

Impact of Changes to the U.S. Department of Education on IR/IE Offices and Higher Education Institutions

May 2025

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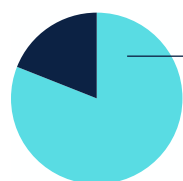
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Survey Overview and Methodology

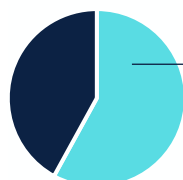
On April 23, 2025, the Office of Senator Elizabeth Warren requested input from the higher education institutional research and effectiveness community on how these federal actions affect institutions and their data functions. In response, AIR conducted a survey of its members and compiled the findings into this report.

The survey was conducted in May 2025 and distributed to 4,853 AIR members, yielding 476 responses—a response rate of approximately 10%.

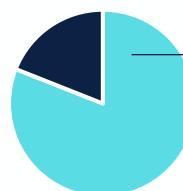
Summary of Results



81% of respondents identified the lack of information about future data collections as the most significant concern caused by staff reductions at the U.S. Department of Education.



58% of respondents identified that changes to the U.S. Department of Education policies and programs have weakened their institutions' abilities to understand and address student needs.



81% of respondents identified that the potential impact of abolishing the U.S. Department of Education could result in loss of access to crucial federal datasets (e.g., IPEDS, NCES Sample Surveys) that are essential to institutional operations.



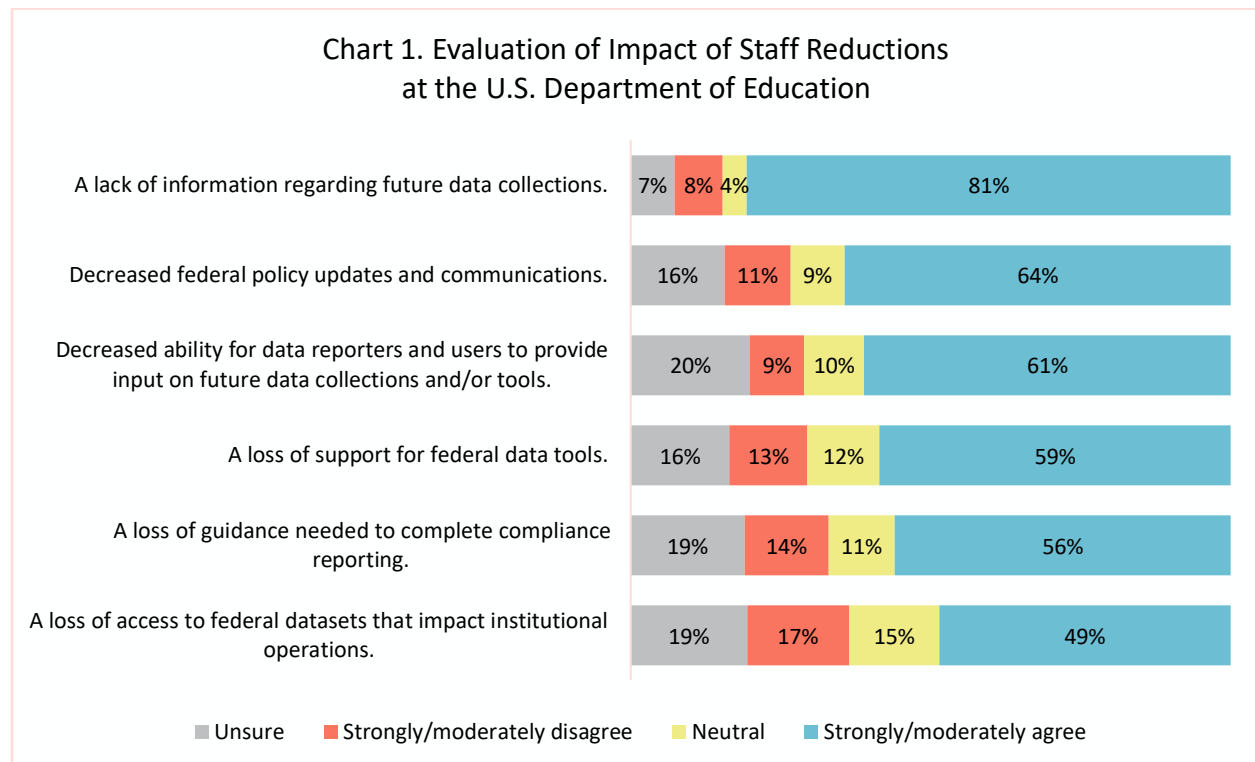
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ASSOCIATION
FOR INSTITUTIONAL
RESEARCH

The Association for Institutional Research (AIR) is the professional association for the higher education data community, including those working in institutional research, effectiveness, assessment, and related roles. AIR supports the development of individual and organizational capacity to use data, information, and analytics effectively and ethically to advance student and institutional success.

Section 1. Staff Reductions at the U.S. Department of Education

We asked respondents how staff reductions in the U.S. Department of Education (Department) have impacted or might impact their offices and/or institutions, currently and in the future. We found that 81% identified the lack of information about future data collections as the most significant concern, followed by 64% who identified decreased federal policy updates and communications (Chart 1).



Key themes that emerged from our inquiry about the impact of staff reductions are listed below with representative comments. (Of note: IPEDS, the Integrated Postsecondary Data System, is the national higher education data collection housed in the Department's National Center for Education Statistics, or NCES.)

IMPACT ON IPEDS/FEDERAL DATASETS

- I assume that there will become a lack of transparency in data and more inaccuracy in federal data sets that we use, if we still can access them. It will become harder for us to benchmark ourselves to other universities without having to pay for access to data from third party vendors. I think we will also eventually have to lose some workers that are on contract or part-time, leading to a higher load on our already strained team. For the institution at large we are already tasked to continue growing enrollment, but knowing that the number of staff we have is going to shrink as people retire and leave. I already know colleagues who work full time at the institution and have to work a second job*

to make ends meet, and soon they will be asked to do the work of 2 or 3 people without getting paid any more for it. The future seems bleak, a lot of people do not work these jobs for the money, but for the impacts that they can make on students' lives and improving their future. Their success is our success. But people are bound to burn out and leave.

- *I am worried that the DOE will suspend all IPEDS reporting. I don't think that every bit of IPEDS reporting is equally valuable, but losing the longitudinal data on enrollment, completions and some other trends would result in less informed higher education policy.*
- *We are having difficulty planning, we are trying to determine whether to continue to run reports (even if we don't submit data) to have the data here for our own use, we don't know how we will compare ourselves to others, and which others we should contact to collaborate (when we go to IPEDS, we can create a peer group on the fly, and individually for every purpose so we don't have to worry).*
- *One of the ways my institution measures licensure rates for our initial teacher preparation program is through the federal Title II report. While licensure rates are reported to the federal government via the state, the state does not publish the pass rates. In order to be transparent and consistent in how we publish those rates, we utilize the Title II report for the numbers we publish on our webpage. With staff reductions to the USDOE, the Title II report may not be collected or published. If that is the case, people will essentially have to take our word for it when we publish internal licensure rates for our initial teacher preparation program.*

IMPACT ON COMMUNICATIONS AND GUIDANCE

- *Unclear guidance on future reporting is the biggest one - we used to be able to anticipate what is coming in the next year/years and change our systems to match the reporting necessary - now we have no idea if our systems need to change completely to comply with something new that might come up, or if changes we were bracing and preparing for are going to ever go into effect.*
- *As an IPEDS coordinator, we would have expected to see an OMB package with major revisions in February. We have no idea when to expect that. We were also preparing to overhaul our race and ethnicity collection, consistent with OMB guidance, and there was no word there either.*
- *Loss of guidance needed to complete compliance reporting. Loss of support for federal data tools. Loss of access to federal datasets that impact institutional operations. Decreased federal policy updates and communications. Lack of information regarding future data collections. Decreased ability to provide input on future data collections and/or tools.*
- *The lack of clarity about what contracts are in effect, what deadlines to expect, and where to find information have cost a huge amount of time. We're losing time having to seek information from*

other institutions or consortia to get a sense of what we're supposed to do and losing even more time on scenario planning how we might adjust to meet reporting requirements if there is no one to accept. Now we have to add planning for data sharing or publication in the event that our future data is not made public by ED. The hardest part is just not knowing. If there were an announcement that the IPEDS data portal will not be available going forward, at least we could plan, but instead we're planning for an outcome of unknown certainty.

