

Press Release

Coalition for Educational Success to Adopt Standards of Responsible Conduct for Higher Education

Former Governors are among those slated to work with leaders from education, business, government and the accounting field

Coalition will build on its work to develop standards to improve transparency and disclosure, address concerns raised in recent months

WASHINGTON, DC – (April 21, 2011) – Today, the Coalition for Educational Success (<http://www.ed-success.org/>) announced it is working on a comprehensive Standards of Responsible Conduct that will apply to members of the Coalition and extend beyond existing federal, state and accreditation regulations and guidelines by outlining operating principles for career colleges. These Standards will serve as a model for all institutions of higher education.

Building on its efforts to develop standards to improve transparency and disclosure and to address concerns raised in recent months, the Coalition is working with former Governors Edward G. Rendell (D-PA) and Thomas H. Kean (R-NJ) along with experts from multiple fields and industries to adopt best practices that will improve and ensure transparency, disclosure, training, provide strong new protections for students, and develop a mechanism to ensure adherence to the new standards.

“We know concerns have been raised and we take them very seriously. Over the past several months, we have been researching best practices to develop strong uniform standards of conduct to address these concerns. By working with experts from multiple fields and with the leadership of Governors Rendell and Kean, we are going to gather a wide range of ideas and perspectives. It is our hope that these standards will serve as a model for all institutions of higher education,” said Penny Lee, Managing Director of the Coalition for Educational Success.

“Today’s economy doesn’t just reward people simply because they have a degree – it requires specific skills for specific jobs. Our career colleges play a critical role in ensuring we have the kind of workforce we need across the nation. The better our career colleges are, the better we can produce talented, qualified workers, and compete successfully in the global economy. That’s why it’s so important to ensure that all institutions of higher education are held to high standards, and it’s why I’m so pleased to be able to play a role in developing those standards,” said former Pennsylvania Governor Edward G. Rendell.

“We want everyone to continue their education beyond high school. Different options make sense for different students – some want a broad based degree, others want specific training for a particular career. Our goal should be to ensure that every type of institution of higher education is focused on giving students the support they need. I believe that’s what these standards are intended to produce, and we’re going to help ensure they do,” said former New Jersey Governor Thomas H. Kean.

The Coalition recognizes and supports the oversight and regulatory responsibilities of the state licensing and authorizing agencies, accrediting agencies, and the U.S. Department of Education, in the regulation of higher education institutions. The Coalition intends the Standards to identify best practices in key operational areas that transcend and complement the work of regulators.

The Standards of Conduct will be refined and released within 90 days and will embrace the following principles:

- **Enrollment** – compliance training for admissions and financial aid employees.
- **Disclosure** – standardized disclosure of tuition cost and fees, graduation and job placement rates and student debt obligations.
- **Market demand for programs** – assessments of job market demand for graduates.
- **Financial Aid** – guidelines to ensure clarity and veracity in the application for financial aid.

- **Student readiness** – guidelines to protect students who withdraw early in an education program from incurring or retaining Title IV debt.
- **Career placement** – employment and/or placement assistance for new graduates.
- **Enforcement** – developing and ensuring a thorough system to monitor and enforce compliance.

In order to receive as much expert input as possible, the Coalition is seeking suggestions from leaders from academia, advocacy organizations, business groups, non-profits and the military.

“There’s no monopoly on good ideas. Our sector has its supporters and its critics and we want to hear from everyone. The more input we receive, the better the Standards will ultimately be, and that means a better education for our students and others,” said Lee.

###

The Coalition for Educational Success includes many of the nation's leading career colleges, serving more than 350,000 students at 478 campuses in 41 states. Career colleges provide training for students in 17 of the 20 fastest growing fields. The Coalition advocates for policies that support wider access to higher education, particularly for non-traditional students including full-time workers, workforce returners, working parents, minorities and veterans.