



VETERANS EDUCATION SUCCESS

Understanding Student Outcomes at Newly-Shuttered Education Corporation of America Colleges and at its Sister School Members of the Career Education Colleges and Universities (CECU) Trade Association

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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In light of the December 5, 2018, announcement by [the Education Corporation of America](#) (ECA) that it is closing the 70 campuses it operated under the brand names Brightwood College, Brightwood Career Institute, Golf Academy of America, and Ecotech institute (with only the New England College of Business to remain open), two relevant questions to ask are:

- (1) What were the student outcomes at those ECA colleges; and
- (2) What are the student outcomes at the remaining “sister” colleges to ECA?

In August 2018, ECA’s veteran employees joined in signing a letter sent by career college employees to veteran and military service organizations urging them to visit the career college campuses “to see why student veterans and military-affiliated students choose our college over others.” The letter was organized and sent by the Career Education Colleges and Universities (CECU), an association that represents 90 schools that offer certificates and degrees at approximately 500 campuses. The association represents for-profit schools, as well as two nonprofit schools that converted from for-profit to nonprofit status in 2011 and 2018, respectively. Among the representatives of 26-member schools who signed the letter were three school brands owned by ECA.

To answer the question of the student outcomes and value of the education offered by these companies, Veterans Education Success examined outcome measures for the 26-member schools of CECU, including three ECA campuses: Brightwood College in San Diego; Brightwood Career Institute in Philadelphia Mills, Pennsylvania; and Golf Academy of America in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. (Across the three brands, these campuses generally had the largest GI Bill enrollment. Most of the outcome data came from the Education Department’s College Scorecard and is not specific to veterans.)

Today, VES is releasing a report that attempts to answer these questions. Our analysis of the student outcomes at these 26 CECU schools (including three ECA campuses) is available [here](#) and the data is [here](#).

In addition, a summary of the ECA campuses' outcomes follows here:

All three ECA campuses were under Heightened Cash Monitoring by the Department of Education. Heightened Cash Monitoring is a step that the Department can take with institutions to provide additional oversight for a number of financial or federal compliance issues. For calendar year 2017, all of the locations operating under these three brand names enrolled about 1,800 GI Bill students.

- Brightwood College, San Diego.
 - Had a high percentage of students with federal loan debt (64%).
 - Only 39% of borrowers are paying down federal student loan debt.
 - Had a 19.5% 5-year cohort default rate, one of the highest among the 26 schools analyzed.
 - 44% of former students earned less than a high school graduate 6 years after they first enrolled.
 - Its criminal justice program was at risk of failing the Gainful Employment rule's debt-to-earnings ratio—the jobs they were promised didn't justify the amount that they borrowed.

- Brightwood Career Institute, Philadelphia Mills.
 - Had a high percentage of students with federal loan debt (72%).
 - Only 17% of borrowers are paying down federal student loan debt.
 - Had a 38% 5-year cohort default rate.
 - Only 28% of former students earned more than a high school graduate 6 years after they first enrolled.

- Golf Academy of America, Myrtle Beach.
 - Had 20 complaints by GI Bill students.
 - Had a high percentage of students with federal loan debt (61%).
 - Only 17 percent of borrowers are paying down federal student loan debt.
 - Only 30 percent of former students earned more than a high school graduate 6 years after they first enrolled.
 - Charged over \$37,000 a year in tuition and fees while similar degree programs were offered at public institutions for between \$7,000 and \$8,000.

The full report on CECU schools' student outcomes is attached and available [here](#) and the data is [here](#).

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