
The



Quarterly

A newsletter from the Wisconsin Educational Approval Board

Issue 15, Fall 2001

Consumer Alert!

Second Computer School Closes Without Notice

Career Tech Corporation (Career Tech), West Allis, WI is the second computer school to fail in Wisconsin this year. The school was closed by court order and EAB revoked the approval of the school on September 26.

Career Tech was approved by EAB in April 2000 to offer four programs. At the time of its closure it had over 100 students and had secured large sums of tuition money. Much of it was unearned at the time of the school closure.

The EAB requires its approved schools to carry a private school bond. As is often the case, the private school bond is not sufficient to cover losses incurred by Career Tech students who paid cash or made credit card payments to the school.

Many other states require private schools to pay into a state-administered tuition protection fund. This "consumer protection" fund works better than has individual school bonding, but the Wisconsin legislature has not enacted this requirement.

The majority of students at Career Tech had secured student loans through SLM Financial Corporation, a Sallie Mae company. SLM is assisting students in requesting a partial loan discharge due to school closure.

Students with loans through other sources such as Key Bank, Wells Fargo and Norwest Bank are not as fortunate. These organizations do not have provisions for discharge of tuition loans if the school closes before the student's training is completed. Students remain responsible for the entire loan repayment.

Nationwide problem

According to officials at lending institutions, computer schools are failing across the country at alarming rates. The first such school to gain national attention was Computer Learning Centers, Inc. (CLC), a publicly traded company headquartered in Manassas, Virginia that operated 23 locations in 10 states. In January of this year, with approximately 9,000 students enrolled, the school suspended classes, filed for bankruptcy and closed all its locations.

CLC participated in the federal student loan program. The U.S. Department of Education was able to intervene on behalf of students and advise students of teach-out, transfer, or federal student loan discharge options.

None of the EAB approved computer schools in Wisconsin participate in the federal student loan program. Therefore, students here are not afforded the protections provided by the federal government.

What has EAB done?

As the economy and technology create new jobs/careers, the EAB must oversee new kinds of schools so consumers are protected. About a decade ago, the EAB began overseeing

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School News . . .

Goodwill Honors Outstanding Achievers

Goodwill Industries of North Central Wisconsin, Inc. celebrated its 30th anniversary and honored several people and businesses for outstanding performance at its sixth Community Report and Breakfast in May. Four people who were served through Goodwill programs were honored as “Outstanding Achievers.”

Goodwill’s ACTION Employment and Training is an EAB approved, private, post-secondary training program for adults looking for alternative ways to learn computer/clerical skills with a minimum investment of time and money. Jane Garcia, a graduate of ACTION’s program, first came to the Goodwill program looking for her first steps towards “normalcy” for herself and her two children. Her life is now filled with confidence and opportunities.

Throughout its 30 years, Goodwill has seen tremendous growth and success in carrying out its mission to help people with special needs live, learn, work and play in the mainstream of community life.

School Name Change

The Aveda Institute, Milwaukee (formerly The Institute of Beauty and Wellness)

ProMentor Partners with Cognition

ProMentor Technology Training, Milwaukee, has recently created a strategic partnership with Cognition, Inc., a server-based training lab. This partnership will

give ProMentor students the opportunity to work on real world problems for one hour at a time. Students will work to solve problems and learn how to perform better in their soon-to-be new employer’s networked environment.

The labs are available 24 hours a day and are scheduled on an as-needed basis. Cancellation can occur up to 15 minutes before the scheduled lab with no penalty for cancellation.

The school’s owner, Luci Klebar, says of the partnership, “We are excited about this partnership because, even with ProMentor being open 60 hours per week and having a networked environment in which students can experiment, there are times when they want more.” This partnership will give students more.

ProMentor is the exclusive education facility with this unique partnership.

ProMentor is Certified WBE

ProMentor Technology Training was recently awarded certification as a woman-owned business through the Wisconsin Business Educational Consortium. This designation gives the school recognition in the state and federal contracting arena. It also allows ProMentor to provide services like training, consulting, network administration and more to organizations that need a minority or woman-owned business to fulfill their contractual obligations for procurement of goods and services from women or minority-owned businesses. The school can also serve as a subcontractor, allowing a contractor to use them to help them meet performance benchmarks for diversity.

