

# Colleges are talking about the Administration's College Rating System, are you?

**From: The Honorable Bob Goodlatte**

**Sent By: [lindsay.yates@mail.house.gov](mailto:lindsay.yates@mail.house.gov)**

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Dear Colleague:

As you may know, the Department of Education, under the direction of President Obama, has begun work to create a “college ratings system.” This proposal was initially announced in August 2013 as part of the President’s “Plan to Make College More Affordable.” Though many of the details and ways in which a rating would be derived are still in deliberations, the original proposal suggested the rating would be based on measures such as percentage of students receiving Pell grants, average tuition, loan debt, graduation rates, graduate earnings, and advanced degrees. This ratings system is to be in place before the 2015-2016 school year, which is rapidly approaching.

Recently, I have spoken with a number of college and university presidents who are concerned about this proposal. Please see an op-ed from the President of Washington & Lee University, Ken Ruscio, that highlights some of these concerns: [http://www.wlumag-digital.com/wlumag/winter\\_2014#pg42](http://www.wlumag-digital.com/wlumag/winter_2014#pg42). The questions from college and universities range from the specific to the 30,000 foot level: How do we deal with transfer rates for community colleges? How do you measure the value of a college education in general? And, is this even the role of the federal government? I share all of these concerns.

I am working to prohibit the use of funds to develop, implement, or administer a Postsecondary Institution Ratings System in the appropriations process. Whether the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Act is enacted or an omnibus bill, my hope is that this legislation will include language prohibiting this ratings system from moving forward.

I will continue to look for opportunities in the Congress to highlight the problems with this proposed ratings system and address the concerns of colleges and universities. I hope that you will join me in this effort.

Affordability and accessibility are goals that we all share and while it is our wish that all taxpayer dollars are spent responsibly, even those paid out in the form of federal student aid, it is important that we trust students’ free choices and allow the standards by which institutions for higher education are measured to be guided by a free market. There are real, long-term consequences that could occur if this proposal isn’t stopped, including the loss of choice,

diversity, and innovation. I am more than willing to engage in a conversation with the Administration and others to determine alternatives for dealing with wasteful spending and bad-actors in the higher education community, but I remain convinced that this is not the correct way.

If you are interested in learning more and working with me on this issue as we move forward, please reach out to Lindsay Yates ([Lindsay.yates@mail.house.gov](mailto:Lindsay.yates@mail.house.gov)) in my office. I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

/s

Bob Goodlatte  
Member of Congress