

§ 1011a. Protection of student speech and association rights

(a) Protection of rights

(1) It is the sense of Congress that no student attending an institution of higher education on a full- or part-time basis should, on the basis of participation in protected speech or protected association, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination or official sanction under any education program, activity, or division of the institution directly or indirectly receiving financial assistance under this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42, whether or not such program, activity, or division is sponsored or officially sanctioned by the institution.

(2) It is the sense of Congress that—

(A) the diversity of institutions and educational missions is one of the key strengths of American higher education;

(B) individual institutions of higher education have different missions and each institution should design its academic program in accordance with its educational goals;

(C) an institution of higher education should facilitate the free and open exchange of ideas;

(D) students should not be intimidated, harassed, discouraged from speaking out, or discriminated against;

(E) students should be treated equally and fairly; and

(F) nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to modify, change, or infringe upon any constitutionally protected religious liberty, freedom, expression, or association.

(b) Construction

Nothing in this section shall be construed—

(1) to discourage the imposition of an official sanction on a student that has willfully participated in the disruption or attempted disruption of a lecture, class, speech, presentation, or performance made or scheduled to be made under the auspices of the institution of higher education, provided that the imposition of such sanction is done objectively and fairly; or

(2) to prevent an institution of higher education from taking appropriate and effective action to prevent violations of State liquor laws, to discourage binge drinking and other alcohol abuse, to protect students from sexual harassment including assault and date rape, to prevent hazing, or to regulate unsanitary or unsafe conditions in any student residence.

(c) Definitions

For the purposes of this section:

(1) Official sanction

The term “official sanction”—

(A) means expulsion, suspension, probation, censure, condemnation, reprimand, or any other disciplinary, coercive, or adverse action taken by an institution of higher education or administrative unit of the institution; and

(B) includes an oral or written warning made by an official of an institution of higher education acting in the official capacity of the official.

(2) Protected association

The term “protected association” means the joining, assembling, and residing with others that is protected under the first and 14th amendments to the Constitution, or would be protected if the institution of higher education involved were subject to those amendments.

(3) Protected speech

The term “protected speech” means speech that is protected under the first and 14th amendments to the Constitution, or would be protected if the institution of higher education involved were subject to those amendments.

(Pub. L. 89-329, title I, §112, as added Pub. L. 105-244, title I, §101(a), Oct. 7, 1998, 112 Stat. 1591; amended Pub. L. 110-315, title I, §104, Aug. 14, 2008, 122 Stat. 3090.)

PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 1011a, Pub. L. 89-329, title I, §122, as added Pub. L. 102-325, title I, §101, July 23, 1992, 106 Stat. 462, authorized grants to States, prior to the general amendment of this subchapter by Pub. L. 105-244.

AMENDMENTS

2008—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 110-315, §104(1), designated existing provisions as par. (1) and added par. (2).

Subsec. (b)(1). Pub. L. 110-315, §104(2), inserted “, provided that the imposition of such sanction is done objectively and fairly” after “higher education”.

§ 1011b. Territorial waiver authority

The Secretary is required to waive the eligibility criteria of any postsecondary education program administered by the Department where such criteria do not take into account the unique circumstances in Guam, the United States Virgin Islands, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Freely Associated States.

(Pub. L. 89-329, title I, §113, as added Pub. L. 105-244, title I, §101(a), Oct. 7, 1998, 112 Stat. 1591; amended Pub. L. 110-315, title I, §105, Aug. 14, 2008, 122 Stat. 3090.)

PRIOR PROVISIONS

Provisions similar to this section were contained in section 1144a of this title prior to repeal by Pub. L. 105-244.

A prior section 1011b, Pub. L. 89-329, title I, §123, as added Pub. L. 102-325, title I, §101, July 23, 1992, 106 Stat. 462, related to State applications for grants, prior to the general amendment of this subchapter by Pub. L. 105-244.

