

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Analysis/Reaction: University of Arizona Global Campus Lost Access to GI Bill
An Estimated 3,000 Student Veterans Impacted**

**Non-Profit Advocate, Veterans Education Success, Urges Action to Protect
Current & Future Student Veterans**

Chandler, AZ, April 6, 2022 -- Amidst concern about the school's financial stability and recent court finding of guilt for fraud, student advocates are calling on the U.S. Departments of Education, Defense, and Veterans Affairs to terminate access to federal student aid funds by the University of Arizona Global Campus (UAGC), formerly known as Ashford University, in a series of letters released yesterday:

- [Letter](#) to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- [Letter](#) to the U.S. Department of Defense
- [Letter](#) to the U.S. Department of Education

“With a court finding of fraud, this company has no business in higher education,” said **Carrie Wofford, President of [Veterans Education Success](#)**.

Last week, UAGC lost its access to GI Bill and other VA payments – at least temporarily. The loss of GI Bill came after the predatory company that runs UAGC gave up its license to operate in the state of California, following [years](#) of being hounded by California regulators for defrauding students. This culminated in a trial brought by the California Attorney General that resulted in a [judicial finding](#) on March 3, 2022 that the company was guilty of violating consumer protection laws in its treatment of students. The school has applied to Arizona regulators for GI Bill approval.

The University of Arizona contracted with Zovio in late 2020 to rebrand Ashford University as UAGC and to manage all operations, including instruction, marketing, and recruiting. It was those same services that Zovio was providing to operate Ashford University and that the California court found to be fraudulent.

Veterans Education Success received more than 129 [complaints](#) from student veterans about Ashford University and UAGC, in addition to several key [whistleblowers](#) at the company, and delivered these complaints to the California Attorney General for its recent case against the company.

“As a former Ashford student veteran, I deeply understand the hope this news will bring to the veterans we serve, as it validates all the lingering doubt about the school,” said **Jennifer Esparza, Legal Director of Veterans Education Success**. “We urge VA to put veterans first by embracing the law that protects veterans from deceptive recruiting.”

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MORE BACKGROUND ON UAGC| ZOVIO | ASHFORD

- UAGC currently enrolls approximately [28,000 students](#) – approximately 3,000 GI Bill beneficiaries and almost 11,000 students using military tuition assistance from the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD).
- These enrollments resulted in **VA paying more than \$31 million in GI Bill funds to UAGC in fiscal year 2020**, according to [VA's GI Bill Comparison Tool](#), and **more than \$26 million in DoD Tuition Assistance**, according to [DoD's TADECIDE](#).

Student Outcomes Comparison from the U.S. Department of Education's College Scorecard

	UAGC/Ashford University	University of Arizona
Return to School Full-Time after Year 1	24%	82%
Graduate Within 8 Years	22%	63%
Withdraw After 8 Years	47%	9%
Transfer After 8 Years	31%	28%

FACT SHEET: OVERVIEW OF UAGC'S ACTIONS – COURT DECISION IN MARCH 2022

The San Diego Superior Court issued a 47-page [decision](#) on March 3, 2022, against Zovio (the company that contracts with the University of Arizona to run UAGC) and Ashford University for violating the California Unfair Competition Law and the California False Advertising Law. The Court found:

- Students were misled about their ability to obtain careers that require licensure after graduating from Ashford, such as teaching, nursing, and social work. For instance, students were falsely promised that their degree would allow them to become teachers, but, in fact, Ashford degrees do not qualify its graduates to obtain the necessary license for most teaching positions. (Order pp. 17-20)
- Students were lied to about the cost of its degrees and the true amount of financial aid available to pay for the tuition, and it downplayed the amount of debt students would be taking out. (Order pp. 20-24)
- Students were deceived about the true pace and time commitment of Ashford's degrees compared to other colleges. Admissions staff routinely described the programs as "accelerated," which the school admitted was inaccurate. (Order pp. 24-25)
- Students were lied to about their ability to transfer credits into and out of Ashford and "knew it was misleading to promise or imply credit would transfer." For example, the court found that "admissions counselors routinely made inaccurate promises that students' prior credits or life experience would transfer before the student received an accurate evaluation from the school." (Order pp. 25-26)

The company's own internal audits had found thousands of deceptions with no measures in place to stop such deceptions.

- The court found that the school “did not take serious action to prevent or remedy the extensive deception their compliance program identified” (Order p. 37) and created a high pressure admissions department whose north star was enrollment numbers.” (Order p. 10)
- The school expected its admissions counselors (**the same employees now working for UAGC**) “**to call hundreds of leads a day,**” and “closing the sale was prioritized above providing students with accurate information.” (Order p. 10-11)
- The testimony at trial made clear that “the pressure to meet their enrollment numbers, the instructions of their managers, and guidance from high performers on their teams all led [employees] to deceive students to overcome objections and promote enrollment.” (Order p. 12).
- The court estimated that the school made one million misleading phone calls.
- The company [delayed](#) its required filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission and [delayed](#) its quarterly earnings call. Such delays are typically viewed as indications of financial risk. California state officials have expressed concern that UAGC may not be able to pay the court

About Veterans Education Success

Veterans Education Success is a nonpartisan organization whose mission is to advance higher education success for veterans, service members, and military families, and to protect the integrity and promise of the GI Bill and other federal education programs. The organization offers free help, advice, and college and career counseling to servicemembers, veterans, and their survivors and families using federal education benefits, and helps them participate in their democracy by engaging with policymakers. Veterans Education Success also provides policy expertise to federal and state policymakers, and conducts non-partisan research on issues of concern to student veterans. Additional information is available at www.vetsedsuccess.org.