**CYoshitomi - Department of Education Regulatory Negotiations**

**Conference Agenda**

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**Topic 2:   DOE Regulatory Negotiations: Accreditation - Separate and Independent Part B**

Similarly, the Department seeks recommendations on how to prevent costly and unnecessary credential inflation, which is sometimes driven by accreditors in partnership with affiliated credentialing organizations.

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| 1. | **Why are new - sometimes higher level - credentials needed? - Laura**Professions evolve and advances in a profession (or its underlying science) often requires expanded curricula leading to an advanced degree. Scopes of practice also evolve - and often for very good reason. For example, there are areas of the country that are historically underserved in the number of health professionals to care for people per capita. To respond, some states have expanded the scope of practice for some mid-level health care providers.This increases the level and type of health care services available to residents of those underserved areas. If the knowledge and skills needed increase, the time to degree/credential may also increase. Is it fair to students to complete 60 credits of post-baccalaureate education and only earn a master's degree because recognition of the actual degree-level they earned is "credential creep?" |
| 2. | **Who controls this? Not accreditors. - Laura**Colleges and universities establish advanced degree programs upon approval by states and institutional accreditors. Institutions are the ones who need to assess viability of the degree and employability of graduates in their own mission-based geographic or other area. If an advanced degree emerges in a profession, it is a job of a specialized accreditor to assure its quality for protection of students and the public. Preventing accreditors from accrediting the degrees won't stop their development, but it could potentially allow for decreased quality of those degrees. Controlling which professions offer which degrees and at what level is not the role of the federal government. |
| 3. | **No correlation - Laura**First, accreditors do not "drive" development of higher-level degree programs in a field. Accreditors respond to what has already been developed. Second, there is no correlation between cost of education (public/private, individual vs. combined degrees), degree level and employment compensation – context needs to be considered – geography, employment setting. |
| 4. | **Drivers of credential inflation**I suspect asking one or a few flexion points to reverse credential inflation is like expecting King Canute to turn back the tide. There are at least two key drivers of this inflation: competition and complexity. In 1910, only 13% of American adults were high school graduates, and only 3% were college graduates. Now about 85% of American adults have high school diplomas … and are being urged to get further credentials to be employable. Why the difference? To some degree, increased complexity and industrialization/automation such that less skill-intensive roles can now be filled by machines, increasing pressure to compete “upward”. “Upward” experiences greater expectations of knowledge and skills for increasingly demanding and rapidly changing “human” jobs. Further, there are economic pressures on employers and institutions brought on by global competition and rising non-academic institutional standards (e.g., the Joint Commission for healthcare). However, if it’s encouraging, the tide also recedes. We see early evidence of a possible, market-driven turn …. Consider that well-paid tech jobs are available via short term bootcamps, that NYU has launched a tuition-free three year medical school for primary care physicians, and that employers are questioning bachelors degree unaccompanied by “soft skills” and providing their own training for those judged teachable. While otherwise concerning, the search by young men for career paths not requiring college and graduate school is another indicator. Finally, salaries multiply-graduated debtors hope for but do not necessarily receive are beginning to influence how much time and treasure people are willing to invest in inflated credentials. If credentialing organizations are eventually seen as contributing to part of this uncomfortable situation, public political pressure on licensing organizations may prove more effective than querying accreditors. |
| 5. | **Evidence? Gellman-Danley**It would help if the Department just came right out and told us examples of what is driving this discussion. HLC certainly has no such partnerships, so I need to know who does, why and the harm it is causing. |

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