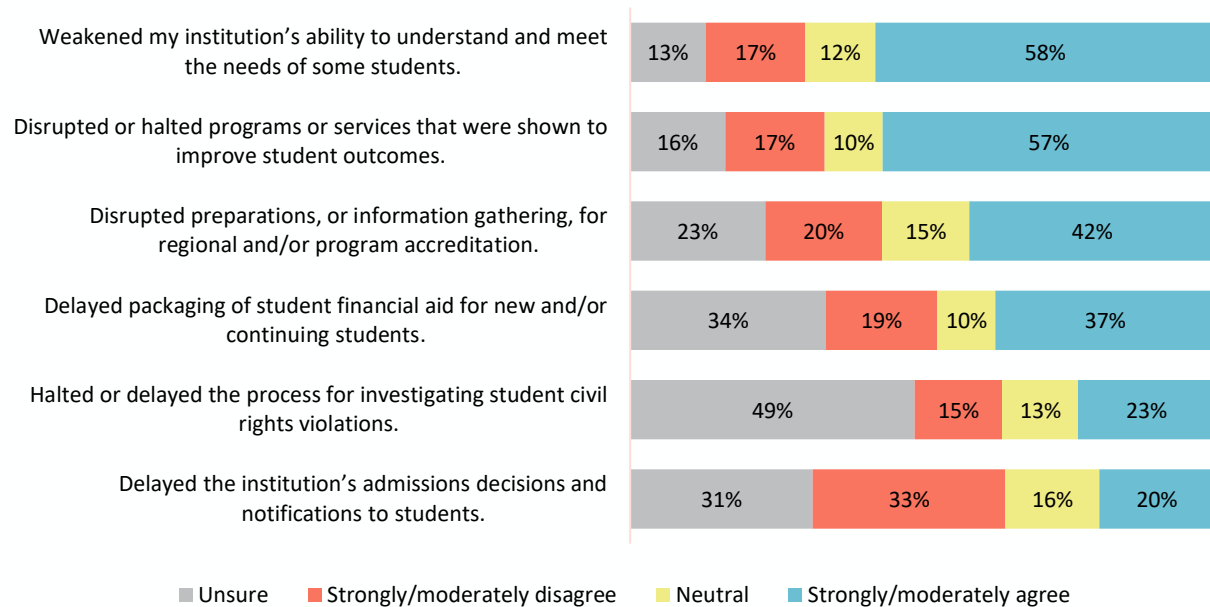
EMOTIONAL TOLL AND WORKPLACE STRESS

- *The fragility of our employment is the heaviest weight to bear. Employment uncertainty is a potent stressor which limits personal ability and decreases various levels of wellbeing.*
- *Aside from the practical ways, it has been very demoralizing to be given the impression that the federal government does not care about the work we do, and/or don't recognize just how important the work we do is to answering the questions (like student ROI, employment outcomes, and college affordability) that they have stated in their own policy agenda and priorities they want answers to.*
- *The most significant current issue is uncertainty. It is not clear what will be expected and supported. It is simply too soon to see all the consequences of these decisions. And I am afraid we simply don't know yet what is still functioning and what is not functioning. I fear we won't completely know what we have lost until it is too late.*

Section 2. Changes in the U.S. Department of Education Policies and Programs

We asked respondents to identify what impacts, if any, have resulted from the recent changes to Department policies and programs. We found that 58% reported that changes have weakened their institutions' abilities to understand and address student needs, and 57% reported disrupted or halted programs aimed at improving student outcomes (Chart 2).

Chart 2. Evaluation of Impact of Changes to Policies and Programs at the U.S. Department of Education



We asked respondents to identify other ways in which changes to Department policies or programs have impacted, or may impact in the future, their offices and/or institutions. While many felt it was too early to fully assess the impact, and some expressed appreciation for the necessary changes to the Department, numerous respondents shared insights on a variety of topics. Below are key themes and representative comments.

IMPACT ON STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

- *Changes to how financial aid is disbursed, accreditation structure, and data collection will be disruptive. Recognizing that change is disruptive, this is not a fear of change, but a concern that a good, valid structure is being dismantled and the end product may look different, but I don't believe any positive change will happen from it. It's like changing banks because someone said I had to when the other locations are less specialized in banking. It doesn't make sense.*
- *The new financial aid year starts in less than 2 weeks, and we have potential changes to the programs that if passed will be implemented 7/1/25. Unbelievable. The reduced support for students will decrease college attendance for first-generation and other students who don't have financial resources.*
- *Proposed changes in Pell will have a devastating impact on many of our students.*

IMPACT ON GRANT FUNDING

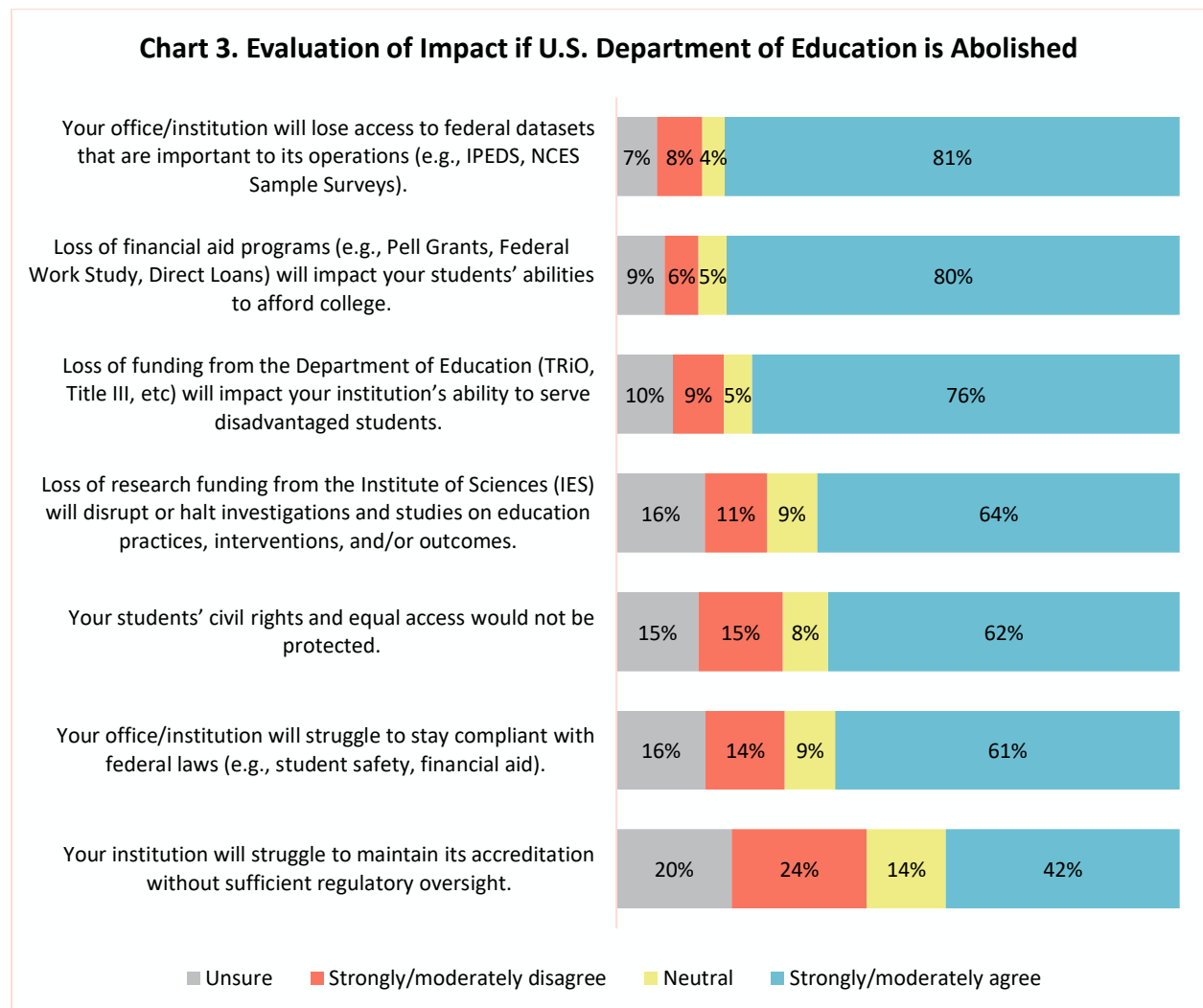
- *The chaos generated by the Executive Orders and changes to the immigration status of our students has meant countless hours are spent trying to understand how best to react. Additionally, the changes in funding from ED grants have required significant effort to gather data to understand the impact and to relay that information to others within the state. Finally, the changes to policy conflict with our state's requirements for reporting regarding access and equity.*
- *The loss of ED grant funding has been a significant blow to the P-12 *and* post-secondary research that we support and conduct, both in our office and as an institution. Many graduate assistants in our Education Policy and Higher Education programs lost their funding support, and our institution has had to scramble to find temporary stop gaps that will at least get them through the end of the academic year.*
- *Changes in policies and programs have put a pause on some activities or plans because there are too many unknowns. And, ceasing to fund some of the research that is being done (or bracing for it, just in case) has caused a lot of concern and frustration, the loss of opportunities for students to help with research, and possibly the loss of positions that were grant funded.*

