



American Federation
of Teachers, AFL-CIO

AFT Teachers
AFT PSRP
AFT Higher Education
AFT Public Employees
AFT Healthcare

555 New Jersey Ave. N.W.
Washington, DC 20001
202/879-4400
www.aft.org

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September 19, 2005

Secretary Margaret Spellings
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Spellings:

We are most interested in your decision to create a commission to develop a comprehensive national strategy for post-secondary education.

We commend your intention to draw on a wide variety of higher education stakeholders to undertake this assignment. At the same time, while the commission includes one or two distinguished faculty members, we are concerned that it does not include leaders of organizations such as ours that represent thousands upon thousands of college faculty members around the country.

The AFT, for example, counts over 150,000 higher education faculty and professionals among its 1.3 million members, more than any other national faculty organization. As you can imagine, AFT leaders have for decades been deeply engaged in the educational, professional and public policy issues facing our members. We believe this perspective—the perspective of the people who work on the front lines with students day in and day out— should be included in the commission's deliberations.

We hope the commission can be expanded to include such representation. AFT, on its part, has a good deal of expertise on higher education issues and we believe we can offer constructive suggestions to help fulfill the commission's mandate. We respectfully request that you give this idea your strongest consideration.

Sincerely,

Lawrence N. Gold
Director, AFT Higher Education

LG: lh opeiu#2 afl-cio