see that they have a “seat at the table” when the upcoming legislative discussions on federal student loan policy are held. After the Democrats’ clean sweep of both houses of Congress in the November midterm elections, many student loan lenders have been skeptical about maintaining their Congressional influence. The Consumer Bankers Association (CBA)’s 2006 Student Lending Conference was attended by several prominent individuals, including Ruth Lammert-Reeves, Assistant Dean of Financial Aid at Georgetown University Law Center, and David Warren, President of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities.

Higher education in the U.S. not keeping pace internationally

The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education has released a report that suggests having a highly qualified workforce contributes significantly to a country’s economic competitiveness, especially in countries with advanced economies. The report, entitled “Measuring up Internationally,” studies the United States’ performance in higher education by examining how other countries with advanced, market-based economies compare on key education-related factors. Evaluating data on a number of criteria, such as high school completion, entry into higher education, and graduation, the report concludes that although the United States remains one of the leaders in higher education, its position has declined significantly.

Spellings addresses FSA conference attendees in Las Vegas

The 2006 Federal Student Aid (FSA) conference held in Las Vegas featured a speech by U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings. The conference’s approximately 3,300 attendees included financial aid officers from more than 2,000 higher education institutions, as well as representatives of lenders, guaranty agencies, higher education associations, nonprofit organizations, and software developers. In her speech, Spellings remarked that 90% of the fastest-growing professions require postsecondary education and that 60% of Americans lack postsecondary credentials. To regain its competitive edge in higher education, the U.S. needs to help an additional 9 million Americans earn degrees. Spellings also talked about her visit to



Asia with a dozen university presidents from U.S. higher education institutions, the purpose of which was to spread the word that America has its doors open to foreign students seeking educational opportunities. She said that Asia's education explosion is being driven by its students' "hunger" to learn and desire to compete, qualities that she fears many American students lack. Appealing to the attendees, Spellings said that to meet the challenges she outlined in her speech, they must work together. She stated that in March she would "convene a summit to discuss the full slate of recommendations, our progress, and specific responsibilities going forward."

GW appoints 16th president

The capitol's largest higher education institution, The George Washington University, has named Dr. Steven Knapp as its new president. Knapp was the unanimous choice of the search committee for the university's 16th president. Prior to joining GW, Knapp was Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at Johns Hopkins University, the nation's largest research university. Having served Johns Hopkins since 1994 and having been in the higher education arena for 30 years, Knapp has acquired expertise in research and has an excellent fundraising record. Located just four blocks away from the White House, The George Washington University was formed in 1821 and is a premier institution for higher education in the United States.