IMPACT ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (DEI) PROGRAMS

- *The chilling effect of the administration's punitive approach to equity in higher education is inconsistent with our office's mission to improve student success through data and evidence. If addressing problems that are substantiated by research is verboten, then what is the point of doing the research to identify the problem?*
- *My institution no longer has a women's center; it was shut down for being too DEI. My institution no longer has Title IX training because it is trying to simultaneously follow the law without breaking it. College-aged women are constantly targeted, and I can't imagine how many also need a safe place to go to. This is an invisible impact that I will never be able to discuss publicly, but I feel it every day. I need help, but if I say I need a woman's center, I risk losing my job and my home.*
- *We are in the beginning stages of our mid-cycle review for our accreditor, and I'm not entirely sure how to guide my team with regard to writing about DEI or related issues. As an institution with social justice centered in its mission, should we downplay the role that plays in our operations? If we emphasize that work as we have in our past assurance arguments, will we be targeted and penalized? Our liaison assures us we'll be fine and that nothing has changed with regard to their expectations at the accrediting agency, but who knows what is coming in the near future from this administration.*
- *We have discontinued DEI programs that were requested by our students which were proven to make positive impacts on student success.*

Section 3. Future Impact if U.S. Department of Education is Abolished

We asked respondents to share their thoughts on the potential impact of abolishing the Department. We found that 81% agreed that their offices and/or institutions would lose access to crucial federal datasets (e.g., IPEDS, NCES Sample Surveys) essential to operations and 80% agreed that their institutions would lose financial aid programs if the Department is abolished (e.g., Pell Grants, Federal Work Study, Direct Loans), making it harder for students to afford college (Chart 3).



We invited respondents to share any additional impacts that abolishing the Department might have on their offices, institutions, and/or students. While many felt it was too early to assess the full impact, and a few expressed that such a move could be beneficial, many others shared their insights. Below are the key themes along with representative comments.

IMPACT ON STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

- *More than 40% of our students receive Pell grants, and others receive federal loans - they would not be able to afford college without this. It will completely impact us. It will decimate our institution. We'd have to lay off half of our workforce.*
- *The fragmentation of oversight would create immediate operational challenges. Without centralized systems like IPEDS and the College Scorecard, institutions would need to develop new processes for data reporting and compliance across potentially 50 different state frameworks. This administrative burden would require significant resources to navigate effectively. The financial implications are particularly concerning. Federal aid programs currently serve as a critical access point for higher education, with Pell Grants alone supporting approximately 6.7 million students annually. The elimination of these programs would create an immediate funding crisis for both students and institutions, potentially decreasing enrollment and exacerbating inequality in educational access. The civil rights protection vacuum is another crucial consideration. Without federal enforcement mechanisms for Title IX, Title VI, and ADA compliance, institutions would face inconsistent standards and potentially reduced accountability for maintaining equitable educational environments.*
- *I think this is the main point- we have no idea how it would impact things because we don't know the game plan for the next steps. There is no plan, there is no information about how things would/could work, there's just quick decisions that are not data informed or even fact based. So, I guess my answer is chaos. There will be chaos because we don't know the impact and students and their families will be worried and concerned. It's likely fewer people will attend college, especially those who rely on federal aid. This will flood the employment market and unemployment rates will skyrocket. I am not saying that the 'old way' or the 'status quo' is great, but changes like these need to be made strategically and with time to pivot.*
- *If federal aid programs are cut, my institution, like many in the nation, would suffer tremendously. Many students would not be able to afford college and our contributions to our local workforce and the greater community would be severely diminished.*

IMPACT ON ACCREDITATION

- *All of the things listed above are likely to become more of a problem. Without robust accreditation it will be harder to make a case with the general public about the value of higher education and the quality of the education delivered by our institution. The plight is also that these aspects of higher education are becoming highly politicized and the fight for academic freedom and free speech and DEI-type supports (which in some cases help all students) put institutions in a hard spot of either capitulating and thereby not protecting and serving their students as well as they could or resisting changes and losing resources that might ultimately result in closing an institution.*

- *We use IPEDS data regularly and would lose our primary source of benchmarking data without it. I said that I didn't know if we would struggle to maintain accreditation because I have no idea what that would look like, but accreditation is a wonderful source of peer feedback and continuous improvement, and also happens to be a good example of public/private partnership. We would like to continue to have a strong process of peer review that provides feedback from peer institutions and to keep that process from becoming politicized and free from interference. Our institution is well-enough resourced that we would be able to replace federal financial aid if need be, but it would reduce to some degree the number of students we could admit who need financial aid. I think this is a desired outcome by this administration, but it represents affirmative action for the wealthy, and moves us further away from meritocracy.*
- *We will stay accredited, but it sounds like the [administration] wants to make it easier for new accreditors to emerge (with lower standards). Institutionally accredited colleges and universities, by and large, are doing good work already. [The administration] is trying to solve the wrong problem.*

Section 4. Impact of Transferring U.S. Department of Education's Responsibilities to Other Departments

We asked respondents to consider the potential impact on their offices, institutions, and/or students if the responsibilities of the Department were transferred to other federal agencies. While many felt it was too early to fully assess the effects, several respondents shared their perspectives. Below are the key themes with representative comments.

IMPACT OF INEXPERIENCED PERSONNEL

- *The folks who are employed with the U.S. DOE are education experts; depending on what other federal department is referenced, those employees are experts in the content of that department and not necessarily in education. I don't know how this could affect my office directly because we will follow our federal requirements regardless of the source, but it could have broader implications about the guidance and the interpretations of the success results. Will the other federal departments be able to analyze and interpret trends across the country in the same manner? Will the other federal departments understand the core of the American education system such that any changes to regulations will result in improved educational outcomes?*
- *It will make it more difficult to correspond with other agencies. Those who are in education know the nuance around the policies; if things are transferred to other government bodies, existing workers will not have the wealth of knowledge from the Department of Education.*

CAPACITY CHALLENGES FOR IR/IE OFFICES

- *My one person IR office would need to adapt to new data reporting and compliance structures, reassess how I track and report institutional outcomes, and manage potential changes in financial aid, accreditation, data privacy (FERPA), federal funding, and much more. I would be challenged with resource allocation, strategic shift, and training.*
- *We would need new contacts, rules, ways of operating and a sense of how the data culture would change. Most Title IV and IR offices are already stretched to capacity and further changes make a challenging situation more complex which impacts student support and outcomes.*
- *The federal reporting process for institutional data, if it still existed, would have to be relearned, diminishing the efficiency of my IR office.*

IMPACT ON FEDERAL DATA COLLECTIONS

- *Data collection processes are already glitchy and difficult even with full support. If they are moved to another office without adequate support, I anticipate it will be impossible to submit data properly. There are also significant privacy concerns with non-education personnel having access to identifiable education data.*
- *I think the chaos and confusion of a transition of responsibilities, along with the general loss of institutional knowledge from firing almost all the staff at the NCES, is enough to create devastating impacts on the national data collection processes that had been in place. The transition to a new office likely means no one will know how to help us respond to IPEDS errors, and that in itself is an issue. These changes are going to last years! Even if they are challenged and reversed eventually.*
- *One of the main values of national datasets is their consistency and highly thorough process when changes do occur. These groups seek input and seek to understand how the information will be collected across the multiple types of institutions. My fear is that disbursing data sets and collections to non-education focused departments will result in a lack of understanding of higher education data that is valuable to higher education for effectiveness studies.*

Section 5. Overall Comments

We asked respondents how other changes to the Department not previously discussed could impact their offices, institutions, and/or students. Although the majority of responses noted the proposed changes as having negative impacts, a few were supportive of the changes, as shared in Sections 5 and 6. Below are key themes and representative comments.

