

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-1304

December 8, 2011

Mr. Steven Lesnick
Chairman and CEO
Career Education Corporation
231 N. Martingale Road
Schaumburg, IL 60173

Dear Mr. Lesnick:

Regarding your company's recent acknowledgement that placement rates were inflated at many of your company's Health Education and Art & Design schools, I am pleased that you have taken the initiative to disclose this inaccuracy, but remain deeply concerned for the more than 100,000 students attending your schools.

I understand that your accreditor, Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS), requires that certain programs have a job placement rate of 65 percent and that many of your school's programs have failed to meet that requirement. While this is certainly bleak news for students graduating from those programs, it also raises serious questions about the validity of job placement numbers for other programs at your schools.

In light of this disclosure, I urge you to perform internal audits of other programs and colleges within your company to reduce future discrepancies in placement rates or other quantitative information disclosed to students and their families. These findings should then be made public so that future students can make informed decisions about programs of study. Ensuring that your schools provide quality education that prepares students for job opportunities in their field of study should be among your top priorities.

I understand that ACICS will be reviewing your accreditation status shortly. Should ACICS repeal the accreditation status of those programs, it would only be fair for Career Education Corporation to refund tuition paid to the students and return federal aid used to the U.S. Department of Education. It would be unthinkable to allow students to go into serious debt to attend a program that is stripped of accreditation.

Many of us in Congress are working to make more information readily available to students and families about their higher education choices. I encourage your company to do the same by providing factual data about your programs and their success rates in preparing students for their chosen field. Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to your response from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dick Durbin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a long, sweeping tail.

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator