

Good afternoon, I would first like to say thank you for having me here to speak to you today on this matter of utmost importance. Hi, I am Dr. Cynthia Lawrence, and I am a veteran spouse. My husband was in the U.S. Air Force from 1986 until 2011. In 2014, I decided to return to school to get my doctorate. I wanted to have more earn ability, and my husband and I worked out that it would be worth using his GI Bill benefits if I could get my doctorate from Grand Canyon University in the expected time. I spent seven years at Grand Canyon University and never received my EdD from that school.

My time at Grand Canyon University was marked by what seemed to me like stall, and bait and switch tactics. I had expected it to take three to three and a half years to get my doctorate, as that was what the school had advertised. Instead, the school repeatedly changed my dissertation requirements by switching the dissertation template, requiring additional classes that were not initially part of the program, and providing conflicting standards. Things would change depending on whether I spoke to my dissertation chair or to my assigned methodologist. This meant that if I wanted to get anything out of Grand Canyon, I would have to pay more and more money. Although I finished the coursework in two years, I spent an additional five years just trying to get my dissertation finished. Not only did GCU use up all of my husband's remaining GI Bill benefits, I also had to take out \$36,000 in federal loans and spend an additional \$17,500 out of pocket. That \$53,500 was just for the dissertation.

I ultimately spent seven years at GCU. Although many of my credits did not transfer elsewhere, I was able to complete my PhD at another school in a much shorter time.

I wish I could say Grand Canyon benefited me in at least some ways, but I can't. Accreditors need to do a better job of making sure that doctoral programs are meeting legitimate educational and professional development goals and are not being operated in ways that just run up the student's costs.

Thank you for your time.