

**House Education Committee
Hearing on Chapter 49.2 (Teacher Preparation) Guidelines**

**Testimony of Dr. Don Francis
President, AICUP
November 13, 2008**

Good morning. As president of the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Pennsylvania, I am pleased to be here to speak with you about the serious concerns of the presidents, provosts, and education department chairs among the 84 private colleges and universities that comprise AICUP's membership. By no means, do my remarks or the remarks of others on this panel reflect the views of all private college presidents and faculty, but the Association's Board (composed of 23 presidents) has taken a very strong position in opposition to the "guidelines" issued to implement Chapter 49.2 and this opposition has been repeated by the vast majority of presidents, provosts and faculty in our membership.

I want to be clear: AICUP is not opposed to the Chapter 49.2 regulations. We agree with the need for greater instruction in special education and ELL and accept the division of the elementary certificate.

I also want to make clear that AICUP supports high standards for our teacher preparation programs. We applaud the Department's efforts to improve the quality of teacher education programs in Pennsylvania. Indeed, we will support the Department's closure of any institution's teacher preparation program that does not meet high standards, but we believe these standards should be measured by competencies and not by credit hours. In these "guidelines," credit hours are treated as a guarantee of quality and they are not. We are concerned that these "guidelines" will actually reduce the knowledge and skills our future teachers will take with them into their classrooms.

AICUP is opposed to these "guidelines" because they are not guidelines at all, but mandates not authorized by statute or regulation.

AICUP is opposed to these "guidelines" because they will worsen the teacher shortage that already exists in subject areas such as math, science and foreign language. As the attached chart reveals, Pennsylvania's private colleges produce a high percentage of the teachers in these shortage areas. If some of these institutions drop their programs or recruit fewer prospective teachers because of these "guidelines," then these shortages will likely worsen. We also believe that we will be unable to recruit out-of-state students interested in teaching as a career, thereby limiting the number of prospective teachers for Pennsylvania and harming our institutions.

AICUP is opposed to these "guidelines" because we believe that preserving the autonomy of institutions to meet high standards in different ways will strengthen both the higher education and basic education institutions. American higher education is built upon the principles of autonomy and diversity, and they should not be discarded lightly.

AICUP is opposed to these “guidelines” because they will significantly increase the cost of producing teachers to the students, the parents, the state, and the schools. This runs counter to our desire to restrain costs as much as possible during these challenging economic times.

After our panelists complete their statements, we will be happy to take questions.