INCREASED WORKPLACE STRESS

- *The fear. The intimidation. The threats. That is what is so difficult. Our office is small, and we work hard to serve our students, staff, and faculty. We collaborate, and we build trust. Our jobs were hard enough, and now I spend my days doing my job and my nights reading and trying to anticipate what is coming so my office and my institution can make good, proactive decisions. Then I spend time trying to explain which potential changes/threats are legal and warrant our attention, which will likely get caught up in courts, and how each will impact us. It's exhausting.*
- *The biggest effect is the anxiety and uncertainty of what the changes at the US Dept of Ed mean to our careers and livelihood.*
- *A sense of unease within the institution about the safety and well-being of our community. A resolve to maintain commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion but tempered with a desire not to be targeted.*

INCREASED CHALLENGES FOR THE IR/IE OFFICE

- *Most IR offices are small comparable to other departments on campus, my IR office is no different. I'm already feeling the effects of the changes are trickling down and have had to cut staff. I am now a one person IR office. All the changes that have happened with the anticipation of more to come are unbearable.*
- *Lack of personnel to adequately support data systems has made submissions very challenging, and thrown future submissions in question.*
- *Our budget has been cut or halted. I'm worried about my position in higher education.*

SUPPORT FOR CHANGES TO U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

- *The Trump administration has my full support in abolishing the DOE. I find this survey very one sided and biased. This survey should include perspectives from both sides of the aisle collecting information on the benefits of the abolishing the DOE as well as the negative impacts. The results of this survey should be shared with both sides of the aisle.*
- *On the positive side, we hope that some of the data required to report will disappear. We are a tiny institution, and some reporting requirements are very taxing on our office. We do not have lots of people and resources to provide so much data.*
- *The DOE should be abolished and education oversight sent back to the states. We do not anticipate any impact to our institution as the federal financial aid programs, IPEDS, regulatory oversight, and funding research currently under the DOE will be transferred to other federal departments.*

Section 6. A Selection of Individuals' Impact Statements

We invited respondents to share individual statements on how the changes within the Department have impacted them, their institutions, and/or their students and stakeholders. Below is a selection of comments representing a variety of perspectives and experiences. The complete list of impact statements can be found in the Appendix.

- *Education should be accessible and supportive to all who have a desire to be life-long learners and critical thinkers. I am especially concerned for students who are vulnerable because of special education needs, social differences (gender identity, sexual identity, etc.), political and religious differences, race or ethnicity, or citizenship status, or might be non-traditional or under-privileged students in a variety of ways. The anticipated changes and accompanying chaos is likely to create many negative impacts and have a particularly noticeable effect on students who already face challenges. Further, restrictions on academic research and research funding diminishes the US's standing around the globe and slows ethical progress and innovation that would otherwise benefit humankind.*
- *If the goal of higher education is to produce a workforce that is socially aware, civically competent, and vocationally prepared, then the changes currently being proposed run counter to these desired societal goods. As our nation continues to diversify, is it not important for all higher education consumers to be prepared and equipped for a workforce that is comprised of diverse backgrounds? The changes to DOE and the larger social contract with higher education is creating further degradation of opportunity and threatens the very engine of research and productivity that has truly made America great. Eliminating data repositories, cutting systems that track outcomes, and threatening data providers who embrace their mission of collecting data will not lead to a better and just society.*
- *The changes underway at the U.S. Department of Education have created transitional challenges for our office, particularly in navigating evolving compliance expectations and maintaining clear communication with federal agencies. However, it is important to recognize that these changes reflect broader efforts to address longstanding inefficiencies within the Department. For decades, despite billions of dollars invested, the Department struggled to deliver the levels of effectiveness, responsiveness, and support that institutions and students deserve. The current reforms, while disruptive in the short term, offer an opportunity to build a more decentralized, transparent, and effective system of higher education governance. Going forward, it will be critical to ensure that essential functions — including student financial aid access, civil rights protections, and transparent data reporting — are preserved and improved to better serve all students and institutions.*
- *Change is scary, but unnecessary change is unproductive. Positive change comes from examining what needs fixed and or upgraded, not quickly 'throwing away the apple cart'. Many of the challenges that we have faced regarding the U.S. Dept of Ed came from other government sources*

imposing restrictions that the staff at the Dept of Ed had to enforce or oversee. Disseminating the responsibilities to other agencies weakens the strength of our education system. Having education entities/programs reporting to multiple entities will actually make administration more complex and it will be difficult to make positive changes in the future.

- *As a catholic institution of higher education, the significant, unwarranted, and overbearing suppression of diversity, equity, and inclusion adversely impacts our ability to fulfill our institutional mission: to welcome students of diverse backgrounds and ensure equitable outcomes regardless of those backgrounds. Our ability to be welcoming and emphasize the institution as both a faith-based and diverse institution is a core characteristic of my university, and now administrators feel as though they must scale back our support services that directly name diversity, equity, and inclusion, despite the benefits these services provide to all students. There is a fear of retribution in higher education for even speaking the words diversity, equity, and inclusion, which has caused us to take steps backward in student support services. Those services are not discriminatory in nature, as falsely proclaimed in narratives against higher education, but uplift students of diverse backgrounds, likely even those that the administration may not believe are diverse due to a superficial understanding of what diversity, equity, and inclusion really means in higher education. Furthermore, the threat to the Department of Education, and ongoing, centralized, and standardized data collection, is significant. By removing our ability to compare ourselves with our peers, we take steps backward in analyzing institutional outcomes. Further jeopardizing the ongoing effectiveness of our higher education infrastructure in the United States. While we can archive the historical data and continue to maintain institutional data sets utilizing similar methodologies, the lack of access and validation of our own and peer data will greatly impede our ability to utilize peer comparisons to continue to improve higher education as a whole. The lack of continuity and standardization will leave our comparative methods debilitated and ultimately invalid. We will be left guessing whether the datasets we may be able to pull from other institutions, if available, are tabulated utilizing generally accepted methodologies, and ultimately, institutional effectiveness measures will be left struggling to ascertain whether comparative information is reliable.*
- *As an institutional research and effectiveness professional at a public research university, I have witnessed firsthand how the evolving landscape at the U.S. Department of Education has fundamentally challenged our operational capacity and institutional mission. The significant reduction in federal guidance, technical infrastructure, and departmental responsiveness has created cascading effects that extend far beyond administrative inconvenience. The diminished federal support framework has left critical institutional functions in precarious positions. IPEDS submissions, once supported by robust technical assistance and clear guidelines, now involve navigating ambiguous expectations with minimal federal consultation. Title IV compliance has become increasingly uncertain as policy interpretations shift without comprehensive guidance, placing both institutional eligibility and student financial support at risk. These challenges aren't merely bureaucratic hurdles; they represent genuine threats to our ability to serve students effectively and maintain regulatory compliance. Perhaps most concerning is the retreat from evidence-based*

practices in education equity. The decreased emphasis on data-informed DEI initiatives has created a troubling vacuum in which institutions must independently defend the value of inclusion efforts without federal reinforcement. This policy shift disproportionately impacts our most vulnerable student populations, whose educational access often depends on systematic attention to equity gaps and targeted interventions. The real cost of these changes manifests in very human terms: overworked campus professionals struggling to interpret shifting compliance requirements; underrepresented students questioning institutional commitment to their success; and research initiatives stalled by uncertainty around federal priorities and funding. As campus-level practitioners, we find ourselves not only implementing policy but increasingly having to fill fundamental gaps in the federal education infrastructure that once provided essential stability to the higher education ecosystem. These challenges aren't abstract policy debates, they represent daily obstacles for those of us committed to educational access, institutional integrity, and student success. When federal educational infrastructure weakens, the burden falls heaviest on those with the least resources to absorb it, both institutionally and individually.