To find out more about the school, visit their website at www.promentor-train.com, or call them at (414) 257-2939.





In the Spotlight

Keller Graduate School of Management

Keller Graduate School of Management was founded in Chicago in 1973 on the idea that the most important components of management education are effective teaching and student mastery of practical management skills. The first class had seven full-time students. By the late seventies, some 900 Keller students were pursuing their MBAs in an evening program introduced in 1974. Today, some 6,000 students across the country benefit from the School's six master's degree programs.

Keller operates 36 sites coast-to-coast. Its Milwaukee site has been approved by EAB since 1983.

The mission of Keller Graduate School of Management is to provide high-quality, practitioner-oriented graduate management degree programs with an emphasis on excellence in teaching and service to working adults. They believe when ambitious adult students are taught by working professionals -- instructors who practice what they teach -- a dynamic real-world learning environment is created. Keller is committed to its students' professional and academic success.

In addition to its six master's degree programs, Keller offers working adults graduate certificate programs in telecommunications management, business administration and electronic commerce. The programs are designed for students who do not wish to complete the entire MBA degree programs.

Keller's Milwaukee Center is located in the heart of the city's financial and commercial district. The center is staffed

full time and offers a comfortable learning environment for working adult students. Each Keller facility has an information center that includes personal computers, Internet access, sample business plans, popular business periodicals, videos of selected courses, a career services video and career services texts. The information center/computer lab is accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

To learn more about Keller Graduate School of Management, visit their website at <http://www.keller.edu> or call them at (414) 278-7677.

*Each day I learn more than I teach;
I learn that half knowledge of another's
life
Leads to false judgment;
I learn that there is a surprising kinship
In human nature;
I learn that it is a wise father who knows
his son;
I learn that what we expect we get;
I learn that there's more good than evil in
this world;
That age is a question of spirit;
That youth is the best of life
No matter how numerous its years;
I learn how much there is to learn.*

Virginia Church



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computer schools and now approves twelve private computer schools.

The EAB has worked with schools to set standards and oversight policy. Thousands of Wisconsin residents have enrolled in training over the years. EAB's oversight of this fast-paced, ever-changing sector has helped Wisconsin consumers.

Yet, every so often a private school will fail, especially in a new sector like computer training. In this school closing, the EAB has done the following: worked with loan companies to assist students, sent letters to all students offering assistance, moved to collect on the independent private surety bond, and forwarded the case to appropriate legal authorities.

Unfortunately, a school closing always produces pain. The EAB tries to control the damage to students. This is part of the price to pay for having a vibrant private school sector responding to economic and career needs. Not all new private schools will succeed. EAB's job is to keep the sector stable. With only 5 unannounced school closures in 15 years, it's done its job well in protecting consumers and allowing new, credible training opportunities.

What does this mean for the consumer?

Before you decide to attend any school, do your homework. Talk with people. Comparison shop. Take the time to visit several schools before you make any decisions. Ask questions. Use this checklist to get the answers you need.

- Is the school approved by EAB, so you have a consumer protection advocate?
- What is the admissions policy?
- Does the program offer the training you need?
- What does the training facility have to offer?
- What are the instructors' qualifications?

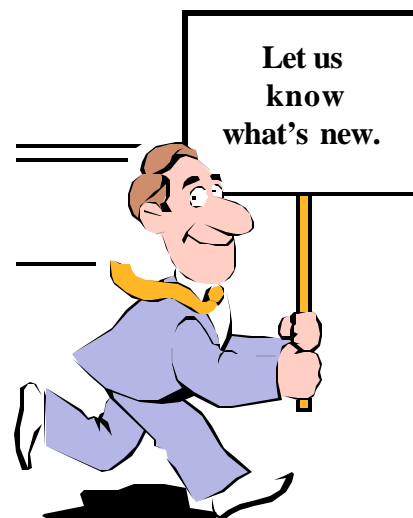
- Does the school offer job placement assistance?
- What other support services are offered?
- What about financial assistance?
- How much does the program cost?
- What is the refund policy?
- Did you receive a catalog?

