SUBJECT: ERIC Clearinghouse

PREPARED: Richard A. Voorhees, President
Association for Institutional Research

Dear Electronic AIR Readers:

The Association for Institutional Research Board would like to inform you of an emerging issue that may affect your access to data and information about higher education. The federal government is proposing sweeping changes to ERIC. The current ERIC contract ends on December 31, 2003. On April 10, the Department of Education released a draft statement:


of work for the ERIC system for the next contract period. As proposed, the ERIC system will be reduced from 16 subject-specific Clearinghouses to one central automated Clearinghouse. There will be no subject specific Clearinghouse web sites, no on-site content experts to answer questions or perform searches, no ERIC Digests, no bibliographies, and, possibly, no New Directions for Community Colleges, or ASHE ERIC Reports. Furthermore, additions to the database will no longer be made with scholarly input. Instead, they will be selected by non-scholars from a pre-approved list of journals, conferences, association, and organizations. Thus, expert monitoring of the quality of research acquired for the database will be eliminated and important contributions from many colleges and independent scholars will no longer be part of the database.

By law, the Department is required to allow for public comment on this draft statement of work. There is no guarantee that letters of support and other testimony will change the proposed statement of work. If you wish to offer support for the valuable services that ERIC has provided to education scholars and practitioners since 1966, please send your comments to the following people before May 9 at 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time:

(1) Your U.S. senators and elected representatives (contact information available at http://www.vote-smart.org
(2) Copy each letter to Secretary of Education, Rod Paige, 
mailto:Rod.Paige@ed.gov Fax number: 202-401-0596

(3) Copy each letter to Jeff Halstead (the contract specialist collecting official responses to the draft statement): 
mailto:Jeff.C.Halsted@ed.gov Fax number:202-708-9817.

A draft template for your written response also is available at 
http://www.saveeric.org/letter.htm or you may choose to create your own letter. Apparently, faxes of letters written on your institutional letterhead are most effective, but e-mails are also welcome. If you send e-mail, please make sure that you include your full physical mailing address at the bottom of the letter or the message may be discarded.

Thank you,

Richard A. Voorhees, President
Association for Institutional Research

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