

Good afternoon. After serving in the Navy for four years, I decided to use my GI Bill benefits to attend college. I chose Stratford University and attended from 2010 until 2013. I completed an associate's degree in culinary arts and then began a bachelor's degree in hospitality management. My hope was that this would set me up for a career in management. I finished my culinary arts requirements and received my chef's coat; but, the school did not award me my diploma. They said they would wait to award me my associate's degree with my bachelor's, once I had completed it.

When I was about two-thirds of the way through my degree, I started at a different Stratford campus. Stratford said I would be able to carry over all of my credits, but that actually was not true. I had to retake some courses I had already completed. And many of the non-degree classes were of very low quality. In my Spanish class, I knew more than everyone else in the class, including the teacher, even though all the Spanish I knew was from high school classes. I was ahead of all the students in my program, and in some courses, I was the only student. At one point, I had to take medical leave for a burst appendix. But the school still required me to pay out of pocket even after I withdrew from classes.

Before I could complete my bachelor's degree, I had to move back to Minnesota to take care of my parents. When I tried to transfer to the University of Minnesota, they said they would not accept credits from Stratford because the school was fraudulent. Stratford has since closed down. Not only did I leave Stratford with worthless credits, but I didn't even get the associate's degree I had earned.

I wish I could say that Stratford was a bad apple, but I also briefly attended the Art Institute and it was having the same sorts of problems. These schools target veterans because they know they can access our benefits. Please consider rules that will force accreditors to weed out bad schools so that veterans like me don't waste our benefits.

Thank you for your time.