

Hi, my name is Shawn Bonita. I served in the Navy from 2003 until 2009. After leaving the Navy, I decided to use my GI Bill benefits to attend college. I started off at a local community college, but then enrolled in Westwood College to study Computer Management with a concentration in Networking. I did my research before enrolling in the school to make sure it was GI Bill approved. I thought that meant the VA had vetted the school and it would be good.

During my first year, I mostly took my gen ed classes, which were fine. After that, I began to take more classes in my major. That's when things started to get sketchy. Westwood claimed they were "revamping their program," but in reality that meant they fired all their best teachers and hired people who did not know what they were doing. Instead of teaching, the instructors would often just throw text up on a screen and we had to read it and figure it out for ourselves. At this point, I was about halfway through the program and decided I would be better off powering through and finishing than quitting. Though I was able to push myself to study hard and teach myself the materials, many of my peers were not.

Once I graduated, it was as if the school said, "Bye, thank you for your money." Westwood provided no guidance as I began looking for employment. Though they had promised well-paying jobs at big tech companies, like Google and Oracle, their career office was totally unavailable. And by this point, I had used up all of my GI Bill benefits and had taken out almost five thousand dollars in loans. Eventually, I moved back home and was able to get a local tech job, but that was not due to my education at Westwood. To move on in my career, I will have to start all over because no one recognizes a degree from Westwood and my credits will not transfer.

I now know that VA will approve GI Bill benefits at virtually any accredited school. Because of that, it is crucial that accrediting agencies are diligent when reviewing schools so that veterans do not end up wasting their GI Bill benefits on a worthless degree.

Thank you for your time.