



NEWSLETTER

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CONGRESS URGES SECRETARY OF EDUCATION TO TAKE FFELP LOAN ACTION

- CARINA ZARAGOZA

Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA) and Representative George Miller (D-CA) wrote to Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings urging her to take action to ensure the availability of loans for students. They also stressed the importance of students' receiving their funds in a timely manner and thus expressed their concern over the uncertainty in the student loan industry.

In the letter, dated February 28, Kennedy, chairman of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, and Miller, chairman of the House Committee on Education and Labor, cited "recent activity in the credit markets" as potentially having a negative impact on "students' ability to access federal student loans." The lawmakers specifically referred to the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP) and the possibility that lenders will pull out of the program, making scarce the availability of loans to students this fall.

Miller and Kennedy have asked Spellings to take two steps. The first would be to set up a "lender of last resort program," essentially making guarantors lenders and the U.S. Department of Education a funding arm. Second, the Direct Loan Program, the U.S. Department of Education's own federal loan program, should be ready in the event a surge in requests is made to the agency due to the unavailability of FFELP lenders.

Recent months have seen many lenders exit the FFELP business. College Loan Corporation, at one time among the largest FFELP lenders in the country, has stopped offering federal Stafford Loans.

This was the second letter from members of Congress to Secretary Spellings in the month of February. On February 15, in a letter addressed to Secretary of the Treasury Henry M. Paulson Jr. as well as Secretary Spellings, 21 members of Congress expressed their concern over the availability of student loans under the FFEL Program.

The letter pointed out that an estimated \$60 billion in new FFELP loans will be needed for the 2008-2009 academic year, and roughly 6.7 million students will be in need of these loans in order to pay for college expenses. Any disruption to the availability of student loans, as well as any interruption of disbursement schedules, will drastically affect a large percentage of students and their ability to pay for college. The main concern for Congress is that access to higher education for many students may be limited.

These appeals from Congress anticipating possible shortages of FFEL Program loans come just one month after Secretary Spellings announced she has not seen any strong evidence that last year's cuts to the FFEL Program by the College Cost Reduction and Access Act will have any negative impact on students or lenders.

The full text of both letters can be found on the Higher Education Washington Inc. website.

On the Net

Higher Education Washington Inc.
www.hewi.net



NEWSLETTER

ABA RELEASES REPORT ON LAW SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

- CARINA ZARAGOZA

The American Bar Association released this week findings from its report on law school enrollment. The report was conducted by the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar. The report only includes ABA-approved law schools.

The report shows relatively little change in law school enrollment over the past year. Enrollment of first-year law students was 48,964 for the 2007-2008 academic year. This number represents an increase of just 27 students from the previous academic year. The report found an increase of total enrollment of 402 law students from the previous academic year, bringing total enrollment of all ABA-approved law schools to 141,433.

The number of minorities increased slightly from 30,557 in the 2006-2007 academic year to the current 30,598. This figure includes a 0.9% increase of minorities as first-year enrollees, from 10,989 to 10,992. However, the proportion of minorities in comparison to the overall first-year class dropped this year from 22.4% to 22.3%.

The gender breakdown of all students enrolled in law school this year is relatively even, with 53.2% being male and the other 46.8% being female. The number of female first-year enrollees increased slightly by 2.4%.

The numbers of female, male, and minority students reflect the overall picture of total law school enrollment, which changed only slightly compared to that of the previous year. ABA consultant Hulett Askew attributes the small changes to a variety of factors, including possibly fewer people applying to law school and the decision on the part of law schools to keep entering classes small.

The report includes enrollment numbers from two new law schools that recently gained ABA accreditation: the Phoenix School of Law, located in Phoenix, Arizona, and founded in 2005, and the Charleston School of Law, located

in Charlotte, North Carolina, and founded in 2006. Both schools, along with the Florida Coastal School of Law (FCSL) are part of the InfiLaw System. FCSL was founded in 1996 by Donald E. Lively and was the first law school to focus on developing "practice-ready" lawyers. InfiLaw's mission is to "establish student-centered, ABA-accredited law schools in underserved markets that graduate students with the skills of a second-year associate." Currently, InfiLaw is working on securing funds for new campuses.

The ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar also reports on various other law school factors, such as tuition. One survey finds that law school tuition has increased anywhere from 5% to 20% over the past five years. These numbers include tuition from both public and private law schools.

In a related study, the average amount borrowed by students to pay for law school was also calculated. For public schools, law students borrowed \$54,509 on average in the 2005-2006 academic year. This represents an increase of almost \$10,000 over a five-year period. Students attending private law schools saw an increase of \$13,000 over the same five-year period, to \$83,181 borrowed on average in the 2005-2006 academic year. This survey is the most recent available on the ABA website.

On the Net

ABA Journal
www.abajournal.com/news/aba_report_shows_little_change_in_law_school_enrollment

ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar
www.abanet.org/legaled/statistics/stats.html

InfiLaw
www.infilaw.com



NEWSLETTER

NEWS IN BRIEF

LAW ADMISSIONS: RANDOM?

Ever wonder how the top schools really pick their law students? Places like Yale and Harvard have interesting ways of selecting future students which may surprise you. According to Dean of Admissions Asha Rangappa at Yale Law School, it's best to get your application in either very early or later since applications that arrive in the middle may get lost in the shuffle in terms of importance. The dean picks around 50 to 80 applicants who are superior and then goes on to the rest. Out of, say, 3,500 applicants, she picks 1,000 who have potential and passes them on to faculty members for the final selection. Yale relies only on "faculty readers," while other schools may have other options. If it sounds a bit subjective and random, that's because it is, but there's not really any way around it, according to the schools.

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA SCHOOL OF LAW GETS NEW DEAN

A University of Virginia law professor has been appointed University of Virginia School of Law's new dean. Paul G. Mahoney became part of the faculty in 1990 and will begin in his new position July 1. The 49-year-old corporate law expert will be the 11th dean of the law school. John C. Jeffries Jr., who is Mahoney's predecessor, initiated a \$150 million "fundraising campaign" to improve certain conditions and recruitment processes.

OCU LAW TEAM FINISHES MOOT COURT COMPETITION IN FIRST PLACE

Oklahoma City University Law School students competed in the 16th annual National Native American Law Student Association moot court competition recently. One of the school's three teams took first place in the competition, which was held in Phoenix. More than 65 teams from schools around the country competed.