Talk with potential employers. Be sure you understand the terms of the enrollment agreement before you sign. Computer schools are approved to offer programs -- not sell blocks of time. Do not purchase 1, 2, or 3 year memberships -- these are not approved programs.

Private schools: A viable choice

Private career schools can offer the training needed to find a first job or learn skills for a new career. Thousands of individuals today hold rewarding jobs because of training they received at private career schools. But we all need educated and informed consumers who make good decisions about choosing a school. EAB helps consumers do this.

For more information about EAB approved schools visit our website at <http://eab.state.wi.us>. Or feel free to give us a call at (608) 266-1996. An EAB education specialist will be happy to talk with you about our approved schools.



from the staff



EAB Conference Postponed

The Educational Approval Board (EAB) Conference scheduled for November 15, 2001 has been postponed until spring 2002.

For the past two years the EAB has hosted a very successful conference for its schools and other interested parties to discuss current and future higher education issues in Wisconsin, the programmatic and strategic role of the EAB and state agency regulations and cooperation on common educational issues.

The postponement of the EAB Fall Conference will allow time for the new Executive Secretary of the EAB to become acclimated and work with the Board, EAB staff, schools and students to consider those issues of importance to our partners and to set strategic direction for the EAB.

We thank all past participants for their understanding as we develop a spring 2002 conference that will best meet your needs and the interests of higher education stakeholders in Wisconsin.

Staff Continues Work on Renewal Applications

EAB staff has completed the initial review of all renewal applications. School renewal certificates and second payment invoices will be mailed to schools in early January 2002.

If there are problems with your application, we'll contact you before renewal is granted.

Career School Tips

Enrollments During Difficult Times

Career and technical schools have the opportunity to make a difference in difficult times. Because of the major changes we have experienced and will continue to face, people are out of work but there are still skilled workers needed in this economy. For that reason, your community needs to know about your school and the benefits of the training you offer.

According to Schulz, school owners need to take a kinder and gentler approach to how they market and the student services offered. Be an information provider showing how your programs can offer new opportunities, particularly to those who feel they are facing a gloomy future. Look at the kinds of support services that you can add to ensure students get off to the best start and are successful. Train your entire staff to be student friendly.

Now may be time to add training programs to better serve your community. What industries are letting people go? What skills do dislocated employees currently have and what training can you offer to make them employable again?

By Susan F. Schulz & Associates, Inc.
<http://www.susanfschulz.com>.



Have you visited the EAB

website lately? The site is updated frequently. Visit us at eab.state.wi.us.



The State Line . . .

New State Budget Makes More Veterans Eligible for Benefits

The state biennial budget recently signed by Governor Scott McCallum includes provisions that make more veterans eligible for Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) benefits and increases the reimbursement rates for WDVA education grants from 65 percent to 85 percent of tuition and fees.

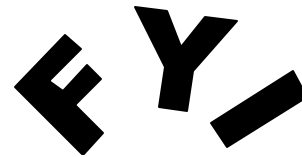
To obtain educational benefits from the WDVA, veterans must meet military service requirements and state residency requirements set by the State Legislature.

In some instances, family members of eligible Wisconsin veterans also may obtain WDVA benefits.

All WDVA education benefits have maximum income limits except for Personal Loan Program.

With the enactment of the biennial budget, about 130 schools have been added to the list of those approved for WDVA education grants. These schools have all been approved by EAB.

Contact the County Veterans Service Office for more information or visit the WDVA website at <http://dva.state.wi.us>.



SCHOOL-TO-WORK: A new report shows that school-to work initiatives such as cooperative education are raising student achievement and winning support from teachers. www.tc.columbia.edu/iee/stwrelease.htm.

ADULT EDUCATION: Only 4 percent of U.S. adults who do not have a high school diploma participate in work-related adult education courses. http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2001/quarterly/winter/feature/f_section1.html.

DOT-COMS: The widespread failure of Internet companies catering to the general public may soon spread to dot-coms serving the \$100-billion education market. www.nsba.org/sbn/01-mar/030601-3htm.

SPECIAL ED: African-Americans are far more likely than whites to be classified as needing special education, and those so classified are less likely to be mainstreamed. www.law.harvard.edu/civilrights/conferences/speced/exsummary.html.

