



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
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February 27, 2023

The Honorable Miguel Cardona  
U.S. Secretary of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202 Via Email  
*Via Email and Federal Express*

**Re: False Allegations regarding The University of Arizona and the University of Arizona Global Campus**

Dear Secretary Cardona,

Although Under Secretary Kvaal and his team have received several briefings directly from me and from my team regarding the University of Arizona Global Campus (“**UAGC**”) and its affiliation with The University of Arizona (“**UArizona**”), I am compelled to respond to the false statements, misrepresentations, and baseless speculation in the letter to you dated February 22, 2023, from Leila Hudson, Ph.D., and Mona Hymel, J.D., both professors at UArizona.

Despite the official UArizona letterhead, faculty leadership titles, and suggestions of faculty authority, neither Professor Hudson nor Professor Hymel was authorized by the UArizona faculty to send this letter. In fact, the letter was never reviewed, considered, nor authorized by UArizona’s Faculty Senate.

Contrary to the essential factual assertion of Professors Hudson and Hymel, UArizona did **not** acquire the assets of Ashford University (“Ashford”) in 2020. UArizona faculty governance did not have an opportunity in 2020 to weigh in on the acquisition of Ashford’s assets because UArizona did not acquire them. On December 1, 2020, UAGC, an independent Arizona nonprofit corporation, acquired the assets of Ashford and began operating the online institution. UAGC is governed by an independent Board of Directors and managed by a senior executive team that is accountable solely to the UAGC Board. In addition, UAGC received its Internal Revenue Service determination letter dated April 8, 2021, recognizing its tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1984, as amended.

Contrary to the baseless speculation in Professors Hudson and Hymel’s letter, the assets of UArizona have never been commingled with UAGC’s assets. To allege or even suggest otherwise is unscrupulous and devoid of any factual basis. As an Arizona public university, UArizona is audited annually by the Arizona Auditor General. Never has the Arizona Auditor General found any hint of commingling of assets or other financial impropriety between UArizona and UAGC. Furthermore, the UArizona faculty, acting through its Faculty Senate, has never “expressed concerns about the commingling” of UArizona assets with UAGC’s assets.

On January 27, 2022, in a public session of the Arizona Board of Regents, I announced that UArizona intended to acquire UAGC as provided under the Affiliation Agreement dated November 12, 2020, between UArizona and UAGC, and the First Amendment to Affiliation Agreement dated January 3, 2022, and commence an accelerated planning process focused on how best to structure UAGC within UArizona. I established a joint Steering Committee composed of UArizona and UAGC leaders and chaired

by Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Teaching, and Learning Gail Burd, Ph.D. Subsequently, I authorized the establishment of the following six working groups composed of faculty members and leaders of both UArizona and UAGC: (1) Academics; (2) Continuous Improvement; (3) Institutional Operations; (4) Oversight and Compliance; (5) Student Success; and (6) Communications.

Throughout this process, I have continually kept the Arizona Board of Regents informed on UArizona's affiliation with UAGC and our planning to acquire UAGC and transition it into UArizona. Contrary to Professors Hudson and Hymel's assertion, the Arizona Board of Regents has not yet authorized UArizona's acquisition of UAGC.

Professors Hudson and Hymel's suggestion that there are "apparent conflicts of interest and conflicts of commitment involving University of Arizona senior leaders and employees" is also an allegation without merit. Under the Affiliation Agreement, as amended, UArizona appoints three Directors to UAGC's Board and the University of Arizona Foundation ("UAF") appoints one Director. The remaining five Directors are independent. The three UArizona appointed Directors and one UAF appointed Director serve in their official UArizona capacities. Contrary to the implications of Professors Hudson and Hymel's statements, none of these four UArizona and UAF appointees to the UAGC Board is employed by UAGC or receives any compensation from UAGC, and their service as UAGC Directors is in their official UArizona capacity. To imply that these Board positions undertaken with the full knowledge of UArizona and UAF leadership violate Policy 2.06.05 of UArizona's University Handbook for Appointed Personnel Policy is completely without merit.

UArizona's efforts regarding, and affiliation with, UAGC have been focused on doing what is best for the current and future students of UArizona and UAGC. Any allegations to the contrary are simply false.

I would be very happy to answer any questions you may have and to provide any requested additional information. I greatly appreciate your consideration of this letter.

Sincerely,



Robert C. Robbins, M.D.  
President, The University of Arizona

cc: James Kvaal, Under Secretary of Education  
Nasser H. Paydar, Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education  
Clarence Powell, Chief of Staff, Office of Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education  
Herman Bounds, Director, Accreditation Group, Office of Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education  
George Alan Smith, Executive Director, National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity, U.S. Department of Education  
Robert Shireman, member, National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity, U.S. Department of Education  
Christopher N. Oberg, Executive Vice President, WASC Senior College and University Commission