



VETERANS EDUCATION SUCCESS®

September 15, 2022

The Honorable Miguel Cardona, Ed.D.
Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202

Mr. Secretary,

Responding to the Department of Education's *Federal Register* notice of August 16, 2022, I write on behalf of Veterans Education Success to nominate Ms. Debbie Cochrane, Chief of California's Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education, for appointment to the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI).

Veterans Education Success is a nonprofit research, policy, and student-veteran advocacy organization. We work on a bipartisan basis to advance higher education success for veterans, service members, and military families, and to protect the integrity and promise of their federal educational benefits, most notably, Title IV student financial assistance programs, GI Bill® benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Department of Defense's Tuition Assistance program.

We believe that none of the quality assurance and institutional integrity safeguards for these programs is more consequential or more potentially effective than accreditation. While state and federal agencies have established various administrative and financial requirements for institutional participation in their respective educational benefits programs, accreditation alone is squarely focused on substantive educational adequacy of academic programs that institutions offer. It is therefore critical for the Department to receive sound and truly independent advice from NACIQI before you recognize an accreditation agency as a reliable authority.

Ms. Cochrane has a wealth of subject-matter expertise, extensive experience with evidence-based institutional accountability, and a track-record of effective oversight. She is well-versed in the underlying legislative and regulatory framework of accreditation, as well as policy and data issues in higher education. Most significantly, she would bring an independent perspective and a thoughtful and inclusive approach to advancement of NACIQI's mission.

Ms. Cochrane has indicated her willingness to serve if appointed and her contact information is as follows:

Debbie Cochrane
Chief, Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education
1747 North Market Blvd, Suite 225
Sacramento, CA 95834

We respectfully request that you select Ms. Cochrane for this important appointment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barmak Nassirian". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and "N".

Barmak Nassirian
Vice President for Higher Education Policy