AMENDMENTS

2008—Pub. L. 110-315 substituted “Territorial waiver authority” for “Treatment of territories and territorial student assistance” in section catchline and struck out subsec. (a) designation and heading and subsec. (b). Text of former subsec. (b) read as follows: “Notwithstanding any other provision of law, an institution of higher education that is located in any of the Freely Associated States, rather than in another State, shall be eligible, if otherwise qualified, for assistance under division 1 of subpart 2 of part A of subchapter IV of this chapter. This subsection shall cease to be effective on September 30, 2004.”

§ 1011c. National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity

(a) Establishment

There is established in the Department a National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (in this section referred to as the “Committee”) to assess the process of accreditation and the institutional eligibility and certification of institutions of higher education (as defined in section 1002 of this title) under subchapter IV of this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42.

(b) Membership

(1) In general

The Committee shall have 18 members, of which—

(A) six members shall be appointed by the Secretary;

(B) six members shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, three of whom shall be appointed on the recommendation of the majority leader of the House of Representatives, and three of whom shall be appointed on the recommendation of the minority leader of the House of Representatives; and

(C) six members shall be appointed by the President pro tempore of the Senate, three of whom shall be appointed on the recommendation of the majority leader of the Senate, and three of whom shall be appointed on the recommendation of the minority leader of the Senate.

(2) Qualifications

Individuals shall be appointed as members of the Committee—

(A) on the basis of the individuals’ experience, integrity, impartiality, and good judgment;

(B) from among individuals who are representatives of, or knowledgeable concerning, education and training beyond secondary education, representing all sectors and types of institutions of higher education (as defined in section 1002 of this title); and

(C) on the basis of the individuals’ technical qualifications, professional standing, and demonstrated knowledge in the fields of accreditation and administration in higher education.

(3) Terms of members

Except as provided in paragraph (5), the term of office of each member of the Committee shall be for six years, except that any member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring prior to the expiration of the term for which the member’s predecessor was appointed shall be appointed for the remainder of such term.

(4) Vacancy

A vacancy on the Committee shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment was made not later than 90 days after the vacancy occurs. If a vacancy occurs in a position to be filled by the Secretary, the Secretary shall publish a Federal Register notice soliciting nominations for the position not later than 30 days after being notified of the vacancy.

(5) Initial terms

The terms of office for the initial members of the Committee shall be—

(A) three years for members appointed under paragraph (1)(A);

(B) four years for members appointed under paragraph (1)(B); and

(C) six years for members appointed under paragraph (1)(C).

(6) Chairperson

The members of the Committee shall select a chairperson from among the members.

(c) Functions

The Committee shall—

(1) advise the Secretary with respect to establishment and enforcement of the standards of accrediting agencies or associations under subpart 2 of part G of subchapter IV of this chapter;

(2) advise the Secretary with respect to the recognition of a specific accrediting agency or association;

(3) advise the Secretary with respect to the preparation and publication of the list of nationally recognized accrediting agencies and associations;

(4) advise the Secretary with respect to the eligibility and certification process for institutions of higher education under subchapter IV of this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42, together with recommendations for improvements in such process;

(5) advise the Secretary with respect to the relationship between—

(A) accreditation of institutions of higher education and the certification and eligibility of such institutions; and

(B) State licensing responsibilities with respect to such institutions; and

(6) carry out such other advisory functions relating to accreditation and institutional eligibility as the Secretary may prescribe by regulation.

(d) Meeting procedures

(1) Schedule

(A) Biannual meetings

The Committee shall meet not less often than twice each year, at the call of the Chairperson.

(B) Publication of date

The Committee shall submit the date and location of each meeting in advance to the Secretary, and the Secretary shall publish such information in the Federal Register not later than 30 days before the meeting.

(2) Agenda

(A) Establishment

The agenda for a meeting of the Committee shall be established by the Chairperson and shall be submitted to the members of the Committee upon notification of the meeting.

(B) Opportunity for public comment

The agenda shall include, at a minimum, opportunity for public comment during the Committee’s deliberations.