

Biden's Education Secretary Moves to Shut Down Largest US Christian University

WASHINGTON – Department of Education Secretary Miguel Cardona's recent pledge to shut down Grand Canyon University, the largest Christian university in the U.S., has sparked controversy and strong pushback from the university's officials.

During an Apr. 10, House Appropriations Committee hearing, Cardona expressed his intent to crack down on GCU and similar institutions. Responding to Rep. Rosa DeLauro, (D-CT), who labeled GCU as "a predatory for-profit school," Cardona defended the department's actions, stating, "We are cracking down not only to shut them down, but to send a message not to prey on students."

DeLauro criticized GCU for misleading students about program costs, claiming, "Scam courses added about \$10,000 or more to the cost of education to these kids." Cardona cited increased enforcement against such schools and mentioned levying the "largest fine in history" against a school that misrepresented costs.

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The Department of Education imposed a \$37.7 million fine on GCU last November, alleging that the university misled over 7,500 students about doctoral program costs. This fine dwarfs penalties previously given to schools like Penn State (\$2.4 million) and Michigan State (\$4.5 million) for different issues.

GCU has appealed the fine and was given a 20-day deadline to

challenge the decision or explain why the fine shouldn't be imposed. The university expects a hearing to take place in January 2025. A university spokesperson criticized Cardona's comments as "legally and factually incorrect" and demanded a retraction.

"The Secretary's comments to the House Appropriations Committee were so reckless that GCU is demanding an immediate retraction, as they do not reflect the factual record in this case. He is either confused, misinformed or does not understand the actions taken by his own agency," the spokesman told Fox News Digital.

This controversy comes amid a broader debate over federal oversight of for-profit colleges. Cardona emphasized the agency's commitment to increased oversight, stating they employ "multiple strategies" to hold such institutions accountable. However, a GCU spokesperson argued that the Department's actions lack fairness and objectivity.

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The scrutiny on GCU has also drawn attention from advocacy groups like the American Principles Project, which launched a petition in "light of the Biden administration's unprecedented attacks on our nation's largest Christian colleges" to "protect Christian colleges." APP's Policy Director, Jon Schweppe, criticized the Biden administration's "scrutinize-and-penalize campaign" against faith-based institutions, calling it an "egregious abuse of power."

In a related development, the Goldwater Institute filed a lawsuit against the Department of Education in February, alleging the agency refused to release public records related to the GCU fine. The institute claims these records could shed light on the "intentional targeting" of GCU based on

“extraordinarily thin allegations.”

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