- *The U.S. higher education system is unique in the world, and so many countries send their students to our colleges and universities to study under our influence. We have produced amazing research, technology, businesses, and a thriving GDP as a result of our higher education system. The past several decades has seen dramatic strides in college affordability, completion rates, and economic infusion. Ending the efforts of a federal department removes vital resources and guidance from a system meant to preserve our American educational values.*
- *I went into higher education because I wanted to help students (and their families) get an education, which leads to better paying jobs and, usually, a change in socio-economic status. I wanted to help people, but I feel like all I can do right now is focus on my own survival as everything I've worked to help build burns around me. I feel lost and constantly scared that I will lose my job. I am worried about students possibly being picked up by ICE.*
- *I view these changes as positive. The Educational Department can demonstrate little in the way of success as assessed by most objective quantitative and qualitative measures. The redesign of the federal role in education with a shift to state authority will serve to advance creativity, student access, affordability, and efficiency as management of education returns to the stakeholders who are closest to it. It will also help to limit the influence of special interest groups that have driven so many expensive initiatives and experiments without any measurable success. Students will still have access to financial aid, research will still be promoted, and data will still be reported and accessed. The fire of Apollo 1, the catastrophic explosion of Challenger, and the tragic destruction of Columbia all resulted in positive changes to the U.S. space program, while revealing significant organizational and design flaws. Each represented a tragic moment in the lives of our brave astronauts, their loved ones, and in our history that ultimately led to the advancement of the space program and improved astronaut safety. The elimination of the Education Department would not be catastrophic, as some might attempt to persuade, and the lack of measurable success, particularly over the last three*

decades, demands change -- a complete redesign. The Education Department has become like Oz over the years, with each administration bringing its brand of sorcery to the top while the minions remain entrenched to run the show as they see fit. Less federal oversight is needed, not more, and the Education Department needs to be retired.

Suggested Citation

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<http://www.airweb.org/community-surveys>.

Appendix: All Individual Impact Statements

AIR invited respondents to provide individual statements on the impact that the changes happening in the Department have had on them, their institutions, and/or their students and stakeholders. All open-ended comments were reviewed to ensure they aligned with professional standards for respectful and constructive dialogue. Comments that included profanity or personal attacks were excluded and not edited. All other responses are presented as submitted to reflect the full range of perspectives shared.

- *Potential or actual funding cuts to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) pose significant challenges for our office, our institution, and the students and stakeholders we serve. As the primary federal entity responsible for collecting and analyzing education data in the United States, NCES plays a foundational role in informing decision-making, policy development, and resource allocation across all levels of education. For our office, which relies heavily on high-quality, longitudinal, and comparative data to support institutional planning, accountability, and improvement efforts, any disruption to NCES data collection or dissemination would impair our ability to conduct benchmarking, trend analysis, and policy evaluation. The loss or reduction of timely, reliable data from sources such as the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS), and longitudinal student tracking systems would limit our capacity to assess student outcomes, equity gaps, and program effectiveness. Institutionally, these cuts could hinder our ability to respond to external reporting requirements, accreditation expectations, and internal strategic initiatives that depend on consistent national and regional data. Without NCES as a central, standardized source of information, institutions would be forced to rely on fragmented or inconsistent third-party data, reducing confidence in our analyses and weakening the foundation for data-informed decisions. For students and stakeholders—including faculty, campus leaders, policymakers, and the public—NCES provides transparency and accountability in higher education. Its data supports initiatives related to college affordability, financial aid, graduation rates, and workforce outcomes. Reducing access to this information undermines efforts to improve student success, close equity gaps, and ensure that institutional practices align with national trends and expectations. In a time when data-driven decision-making is more important than ever, cuts to NCES threaten to erode the infrastructure that supports educational research, accountability, and continuous improvement. We strongly urge continued investment in NCES to preserve its role as a trusted source of evidence that benefits institutions, students, and the broader educational ecosystem.*
- *I think the goal is to reduce the amount of financial aid available and significantly reduce the number of minorities receiving an education. Ultimately, I think the administration wants fewer educated people as they are easier to control.*
- *Continue to work hard to reduce bureaucracy and inefficiency.*

- *I view these changes as positive. The Educational Department can demonstrate little in the way of success as assessed by most objective quantitative and qualitative measures. The redesign of the federal role in education with a shift to state authority will serve to advance creativity, student access, affordability, and efficiency as management of education returns to the stakeholders who are closest to it. It will also help to limit the influence of special interest groups that have driven so many expensive initiatives and experiments without any measurable success. Students will still have access to financial aid, research will still be promoted, and data will still be reported and accessed. The fire of Apollo 1, the catastrophic explosion of Challenger, and the tragic destruction of Columbia all resulted in positive changes to the U.S. space program, while revealing significant organizational and design flaws. Each represented a tragic moment in the lives of our brave astronauts, their loved ones, and in our history that ultimately led to the advancement of the space program and improved astronaut safety. The elimination of the Education Department would not be catastrophic, as some might attempt to persuade, and the lack of measurable success, particularly over the last three decades, demands change -- a complete redesign. The Education Department has become like Oz over the years, with each administration bringing its brand of sorcery to the top while the minions remain entrenched to run the show as they see fit. Less federal oversight is needed, not more, and the Education Department needs to be retired. Institutional researchers pledge to present objective views to our stakeholders, and I truly hope that balanced views will be presented to Senator Warren.*
- *I feel that we are all anticipating impacts that I believe will not occur.*
- *I can't even imagine the far-reaching ramifications these changes will have on our office, the institution, and our students. There will most certainly be negative consequences that will continue for years to come.*
- *The chaos this administration is creating is making it difficult for our institution to plan for upcoming funding levels, and to anticipate how our students will be able to attend our institution. We (as a nation) rely on strong, well-run programs, and these cuts are doing nothing to help anyone besides Trump and his rich cronies.*
- *The changes underway at the U.S. Department of Education have created transitional challenges for our office, particularly in navigating evolving compliance expectations and maintaining clear communication with federal agencies. However, it is important to recognize that these changes reflect broader efforts to address longstanding inefficiencies within the Department. For decades, despite billions of dollars invested, the Department struggled to deliver the levels of effectiveness, responsiveness, and support that institutions and students deserve. The current reforms, while disruptive in the short term, offer an opportunity to build a more decentralized, transparent, and effective system of higher education governance. Going forward, it will be critical to ensure that essential functions — including student financial aid access, civil rights protections, and transparent data reporting — are preserved and improved to better serve all students and institutions.*

- *These changes have created challenges for the institutional research office in maintaining its effectiveness and fulfilling its mission. This definitely may lead to a reduction in specialized research capabilities.*
- *I admire Senator Warren, and I hope she can keep fighting in the U.S. Senate. Our institutions are strong, and I think we will find workarounds in a lot of cases for all these drastic changes. It is the worst case situation that I worry about the most. It is the constant waiting for the boot to fall on us. As far as I am aware, we have not had significant impact from any changes. I also believe the ignorance of these sweeping pronouncements reflects a misunderstanding of how higher education works and the consequences of the changes POTUS wants to make. It may ultimately be the final guardrail that halts things.*
- *From the perspective of an Administrative Professional who is currently supported and protected by the lowest-paid labor union on campus, my employment feels so unstable, and the stress from that atop of the daily stressors of working a job that could easily be separated into 3 full-time positions, with the additional concerns about my personal wellbeing and safety in this country, I am facing a number of emotional and physiological symptoms that cause me concern for my health. I believe the upheaval in this nation under the current administration will lead to widespread health issues (mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual.) The more that protections are walked back, the more it is clear that no one is safe. The more that is stripped away from the lower-working class, the more that we suffer and, in turn, the more that the economy will suffer. It seems very much like the current administration is saying 'Let them eat cake.'*
- *This change will impact our ability to provide adequate and consistent services to our overall customer base. This may impact our ability to attract students, qualified faculty and staff, and potentially harm alumni and donor relationships. Ultimately, this process, though may have some merit, seems to be potentially rolled out in a manner that is fast, haphazard and without thought to the overall impact, not just to HBCUs and MSIs, but to the entire higher education population (including small cash strapped institutions). Lastly, there is concern that the administration has not taken into consideration the forthcoming enrollment cliff as it relates to the drop in U.S. birth rates, nor the fewer number of Black males enrolling in higher education. In some cases, the primary pathway to success for the latter, is through HBCUs. There should be a bridge program for Black males, which allows them to hold a comfortable space to flourish and thrive in an academic setting. We have to be intentional about serving this student population.*
- *I realize I hold the minority opinion - that's fine. How can you just memory hole the FAFSA fiasco and the Gainful Employment debacle? Oh yeah, too many IR folks see their jobs tied to compliance reporting and feel threatened that their jobs may go away. Spend your time championing consortiums outside of government for data sharing and stop whining.*

