

Date: March 5, 2024

To: U.S. Department of Education

From: Jo Blondin and Michael Cioce, Community Colleges

Scott Dolan, Private-Nonprofit Institutions of Higher Education
Michale McComis, Institutional Accrediting Agencies Recognized by
the Secretary
JoEllen Price and Zachary Goodwin, Financial Aid Representatives
Jillian Klein, Proprietary Institutions of Higher Education

Re: Issue Paper 3—Distance Education

The Department of Education has proposed modifications to 34 C.F.R. § 600.2, Definitions, that propose removing asynchronous learning as an option in clock hour programs. Given that the Department's proposal will impact nearly 8000 programs and their students and as a means to address the Department's concerns regarding the oversight of asynchronous learning in clock hour programs, Institutional accreditors have offered to include a review in this area where applicable. As a means to assess and ensure a review of these programs, negotiators propose the addition of the following language in Section 602.17(i):

602.17(i) If the agency allows asynchronous distance education delivery methods for clock hours programs, the agency must:

- 1. Limit the allowance for asynchronous distance education delivery methods to only those portions of the programs that do not include hands-on learning objectives;***
- 2. Require the institution to demonstrate that the asynchronous distance education delivery methods are comparable to synchronous distance education delivery methods in student engagement, objectives, effectiveness, and educational outcomes;***
- 3. Require institutions to use student identity practices required in Section 602.17(g).***