



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

April 22, 2024

Sent Via Email to: Miguel.Cardona@ed.gov
Secretary@ed.gov

U. S. Department of Education
Attn: Secretary Miguel Cardona
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Mr. Secretary,

I am the Arizona elected State Superintendent of Schools.

Last year, I wrote to you on behalf of Grand Canyon University because they have been subjected to a lot of harassment from the Federal Department of Education, which is unjust.

At that time, I requested that your department sit down with Grand Canyon University and work out any differences. They are a major ally to my effort to raise academics in Arizona schools, and any harm you do to them would do harm to my goal of academic excellence. We also have a severe teacher shortage in Arizona, and the elimination of GCU would be a severe blow.

However, in your testimony before the U.S. House Appropriations Committee last week, you threatened to shut down this university even though GCU reports to me that your department has already granted a three-year extension of GCU's provisional program participation agreement that allows it to continue to receive Title IV financial aid dollars.

Also, GCU remains fully accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, which gave the university a maximum 10-year extension in its last review, and all of GCU's academic programs, including those requiring state licensure, remain in good standing.

Further, GCU reports that they have asked your department for evidence of intent and verified student complaints regarding the accusations your department is making, and you have refused to provide that information.

In the U.S., anyone accused of wrongdoing is presumed innocent and entitled to their day in court. For a Cabinet-level official, one who is sworn to uphold the U.S. Constitution, your threat against GCU is contrary to those constitutional guarantees and unworthy of your position. It is unwarranted, unjust and the latest episode of harassment against this school by the federal government.

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In my letter last year, I explained that in my 46 years of experience with Arizona education, GCU has had a reputation of having an excellent program to train teachers in a state with a shortage of teachers. I urged you to sit down with GCU leadership and work out any differences. That is a reasonable request, but so far, you chosen to be unreasonable. I urge you to change your posture and come to a satisfactory resolution.

Sincerely,

Tom Horne
State Superintendent of Public Instruction
Arizona Department of Education

Tom Horne, Superintendent of Public Instruction

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