



January 18, 2024

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

RE: Lincoln Technical Institute

Dear Holly Eichhorst,

The Lincoln Technical Institute in East Windsor, Connecticut, is on the list of schools that may have its renewal application considered by the Commission at the February 2024 meeting. This past October, when the Lincoln Technical Institute's New Britain campus was up for review, we wrote to you to share complaints from student veterans about Lincoln Technical Institute and to elevate for the Commission's attention the government investigations into Lincoln Technical Institute.<sup>1</sup> The complaints detailed in our October letter included complaints from several student veterans who attended the East Windsor campus. Today, we write to reiterate the issues raised in that letter and to urge the Commission to take appropriate action regarding the accreditation status of Lincoln Technical Institute.

Student veterans who attended the welding program at the East Windsor campus described the program's transition to online during the pandemic. One veteran stated that the students did not learn anything and were forced to watch "random" videos on YouTube. Even once the school reopened in-person classes, the student veteran said everything was disorganized and "the teachers don't know what's going on." The student veteran told us, "I'm a responsible student and I take my education very serious[ly] but I'm being scammed and it's really frustrating."

Another student veteran who graduated from the East Windsor Motorcycle Technology Program in or around 2016 contacted us for help, explaining, "There are many areas where I feel deceived by this school, and since graduating, I feel I'm no better prepared to enter the workforce. I was told we'd be learning small engine repair, and motorcycles, this was not the case. I used my GI Bill, but still incurred student loans."

Two student veterans who have contacted us, and who spoke at a U.S. Department of Education rulemaking, report that Lincoln Technical Institute told them the welding program at the Mahwah campus was approved by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to receive GI Bill payments when in fact the program had not been approved. The school had the student veterans take out loans, promising that their GI Bill payments would be received before any interest accumulated on the loans. This is a serious breach of the Commission's standards for

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<sup>1</sup> Veterans Education Success Letter to ACCSC (Oct. 31, 2023)  
<https://vetsedsuccess.org/our-letter-to-lincoln-technical-institutes-accreditor/>

honesty in an institution's recruitment and enrollment practices. Further, according to the student veterans, the school lied to them about the total amount of loans, saddling the students with twice as much debt as they expected. When the students requested to see their enrollment paperwork to demonstrate that they had intended on using the GI Bill, they were told that the paperwork had been "shredded." You can read the student veterans' statements to the Department of Education [here](#) and [here](#).<sup>2</sup> These allegations warrant immediate attention.

Other student veterans have also raised complaints about the low quality education provided by Lincoln Technical Institute. Another student veteran who attended the Mahwah campus in 2022 said, "I have issues with the quality of the education, the course material, and the instructor competency. For the first month of class, I had an instructor that taught nothing and stayed on his phone. School leadership was made aware.... This was probably 8-10 classes (4 hours each) of sitting there doing nothing. In the case of one course, I taught the class because I had experience doing it."

As we noted in our letter to you in October, [in 2015](#) Lincoln Technical Institute entered into a settlement with the Massachusetts Attorney General to settle allegations of unfair and deceptive trade practices.<sup>3</sup> Further, according to media reports,<sup>4</sup>

On June 7, 2022, the Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General ("AGO") issued a civil investigative demand ("CID") to Lincoln Technical Institute in Somerville, Massachusetts. The CID states that it is intended to investigate possible unfair or deceptive methods, acts, or practices in violation of state law and that it relates to allegations that the institution violated law by engaging in unfair or deceptive practices in connection with their policies regarding fee refunds and associated disclosures to students and prospective students. The CID has requested that the institution provide to the AGO a list of documentation generally from the period from January 1, 2020, to the present.

Similarly, it appears the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) notified Lincoln Technical Institute in December 2021 that it was assessing whether the institution is "subject to

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<sup>2</sup> See Student Veteran Submission: Jesus Abarca Testimony to the Department of Education, (Dec. 7, 2021) <https://vetsedsuccess.org/student-veteran-submission-jesus-abarca-testimony-to-the-department-of-education/>; Student Veteran Submission: Dylan Contrino Testimony to the Department of Education, (Dec. 7, 2021) <https://vetsedsuccess.org/student-veteran-submission-dylan-contrino-testimony-to-the-department-of-education/>.

<sup>3</sup> Press Release, AG Healey Secures Additional \$2.3 Million for Students Misled By For-Profit Schools (July 30, 2015) <https://www.mass.gov/news/ag-healey-secures-additional-23-million-for-students-misled-by-for-profit-schools>

<sup>4</sup> David Halperin, *Law Enforcement Investigations and Actions Regarding For-Profit Colleges*, Republic Report, (Oct. 19, 2023 (updated)) <https://www.republicreport.org/2014/law-enforcement-for-profit-colleges/> (last accessed Oct. 31, 2023).

CFPB’s supervisory authority based on” the school’s activities “related to certain extensions of credit” to students and requesting certain information.<sup>5</sup>

The government investigations and complaints from student veterans raise substantial questions about Lincoln Technical Institute’s compliance with ACCSC’s substantive standards, including educational quality and student recruitment practices:

- Section I—Ownership, Management, and Administration to demonstrate that there are well-qualified administrators, clearly written and consistently executed policies, and ongoing improvement activities to assure “providing quality education to students” and “ethical, fair, and honest practices.”
- Section I, D—Tuition, Cancellation, Refund, and Payment Policies.
- Section II, A4(a) and (b)—The school has a systematic and evidence-based program evaluation process for each occupational program or each group of related occupational programs. The school’s program evaluation process is comprehensive, conducted by faculty and educational administrators regularly, and uses input from internal and external sources.
- Section III, B—Faculty Qualifications, including: Faculty members must have appropriate qualification and be able to teach in a manner that permits announced educational objectives to be achieved. All faculty must be able to demonstrate a command of theory and practice, contemporary knowledge, and continuing study in their field. Faculty teaching technical and occupationally related courses in either non-degree or occupational associate degree programs must have a minimum of three years of related practical work experience in the subject area(s) taught.
- Section IV—Student Recruitment, Advertising, and Disclosures.
- 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, A6: A school complies with applicable federal and state laws and regulations pertaining to student recruitment.
- 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.
- Section VI, B: The school maintains an educational record for all currently enrolled students that consists of all admissions; transcripts and academic progress reports; records related to tuition and fee payments, refunds, and financial aid; and information upon which a student’s initial and continued enrollment is based. The school maintains

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<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

these records during the student's enrollment and for five years post the student's graduation, withdrawal, or termination date.

Pursuant to Section VII of the ACCSC standards, and in light of the state and federal investigations, the Commission should review and "take appropriate action ... regarding the accreditation status" of Lincoln Technical Institute.<sup>6</sup> We urge the Commission to require Lincoln Technical Institute to demonstrate compliance with ACCSC standards prior to considering the renewal application for the East Windsor, Connecticut location.

Respectfully,



Della M. Justice  
Vice President for Legal Affairs

Nathan Winshall  
Law Fellow

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<sup>6</sup> 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>