

My name is Mike Nelson, and I want to thank you for the opportunity to share my personal experience. I attended an accredited school that abruptly closed just a few months ago, during my final set of classes before graduation.

I served in the United States Army for 12 years. Years later, a new opportunity presented itself that allowed me to leverage my skills from the Army, but would require me to return to college.

I have been teaching culinary arts at a public high school, and teaching dual enrollment at a local university. When I was hired I knew I would eventually need a bachelor's degree in culinary arts to maintain my new career long-term. After months of research, I settled on the Art Institute.

My experience as a student was less than ideal. The classwork took a Do It Yourself approach to learning. Assignments consisted of watching YouTube videos with very little faculty engagement or hands-on learning. But I was too close to completing my degree to look elsewhere. I entered my last term only two classes short of earning my degree. This is when we learned the school was closing immediately. The sudden closure has left me facing significant challenges with no viable options.

This has affected my immediate educational progress, but it has also jeopardized my long-term career goals. Plus, the lack of proper communication and guidance during this closure made everything worse. As students, we were left stranded without information about transcripts, tuition reimbursements, or viable options for continuing our education. The absence of a concrete plan or support from the Art Institute added stress and financial strain.

In light of these challenges, I strongly advocate for increased oversight to prevent similar abrupt closures in the future. Thank you for taking the time to hear my story.