



January 18, 2024

Holly Eichhorst
Manager of Commission Actions and Governance
Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges

RE: Aviation Institute of Maintenance

Dear Holly Eichhorst,

The Aviation Institute of Maintenance campus in Manassas, Virginia, is on the list of schools that may have their renewal application for accreditation considered by the Commission at the February 2024 meeting. This past October, when the Aviation Institute of Maintenance's Norfolk and Chicago campuses were up for review, we wrote to you to bring to your attention information we had received from student veterans, which indicated a system-wide issue.¹ Today, we write to reiterate the issues raised in that letter and to urge the Commission to require the Aviation Institute of Maintenance to demonstrate its compliance with ACCSC's standards.

Three different students have complained that they incurred thousands of dollars in student debt from attending the Aviation Institute of Maintenance, although recruiters/financial aid personnel at each of their schools told them they would not owe anything. One student veteran who recently contacted us reported having \$80,000 in student loans even though the recruiter told the student that his GI Bill would cover the full cost. This student and another student shared that they did not understand why they had to apply for federal student loans when they had GI Bill benefits.

The student veterans who have contacted us appear to be from different locations, yet they have the same basic complaint—they incurred debt to attend the Aviation Institute of Maintenance, even though they were led to believe that they would not owe any additional amounts when they initially enrolled. We urge the Commission to review Aviation Institute of Maintenance's compliance with ACCSC's Standards, including Section IV—Student Recruitment, Advertising, and Disclosures.² Specifically, the school's compliance with the below standards warrants review by the Commission:

¹ Veterans Education Success, Our Letter to Aviation Institute of Maintenance's Accreditor (Oct. 31, 2023) <https://vetsedsuccess.org/our-letter-to-aviation-institute-of-maintenances-accreditor/>

² Standards of Accreditation, The Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC), (July 1, 2023) <https://www.accsc.org/UploadedDocuments/standards%20and%20alerts/ACCSC-Standards-of-Accreditation-and-Bylaws-070123.pdf>

- Section IV, A2: A school's recruitment efforts describe the school to prospective students fully and accurately and follow practices that permit prospective students to make informed and considered enrollment decisions without undue pressure.
- Section IV, A4: A school has and enforces an acceptable code of conduct for all school personnel whose primary responsibilities are to engage in recruiting and admissions functions prior to and during admission and matriculation.
- Section IV, A8: A school has in place policies and procedures and takes reasonable steps to ensure that its personnel do not make false, exaggerated, or misleading statements about the school....
- Section IV, A10: A school shall not permit its personnel whose primary responsibilities include recruiting and admissions activities to assist prospective students in completing application forms for financial aid.

We urge the Commission to exercise its authority under ACCSC Standards, Section IV, A9 to require the Aviation Institute of Maintenance "to audit its recruiting activities for compliance with accreditation standards or applicable law and regulation using a qualified independent third-party that is approved by the Commission"³ prior to considering the renewal application for the Manassas location.

Sincerely,

Della M. Justice

Della M. Justice
Vice President for Legal Affairs

Nathan Winshall
Law Fellow

³ *Id.* at 98.