

Carolyn Hix, Military Spouse

Testimony

U.S. Education Department

December 7, 2021

Good afternoon, my name is Carolyn Hix. I am a spouse to an army veteran and a mother of four. I wanted to provide a good life for my children by going to college. Sadly, after attending three for-profit colleges, I feel like I have hurt my family instead of helped them.

In 1996, I attended Blair College in Colorado Springs, a for profit college, because they branded themselves as a military-friendly college and said they offered discounts for military-connected students. Seeing that my tuition fees were still high, I asked how those discounts were applied, but Blair only offered confusing answers. Blair College also told me that my credits would transfer elsewhere if I needed to relocate. When I was just a few credits shy of completing my Associates in Business, our family received orders to move to Germany.

After arriving in Germany, I attempted to complete my degree through a program offered on the base but was told none of my credits from Blair would transfer. Upon returning to the states, I tried to transfer to Central Texas College but was also told they would not accept any of my credits from Blair. I remember sitting in the parking lot crying.

I looked all over to try and find a college that would accept my credits. I finally found American Intercontinental University Online, another for profit college, and it allowed me to transfer my credits from Blair. AIU sold me on being a military-friendly school, and I was told that they were a Department of Education accredited school. They also told me that I would receive a discount as a military dependent. The fees were high, and I never saw the military discount. My classes were 5 weeks long and online. I never took a final exam which I found odd. Upon graduation in 2005, I requested assistance with my job search which was originally promised to me. But AIU just directed me to read a website and never returned my calls.

I later decided to earn my Masters in Mental health. Once again, I found it difficult to find a school that recognized my diploma. Capella University accepted me into the Master's program after I saw them at a career fair at Fort Gordon in Georgia. There was no entrance exam and no finals. The fees were outrageous, and the school claimed to be a Yellow Ribbon college. Even though I completed the degree, I still haven't passed the licensing exam after four attempts because I did not learn the materials at Capella.

Needless to say, I am over my head in student debt because of the high costs of completing my degrees. My children are in college now and I have ensured that they are not attending for-profit

colleges. I am hopeful that our government can protect college students and military-connected families by not allowing for-profit colleges to take advantage of them anymore.