



April 12, 2007

To the Macalester community:

As many of you know, over the past few weeks the news media have been filled with stories about alleged abuses in the college loan industry and recent inquiries into “preferred lender” practices. These stories are both unusual and disturbing, since these stories are suggesting an unethical relationship between a few financial aid offices and the companies who administer student loans.

I understand if you and your family have been worried by these stories, because I myself am upset by them. The financial aid industry is a small one, and in some cases, the financial aid professionals who are the subjects of these stories are people I have worked with in my almost twenty years as a financial aid professional.

Fortunately, there is one aspect of the story that Macalester students and their families do not have to worry about. In the Macalester Financial Aid Office, we pride ourselves on our careful processes, our complete transparency, and our commitment to helping students overcome financial barriers to education.

I want to assure all Macalester students and families that we do not, nor have we ever, accepted gifts in exchange for steering students and their families to certain student loan lenders. For years, the financial aid staff has compiled a carefully vetted lender list, which includes 6-8 lenders each year. We compile this list only to provide parents and students with a pool of lenders who we are confident can provide competitively priced and well-serviced loan products. A good deal of staff time and effort goes into researching and reviewing these lenders, and the lender list is in no way a product of any kind of inducement or incentive from the lenders to our staff. Students have always had the option of choosing a lender not appearing on our list.

As a financial aid professional and a Macalester alumnus, I have always been very proud to be a member of the Financial Aid Office staff. My staff and I are dedicated to providing access to the wonderful experience and education that Macalester has to offer, and we will continue to do that work in the same aboveboard and transparent manner as always. In that spirit, I welcome and encourage any member of the Macalester community to contact me with questions or concerns you may have about this issue or our processes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian L. Lindeman".

Brian L. Lindeman '89
Director of Financial Aid