- *Again, I SUSPECT this will have a huge impact but until the next cycle starts rolling out, I have no idea. And, at this point, I can not point to any concrete impacts this has on my office or institution. I have no data to give you though I do have plenty of hypotheses. I recommend doing the survey again next year. Maybe Senator Warren could research what higher education institutions would like to see changed in terms of Federal oversight. For example, gainful employment was an absolute horror show. We also spend hours on compliance that no one looks at (net price calculator, clery report, website disclosures, etc.) I heard someone say 'Addition by subtraction' should be used for reporting requirements. You can add a new one if you take one away. Let's come up with our own plan for what should be cut so we have an answer for 'debloating' so that others aren't doing it for us. Just a thought.*
- *The greatest impact so far is uncertainty. This industry doesn't change the fastest, but that makes for very stable employment prospects. Now with all this chaos and flux its difficult to even claim that. Many of my colleagues are both fearful for their position if the federal requirements change drastically (which could happen tomorrow), and also fearful of speaking out against the changes. It's a very nervous time to work in higher education, especially in my conservative state.*
- *As an institutional research and effectiveness professional at a public research university, I have witnessed firsthand how the evolving landscape at the U.S. Department of Education has fundamentally challenged our operational capacity and institutional mission. The significant reduction in federal guidance, technical infrastructure, and departmental responsiveness has created cascading effects that extend far beyond administrative inconvenience. The diminished federal support framework has left critical institutional functions in precarious positions. IPEDS submissions, once supported by robust technical assistance and clear guidelines, now involve navigating ambiguous expectations with minimal federal consultation. Title IV compliance has become increasingly uncertain as policy interpretations shift without comprehensive guidance, placing both institutional eligibility and student financial support at risk. These challenges aren't merely bureaucratic hurdles; they represent genuine threats to our ability to serve students effectively and maintain regulatory compliance. Perhaps most concerning is the retreat from evidence-based practices in education equity. The decreased emphasis on data-informed DEI initiatives has created a troubling vacuum in which institutions must independently defend the value of inclusion efforts without federal reinforcement. This policy shift disproportionately impacts our most vulnerable student populations, whose educational access often depends on systematic attention to equity gaps and targeted interventions. The real cost of these changes manifests in very human terms: overworked campus professionals struggling to interpret shifting compliance requirements; underrepresented students questioning institutional commitment to their success; and research initiatives stalled by uncertainty around federal priorities and funding. As campus-level practitioners, we find ourselves not only implementing policy but increasingly having to fill fundamental gaps in the federal education infrastructure that once provided essential stability to the higher education ecosystem. These challenges aren't abstract policy debates they represent daily obstacles for those of us committed to educational access, institutional integrity, and student success. When federal*

educational infrastructure weakens, the burden falls heaviest on those with the least resources to absorb it, both institutionally and individually.

- *As a catholic institution of higher education, the significant, unwarranted, and overbearing suppression of diversity, equity, and inclusion adversely impacts our ability to fulfill our institutional mission: to welcome students of diverse backgrounds and ensure equitable outcomes regardless of those backgrounds. Our ability to be welcoming and emphasize the institution as both a faith-based and diverse institution is a core characteristic of my university, and now administrators feel as though they must scale back our support services that directly name diversity, equity, and inclusion, despite the benefits these services provide to all students. There is a fear of retribution in higher education for even speaking the words diversity, equity, and inclusion, which has caused us to take steps backward in student support services. Those services are not discriminatory in nature, as falsely proclaimed in narratives against higher education, but uplift students of diverse backgrounds, likely even those that the administration may not believe are diverse do to a superficial understanding of what diversity, equity, and inclusion really means in higher education. Furthermore, the threat to the Department of Education, and ongoing, centralized, and standardized data collection, is significant. By removing our ability to compare ourselves with our peers, we take steps backward in analyzing institutional outcomes. Further jeopardizing the ongoing effectiveness of our higher education infrastructure in the United States. While we can archive the historical data and continue to maintain institutional data sets utilizing similar methodologies, the lack of access and validation of our own and peer data will greatly impede our ability to utilize peer comparisons to continue to improve higher education as a whole. The lack of continuity and standardization will leave our comparative methods debilitated and ultimately invalid. We will be left guessing whether the datasets we may be able to pull from other institutions, if available, are tabulated utilizing generally accepted methodologies, and ultimately, institutional effectiveness measures will be left struggling to ascertain whether comparative information is reliable.*
- *Change is scary, but unnecessary change is unproductive. Positive change comes from examining what needs fixed and or upgraded, not quickly 'throwing away the apple cart'. Many of the challenges that we have faced regarding the U.S. Dept of Ed came from other government sources imposing restrictions that the staff at the Dept of Ed had to enforce or oversee. Disseminating the responsibilities to other agencies weakens the strength of our education system. Having education entities/programs reporting to multiple entities will actually make administration more complex and difficult to make positive changes in the future.*
- *The turbulence and constant changes made to the US Department of Education is wearing everyone down. Faculty, students, and staff are all concerned about funding for their jobs, funding for their education, and if they will be here this time next year. It wears us down emotionally and physically. We are already constantly asked to sacrifice and do more with less, but there is only so much we can do. People are disillusioned and burn out is at an all time high. Our institution may be large enough*

to weather the storm, but I fear it will no longer be able to provide access to everyone, but only those with pockets deep enough.

- I went into higher education because I wanted to help students (and their families) get an education, which leads to better paying jobs and, usually, a change in socio-economic status. I wanted to help people, but I feel like all I can do right now is focus on my own survival as everything I've worked to help build burns around me. I feel lost and constantly scared that I will lose my job. I am worried about students possibly being picked up by ICE. I am angry and I want to scream at the leaders of this country who have ruined so many lives. We are supposed to be better than this.*
- Our college focuses on training students to work in the trades and technical industries that are specifically in need of more employees. So, the changes at the Department of Education will decrease the number of qualified trades people and technical experts entering the workforce. By making it more difficult for students to succeed in their education, we decrease the number of skilled workers in America. This is antithetical to the goals of the current administration, as this would make the country more reliant on skilled workers from other countries.*
- My primary concern is ensuring our institution maintains compliant with Federal regulations and requirements, as a means to ensure we serve our students, community, and society. We are a STEM dominant institution with significant Federally-supported research outcomes. When we are in conflict with Federal expectations regardless of what we do, it creates a disservice to our students and society. There are laws on the books that we must follow, yet there is a substantial swell of expectation that we will be unable to follow the law because the mechanisms at the Federal level will be removed that make it possible to follow the laws. A minimally functioning Federal government should/must be able to support the upholding of laws currently codified.*
- For students, this could be disastrous - any disruption to our students' financial aid would not only impact them, but our college and our town. Our college is what holds the small town up creating most of the economic impact. Personally, I have worked for 10 years diligently paying my student loan payments on the promise of forgiveness and now all that might just go out the window.*
- The uncertainty and continual changes in information make it nearly impossible to stay up-to-date with what is going on. This feels purposeful as to burn us out so we will stop caring about the next announcement. The attack on higher education is going to hurt future generations unless we find better ways of showing the value we bring to society, industry and everyone's lives. The economic impact of universities goes well beyond what we can quantify easily, the foundational research that is now applied in almost every aspect of our lives is not seen by most people as facilitated by universities... but it is, and until we have our industry partners acknowledging that... we are in trouble. As a highly educated person, my own children may continue to have access to higher education, but for so many first-generation people, that may not be true in the coming generation... that crushes me and goes against everything I have worked toward in my career. My team and I work for a university because we believe in its access mission (not because we get paid*

commensurate with industry peers)... but we will no longer be able to make that mission financially feasible without federal funding for financial aid.