SURPLUS: The vast majority of Americans believe the budget surplus should go toward strengthening Social Security and improving public education instead of tax cuts. www-news.uchicago.edu/releases/01/010215.bobo-dawson.shtml.

PARTNERSHIPS: The number of U.S. school districts participating in school-community partnerships has grown from 51 percent to 69 percent. www.partnersineducation.org.



On the National Front

ACCSCT Recognition Extended

The Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges of Technology (ACCSCT) announced that in May, the U.S. Secretary of Education, upon the recommendation by the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI), extended ACCSCT's recognition period to five years. The decision followed the Committee's review of an interim report of the Commission's adherence to criteria for the recognition of accrediting agencies. The five-year period extension is the maximum allowed.

Twelve EAB approved schools are accredited by ACCSCT. The Commission reports that almost 155,000 students are served in its 768 schools and colleges. More than 70% of the enrollees complete their programs, and of the graduates, more than 85% are placed in training related jobs. ACCSCT schools make over 3,800 diverse work force programs available to the public.

Students Learn Harsh Realities of Plastic

Young adults are graduating from college with more debt than ever before, and increasing levels of it come from credit cards. Half of today's college students graduate with student loan debt that averages \$19,400 -- twice what it was a decade ago. Their debt to credit card companies, some surveys suggest, may average more than \$2,700. These are some of the conclusions in a U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) report released this past summer.

Although students don't have much

money, credit card companies recognize that they are worth an investment for the long term. About half of all students work part time, earning \$4,500 a year. Students who rely on family support receive about \$300 a month, the GAO found. But when today's students get out of college, they'll earn a lifetime average of \$1 million more than their peers who didn't attend college.

In response to pressure from students and families, a few universities are limiting on-campus solicitation of credit card applications, the GAO found. Some state legislatures are considering laws that would limit the companies' on-campus presence and force them to provide greater disclosure of their policies. Some colleges and universities offer credit education programs and credit counseling services, recognizing that retention rates can be affected by students' financial situations.

The issue of student indebtedness promises to stay on the public's mind. The Bankruptcy Reform Act, passed by the U.S. House of Representatives this year, makes it more difficult for students to declare personal bankruptcy and requires loan repayment even if they are successful in declaring bankruptcy. As the bill was being considered, legislators like Rep. Slaughter were unable to include restrictions on credit card marketing practices to college students. The credit card companies, who back the act, prevailed.

Check out Yahoo! Education Site

The well-known dot.com Yahoo! has created a special site for educators, especially those based in colleges, to put courses online. At *education.yahoo.com* you can find tools to post course content, to create message boards and class chat rooms, to assign and accept assignments, to register students, etc. The site also offers online reference books for you and your students. And it's all free, paid for by the banner ads at the top of the screen.

Higher Education's Newest Blight: Degree Inflation

Today's consumers are accustomed to obtaining the goods and services they need instantly. For the savvy shopper, price comparisons, specifications and warranties -- as well as the items themselves -- are just a short phone call or mouse click away.

A growing number of these consumers are now setting their sights on higher education. Many wish to obtain degrees and diplomas in the same way they acquire other goods and services -- instantly, without necessarily having to learn much by way of new knowledge. Technology makes this possible.

While grade inflation has been a concern for decades, today's technologically advanced education market introduces a new concern, "degree inflation." Degree inflation occurs when people are awarded degrees whether or not they have learned the content necessary to earn the right to hold them. Experts warn that if more degrees are awarded this way, it could even result in education inflation -- a society full of degreed but uneducated people.

Fast-degree institutions of higher education can mix and match courses, adding some and removing others from students' required programs of study to please the student (who is also a customer) and to maintain his or her patronage. The proliferation of fast-degree institutions of higher education gives potential students enormous clout in their degree-seeking ambitions. Potential students can shop around for degrees that come at the lowest cost and require the least amount of time and effort. The students expect the degrees to be served to them.

The fast-degree institutions risk watering down the quality of their degrees by removing courses here and there, or by offering credit for unevaluated life experiences.

Excerpt from article in On Campus, October 2001. Author: M. O. Thirunarayanan (thiru@fiu.edu).

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