COMPLIANCE NEWSLETTER

HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE POST-MIDTERM LANDSCAPE

The 2026 midterm election results signal a clear desire to challenge the status quo, yet experts caution against expecting a simple return to pre-Trump policies. With a divided government and executive veto power intact, there are many hurdles to sweeping change.

Instead, the new congressional makeup opens up new opportunities. Advocacy groups are encouraging lawmakers to leverage oversight powers to restore vital scientific research funding, protect international student visa frameworks, challenge federal restrictions on DEI initiatives, and rollback graduate loan limits.

Key initiatives to watch include the College Transparency Act, which would standardize post-graduation outcome data, protect research grant allocations, and expand support for student loan borrowers exiting default. Additionally, lawmakers are expected to hold oversight hearings examining executive agency enforcement and institutional compliance burdens.

Rather than litigating past battles, institutions should prepare for heightened regulatory scrutiny around program outcomes while collaborating with lawmakers to lay the groundwork for long-term higher education reform and sustainable campus compliance.

READ MORE:

Read an assessment of the new political landscape:

- The Midterms Are Over. Now to the Work of Rebuilding Higher Education

Read more about what experts think the Democrats will seek to do with their congressional majority:

- How Can Democrats Make the Most of Their Win?

FINAL ACCREDITATION RULE REFORMS MANDATORY PROGRAM METRICS

The U.S. Department of Education finalized a higher education accreditation rule shifting institutional evaluations toward quantifiable student outcomes, including graduation rates, tuition costs, and post-graduation earnings.

To enhance affordability, the rule pressures schools to shorten degree durations and streamline credit transfers. Accreditors must also evaluate campus policies promoting academic freedom and "intellectual diversity."

Consequently, low-earning graduate and liberal arts programs face heightened risks of losing accreditation or federal aid eligibility, while critics warn that mandatory viewpoint diversity oversight invites political intrusion into academic curricula and curtails campus diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

READ MORE:

Read the Higher Ed Dive's brief on the ED's new accreditation rules:

- Education Department proposes accreditation overhaul

TC POLICY & RESOURCE HIGHLIGHTS

(CLICK ON A RESOURCE TITLE TO LEARN MORE)

SPECIAL EVENT APPROVAL POLICY

This policy sets standards and provides guidelines for organizing and securing appropriate College resources for special events.

REGISTRATION POLICY

This policy describes the procedures and standards for student course registration.