- *If the goal of higher education is to produce a workforce that is socially aware, civically competent, and vocationally prepared, then the changes currently being proposed run counter to these desired societal goods. As our nation continues to diversify, is it not important for all higher education consumers to be prepared and equipped for a workforce that is comprised of diverse backgrounds? The changes to DoE and the larger social contract with higher education are creating further degradation of opportunity and threaten the very engine of research and productivity that has truly made America great. Eliminating data repositories, cutting systems that track outcomes, and threatening data providers who embrace their mission of collecting data will not lead to a better and just society.*
- *The rapid changes and uncertainties surrounding the focus on decentralizing the DOE have impacted all in higher education, faculty, staff, students, families, communities, and more. There are more questions every day with no answers. It is a frightening time, and the role of our government is to ensure the protection of our educational rights.*
- *I am a single mother and am currently on the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program. My son is also supposed to start College the Fall. The uncertainty about my financial future is a source of phenomenal stress for our family. I only had 3.5 years left of my 10 years of service. My time serving right now isn't being counted and hasn't been for several months now. If my student loans suddenly become due, it will change the entire landscape of my life.*
- *Our institution is not currently under investigation for antisemitism as are institutions like Columbia, Harvard and others. However, we do see what is happening with other institutions as do our students. This environment of hostility brings with it a personal hesitancy to speak up about or to address wrongs. The Department of Education is intended to be a partner to support institutions as they remedy campus issues; it is no longer a reliable cooperative partner.*
- *I anticipate a streamlined experience and reduced reporting requirements. I look forward to a simpler and more useful interaction with federal authorities and a greater autonomy from federal overreach. I firmly believe that Elon Musk should be given a bigger and more powerful chainsaw. He is doing good work, and DOGE should continue stripping the bloat from our government before it collapses from federal bureaucratic obesity. We cannot continue on the old path. It was headed toward the total destruction of this country, and it is about time that someone takes that problem by the horns. The federal government should never be the largest employer in a country, for that is the sign of bureaucratic dystopian nightmare. And that is exactly where we were headed. Not anymore. This administration must keep up the good work and get our country back on track.*

- *As a higher education professional for more than 25 years, I am extremely concerned with President Trump's actions against the Department of Education. While a thoughtful examination of government spending may provide opportunities to better support those living in the United States, the haphazard approach lacking data-informed decisions, is dangerous for the future of our country. The United States needs a well-educated society with open doors to global talent in order to build a prosperous and sustainable future for the entire world. Education is the cornerstone for our future.*
- *The U.S. higher education system is unique in the world, and so many countries send their students to our colleges and universities to study under our influence. We have produced amazing research, technology, businesses, and a thriving GDP as a result of our higher education system. The past several decades has seen dramatic strides in college affordability, completion rates, and economic infusion. Ending the efforts of a federal department removes vital resources and guidance from a system meant to preserve our American educational values.*
- *I've worked for over eight years towards Public Service Loan Forgiveness, doing meaningful and impactful work along the way. It would absolutely crush me to have that opportunity swiped away right as I am about to attain it.*
- *Education should be accessible and supportive to all who have a desire to be life-long learners and critical thinkers. I am especially concerned for students who are vulnerable because of special education needs, social differences (gender identity, sexual identity, etc.), political and religious differences, race or ethnicity, or citizenship status, or might be non-traditional or under-privileged students in a variety of ways. The anticipated changes and accompanying chaos are likely to create many negative impacts and have a particularly noticeable effect on students who are already facing challenges. Further, restrictions on academic research and research funding diminishes the US's standing around the globe and slows ethical progress and innovation that would otherwise benefit humankind.*
- *Dismantling the Department of Education is one part of an effort to undermine higher education in the U.S. Elite institutions are a large generator of our culture's acceptable discourse. The Trump administration and its influences oppose the current discourse and are emboldened to act as an existential threat to institutions propagating said discourse. Challenging the existence of even Ivy League schools is a threat to all schools and to the academic pursuit of truth, whether or not one agrees with their worldview.*
- *Higher education is one of the last things in which America leads the world. Students come from all over the world to the US for a degree. That is ending under this administration. Please do what you can to strengthen the US DOE.*
- *Education is the true equalizer for our communities, and this is why I am a 20 plus year institutional researcher. As a black, third generation college graduate that did not grow up with significant*

means, higher education has been the avenue for me, my family, and my community to progress to the mountain top of success. The changes to the department of education are nefarious and only reflect the resentment the president has for people of greater intelligence. Many hustlers think they are brilliant until their plug is taken to jail. Elon is the plug.

- *Personally, I always hold a strong value in quality education. I support any decision to make fundamental improvements, not just on paper, but in action to improve the quality of public education. I have been working as a Director of Assessment and Accreditation Services for over a decade, going through two 5-year interim reviews and a 10-year reaffirmation review. My experience is that this kind of accreditation review is only a formality, which has nothing to do with educational quality improvement, as those accreditation organizations claimed. It is a total waste of money for the institution and the state. Think about it reasonably, how could those accreditation organizations hold the same standards for Ivy League institutions and community colleges? Those standards are good for nothing. The IE offices in HE are doing nothing but preparing the reports, which have no value in quality improvements.*
- *With so many changes being announced so quickly, it is extremely difficult to plan for the future of our University and prepare ourselves to support our students in the best ways possible.*
- *The Trump administration has made it clear that revealing my name and the institution I work for will put both me and my institution at risk. I must prioritize my children and family, as my salary is what provides food on the table and a roof over our heads. I hope that my sacrifices put my children in a position where they will be able to stand up for their beliefs without the fear that losing a job will threaten their families' basic living conditions, impacting on our well-being, rather than just our convenience.*
- *As a higher education administrator and faculty member, I am witnessing firsthand the effects of the ongoing changes at the U.S. Department of Education on both institutional operations and student well-being. Delays and shifting policies surrounding financial aid processing, regulatory guidance, and compliance have created increased uncertainty for students, many of whom are first-generation or from underserved backgrounds, and for the offices tasked with supporting them. At my institution, we are experiencing mounting challenges in communicating accurate and timely information to students and families, which affects trust, enrollment decisions, and persistence. The administrative burden on staff has grown significantly, as we work to interpret evolving guidance while maintaining day-to-day responsibilities. This has strained resources and morale, and has made it more difficult to focus on student success initiatives. Our students depend on a stable, responsive system to fund their education and plan for their futures. As we aim to strengthen equity, access, and outcomes in higher education, consistent and transparent support from the Department of Education is critical.*
- *Federal regulations have become very complicated and cumbersome for institutions over the past few years, and I welcome the opportunity for these to be simplified or removed. However, I am*

concerned that there may be unintended consequences and reduced ability for disadvantaged students to succeed in higher education with how the current changes are being rolled out.

- *I am halfway through a doctoral program in institutional research and currently work for the Colorado Community College System. Changes in the U.S. Department of Education impact me as both a student and employee within the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education that serves roughly 150,000 students annually. The uncertainty there has been characteristic of this administration's sudden changes in policy have made it nearly impossible to plan for repaying my student loans and public service loan forgiveness, the possibility of loss of funding as a student and professional researcher, and for the viability of a career in my chosen field of academic and institutional research.*
- *I would like to say that as an IR Professional, this survey is almost like a 'push poll'. It is evident the answers that are expected, and some of the things mentioned are not impacted at all by the Federal Government. For example, some of the survey items included changes in the restructuring of the Dept of Ed hindering our ability to treat our students equitably, ensure student outcomes are met, and maintain accreditation standards. We are dedicated to ALL of our students, and we would pursue excellence with or without accreditation. We are a culturally diverse campus with students from many parts of the world. It is our mission to ensure that they learn, grow, and become successful in their chosen fields of study. We are a non-profit, private, Christian university, in which the administration, faculty, and staff work at lower pay than those serving at public and well-endowed private universities. And as most of those institutions do, we serve willingly and joyfully because of our love of learning and seeing young people reach their full potential. We also are inspired by the example of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.*
- *Having been in IR for over 3 decades, my first exposure to the meaning of institutional research was related to NCES and IPEDS reporting. Our office was developed to meet these reporting needs which have evolved into advanced analytics and the study of higher education. We understand and appreciate the importance of IPEDS reporting because of the meaningful, consistent and longitudinal comparative information we are able to retrieve from it. It is an institution in itself and the backbone of how IR was founded. Institutions and IR offices within institutions will struggle to find meaning and comparison data without IPEDS.*
- *Lack of transparency and resources will cause increased frustration in already challenging positions in higher education. The high stakes games that are being played by the Trump administration will push professionals out of the higher education field and institutions and students will pay the price. Bad actors in higher education will undoubtedly get ahead as they don't follow good practice, accreditors are devalued, and the US will continue to lose ground in terms of our reputation across the world.*

