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For more information: Mary Gotschall

202-336-6744

Mary.gotschall@apscu.org

Bob Cohen

202-336-6836

bob.cohen@apscu.org

APSCU Statement on Senate HELP Committee Hearing

Washington, D.C.--The Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities issued the following statement in response to today's Senate HELP Committee hearing:

We think the Committee missed an opportunity to examine some of the problems that exist across all sectors of higher education, and that impact all students – regardless of the type of institution they attend. It shouldn't matter where a student goes to school, it should only matter that they go to school, graduate and get good jobs as a result.

The contrast between yesterday and today is a good example of what is so great about Washington...and what's often not so great. Yesterday was Washington at its best: more than 2,000 students from private sector colleges and universities sector rallying in front of the Capitol, galvanized into action, exercising their right to tell their government what they think. Their message was loud and clear: it's my education, my job, my choice. Today's a good example of what doesn't work so well: a hearing where their point of view was never expressed or heard, though their futures are being impacted.

While APSCU does not have access to the data the Committee Chairman used in his analysis, the conclusions in the report issued today are logically inconsistent with data reported by the U.S. Department of Education regarding graduation from postsecondary institutions. They are also inconsistent with requirements those schools that are nationally accredited have to achieve specific graduation/retention goals in order to maintain accreditation.

The Committee report charges that students enrolling in private sector postsecondary institutions turn over at extremely high rates and do not complete their programs.

Yet according to the National Center for Education Statistics, for fall 2007, though PSCU students were only 8 percent of all Title IV postsecondary students, 15% obtained degrees or certificates from PSCU's. These ED data indicate that schools in our sector do help students achieve their dreams.

In addition, two of the largest national accrediting bodies—ACICS and ACCSC—report the retention/graduation rates of schools they accredit. Institutions must maintain a retention rate of 75 percent to meet ACICS requirements and a graduation rate of 65 percent to meet ACCSC requirements. Again, these data indicate that students enroll and stay in their programs.

About APSCU: The Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities is a voluntary membership organization of accredited, private postsecondary schools, institutes, colleges and universities that provide career-specific educational programs. APSCU has more than 1,800 members that educate and support over one million students each year for employment in over 200 occupational fields. APSCU member institutions provide the full range of higher education programs: masters and doctoral degree programs, two- and four-year associate and baccalaureate degree programs, and short-term certificate and diploma programs. Visit APSCU at www.apscu.org or follow us on Twitter: apscunow. On September 22, 2010, APSCU changed its name from the Career College Association.

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