

Good afternoon, I am Riley Street. I served in the Army from 2015 until 2020. After my time in the military, I decided to go to school to pursue art and design. I attended Living Arts College from March 2021 until its closure in December 2022. My time there was filled with unmet promises.

When I enrolled, I signed up for a degree in Animation and 3D Design. However, the course catalog's description of the program differed from the actual curriculum. Based on what I had read, I thought the program would begin with drawing and sketching, before transitioning those skills to the computer for 3D Animation. Many of my artistically-inclined classmates and I thought the program would lead to a variety of jobs that fit our interests. Instead, the program funneled all its students to more technical animation-related jobs. So I switched into the Interactive Media and Graphic Design program. But this degree was a road to nowhere. The curriculum and coursework were just recycled from class to class. Most of the opportunities this degree led to were quick one-off gigs, like designing the logo for a new business. No one offered a steady paycheck and benefits for people with our degree.

I began to hear rumors that something was happening with the school. In August 2022, the school told us that they were looking to get approved by a new accreditor, but that we would still be able to finish our degrees. They encouraged us to sign up for classes. Later, the school threw us for a loop: students could continue to pay out of pocket or with VA benefits, but we could not pay with federal loans. Finally, in December, the school shut down completely. They started letting anyone into the dorms and began renting them out as apartments, leading to an unsafe atmosphere.

Without asking, Living Arts automatically enrolled students in another school, Full Sail University. But I didn't want to go there because I had heard that Full Sail was not a good school. Instead, I had to go through a long process of requesting my transcript. I still do not know whether my credits will transfer to other schools.

Schools should not be allowed to make promises that they cannot keep. When we found Living Arts, other veterans and I got our hopes up that we would find jobs aligning with our specific interests, but we were let down. On top of that, schools should not be allowed to fail the way that Living Arts did, leaving many of us wondering what our next steps would be with very little warning. Please consider rules that will force accreditors to take action before it is too late.

Thank you for your time.