- *I would love to see better (not necessarily more, just better) regulatory policies and practices from the government. I expect the states can provide this, perhaps better than the federal government, given enough time and knowledge transfer from current federal government employees.*
- *As an institutional research professional, I fear that we are going backwards with the Trump administration's DOE mandates. The progress that we have made in leveling the playing field for people with educational aspirations is being reversed. Progress in the everything from Artificial Intelligence to real-time cause and effect, actionable results as captured by sophisticated data technology are being eliminated. This is the absolute worst time in American history for this as our footing in the world, where education is mostly considered a right, not a privilege, is increasingly imperiled.*
- *I have worked in public higher education at multiple institutions for over 30 years. If federal funding were withheld from all private institutions and instead redirected to public institutions, the additional funding would allow for expansion of education to those who need it most and there would be a massive leveling up of collective knowledge and skills across our country. This in turn would prepare our country for meaningful employment.*
- *I hope that results are shared equitably among senators and not just E. Warren.*
- *I don't know anyone who works at my university who couldn't come up with at least a handful of federal regulations or requirements that could be improved, streamlined, or dispensed with altogether. How about including us in the conversation? We all want our government to work better for us and to cost less. All we ask is that existing commitments be honored so that we can in turn honor our existing commitments. All we ask is that it be done in a fair, evenhanded, predictable way we can plan for.*
- *The depth and breadth of the changes impact on our work. As professionals that help the university make data-driven decisions, we no longer have confidence in data collected, nor can we use the data to predict outcomes. The constant threats thwart our ability to be genuine and vulnerable. Instilling fear is not the way to advance improvement. We want to serve our students; we want to advance research that serves our community. Instead, we spend time on external threats.*
- *This is impacting ALL of our students in a negative way. These decisions will make it harder for people to have access to education and will disproportionately impact on marginalized communities.*
- *These changes have been frightening and disheartening for me personally. As an educator with over 20 years of experience, I have witnessed how access to and conversation about student data can transform education trajectories. Despite skepticism in my early days, my experience over and over has reinforced how education outcomes are still influenced by demographic factors like race/ethnicity and gender, and I know that from seeing it in the data. And I've seen changes in outcomes when we looked at that data and made changes in the student education experience. Last*

year I moved from a state that was deeply in the process of implementing many of the things that are now happening at the national scale, in reaction to progress that had been made to acknowledge equity gaps in our state. Living and working there became intolerable for me and my family so we relocated only to now be faced with many of the same challenges because of work being done to dismantle educational progress nationally.

- *The Executive Branch malpractice has, across the board, led to an inability to behave responsibly with budgets. This is obviously true of the many NSF-funded projects but it cuts across all offices: Admissions can't guess at admitted student acceptances, Student Financial Aid cannot securely offer aid packages - or even sustain the packages as designed for individual students already enrolled, Off Campus Programs cannot offer programs to all students equally because international students may not be able to return to the college, ... the hits just keep on hitting.*
- *We have prided ourselves in supporting services and academic programs for ALL students but particularly those in marginalized populations who have not had the same access and opportunity as majority groups. Of course, higher education can be improved, but there is no benefit to anyone except the uninformed and erratic Trump administration to tearing down an office that supports and cherishes US and international students. Our institution is committed to providing an education that fosters future economic and community health. One of the ways we do that is through data analytics and benchmarking. The US ED is a valued partner that has demonstrated repeatedly that higher education (and K12) MATTERS and that student success/outcomes are not just hearsay. While rules can be cumbersome, we engage because we want to be better for our students and families. If the decision were based on evidence, I would not be writing this, but it isn't - it's one person's folly and bullying, which Congress should shut down.*
- *Dear Senator Warren, I am writing to express my deep concerns regarding the recent changes at the U.S. Department of Education and their profound impact on our institution, our staff, and our students. The potential transfer of the U.S. Department of Education's responsibilities to other federal departments raises significant concerns about the efficiency and responsiveness of these departments. With an increased workload, these departments may struggle to provide timely responses to critical matters, leading to delays that could severely affect our institution's operations. Additionally, the increased workload could result in burnout among federal employees, causing high turnover rates and leaving institutions like ours uncertain about whom to contact for essential information. Our programs are heavily dependent on the U.S. Department of Education's support. If the Department were to be abolished, our institution would face existential threats. The majority of our staff is funded through grants provided by the Department, and losing this funding would drastically reduce our ability to serve our students effectively. Furthermore, the abolition of financial aid programs would prevent many of our students from attending college, undermining their educational and career aspirations. Recent changes to the U.S. Department of Education's policies and programs have already had detrimental effects on our institution. These policies provided crucial protection and stability for our students, and their removal has eroded trust in the government. The*

stripping away of high-need programs and policies does not bode well for the United States' reputation and commitment to education. Looking ahead, we anticipate further negative consequences from these changes. The reduction in staff at the Department has already caused delays in reimbursement payments for federal grants, inconsistent notifications regarding changes in positions, and a lack of responsiveness to grant-related inquiries. These issues create a domino effect, impacting our institution's ability to manage grants effectively and potentially leading to staff layoffs. Such layoffs would harm our student population by reducing the support and resources available to them. In conclusion, the changes at the U.S. Department of Education pose significant threats to our institution's stability and our students' ability to access quality education. We urge you to consider the far-reaching implications of these changes and advocate for policies that support and strengthen the Department's role in higher education. Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

- *In addition to the functioning of my institution, these changes have caused a great deal of unease among those at my institution. The lack of clear advice at the federal level has made it harder for us to know how to operate and if we are legally 'safe' to continue our normal operations. This has caused a great deal of stress for myself and my colleagues and is dramatically impacting our wellbeing, which is something this survey did not otherwise capture, but that I think is important to note that people working in Higher Ed and IR right now are afraid about a lack of job security for the remaining few years of the presidential term.*
- *The dismantling of higher education is clear and palpable to those of us working in it. Some suggest it is systematic, others that it is the result of uncoordinated efforts unaware of their broader negative impact on higher education as a whole. I think that most concern comes from the uncertainty of it all. How much will changes made by the current administration impact on institutions and individuals directly? How many of the changes of the current administration will stick and what will be overturned, repealed, or subsequently improved? The impact this will have on students is the bigger issue, as the goal of higher education is to train our future experts while contributing to communities and greater bodies of art and science and such. The impression I get is that the current presidential administration does not care. The long term impact on our nation is also difficult to characterize accurately, but I do not foresee it having a positive impact on our international standing. If they did care about being the best, they'd invest in higher education, not pull support of it.*
- *The institution that I work at is an HBCU with a rich history of serving our students and promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. The changes happening at the U.S. Department of Education and the rhetoric coming from this administration impacts us greatly and puts our entire existence at risk. Our administration, faculty, staff, and students rely on federal resources such as grants, financial aid, and programs geared toward assisting disadvantaged students. To take these things away forces us to reduce our staffing and our programs. It also forces students to make more difficult choices regarding their educational aspirations. As an HBCU, we are in the unique situation where the*

majority of our student population is African American. We also have a large population of international graduate students. With the targeting of DEI, there is a lot of fear and anxiety on our campus. There is the general feeling of being targeted and punished. We have been forced to remove any reference to diversity on our website and in our publications despite it being a part of our mission as an HBCU. In addition, there has been a complete lack of transparency or direction as to what it all means for us as an institution or for the greater goal of educating students from different backgrounds. This will impact higher education in ways that will affect this country for years to come.