

Mr. Mark Dreyfus, President
ECPI College of Technology
5555 Greenwich Road
Virginia Beach, VA 23462

Dear Mr. Dreyfus:

I am copying you on the letter below, which has been sent to the Virginia Attorney General's Office, the Virginia Office of Consumer Affairs, the accrediting commissions of ECPI Technical College and ECPI College of Technology, local media outlets, the Virginia Department of Education, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, and the Federal Department of Education. I believe this information would interest you greatly. The Virginia Attorney General's office has notified me of its consideration of a case against ECPI College of Technology-Glen Allen and the Office of Consumer Affairs has already opened an investigation. From this point forward, you will be reading the letter I have sent to the Virginia Attorney General's office (similar variants of which have already been sent to the afore-mentioned agencies and organizations):

Having been referred to you by the Virginia Department of Education, I am writing for two reasons today. First, I would like to request your assistance in resolving a serious matter I am involved in with a local college. Second, I would like to provide you with information so if the need arises you can alert other area students and prospective students to stay far away from the promises of this institution.

The issue at hand is between myself and the Innsbrook campus of ECPI College of Technology. I enrolled at the school in August 2005 when it was named ECPI Technical College. I chose ECPI primarily because of their accelerated Bachelors degree program, which would allow me to obtain my B.S. degree in Management Information Systems and graduate in 29 months so I could then go on to get a Masters degree. The short time in school really appealed to me because I did want to hurry up and get my graduate-level degree, and a short time in undergraduate school would make this possible.

When I enrolled, I was assisted by an enrollment advisor by the name of Redacted. He was well aware of my reason for choosing ECPI, even stating that it would be possible for me to go to any other school I wished because my undergraduate degree would be accepted at any school. He spent a lot of time trying to highlight that ECPI was like any

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other college, and the degree was just as legitimate as one from, say, Randolph-Macon College or Virginia Commonwealth University. I made the mistake of listening to him.

Through dedication and hard work I completed my Bachelors degree ahead of schedule, graduating in June 2007. I did not immediately go on to school for my graduate degree because I wanted to spend a year deciding whether or not to stay in the Richmond area, among other things. In addition, I wanted to build up some savings so I could put some of my own money into paying for the graduate degree without having to rely completely on student loans.

When I did begin looking at schools to attend for my Masters degree, I received a rude awakening from every school I talked to. Though it had not been disclosed to me that this would be a problem by my admissions advisor Redacted, ECPI Technical College was nationally accredited. Most universities (and all universities with a good name) are regionally accredited. Because ECPI was not regionally accredited at the time I received my Bachelors degree, I have not been able to enter any graduate school of my choice (University of Virginia, Harvard University, University of Richmond, Virginia Commonwealth University, and even Averett University!). These schools do not accept degrees from nationally accredited schools. This was not disclosed to me by Mr. Red, my admissions advisor, and in fact he stated that I could go on to any school to earn my Masters degree once I had a Bachelors degree from ECPI.

Last year, ECPI Technical College became regionally accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and renamed ECPI College of Technology. They now offer a program for students from the old school to come back to the new school and earn a Bachelors degree under the new accreditation. Based on my knowledge of ECPI refunding a student nearly all of his tuition in the past because of issues with his degree not being accepted elsewhere, as well as the fact that my admissions advisor misled me about my degree being accepted by universities, I have been attempting to have the school pay for me to complete the 30 credits required to upgrade my degree. They are stating this is not their problem, and refuse to do so.

I am in \$40,000 of student loan debt with ECPI already, for what has turned out to be a worthless degree. What they have done to me and hundreds of other students was unethical at the least, and I would hope even illegal. At the recommendation of a very helpful admissions director, Redacted by I have met with the campus director, Redacted who seemingly tried to end our meeting as soon as it started. He tried to insist that

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my issue was that the universities would not accept my credits - however, as explained to me by every university I have talked to, the issue is not my credits, but the degree itself. Once a Bachelors degree is earned, it is not the credits earned towards the degree that determine its acceptance by a university, but rather the degree itself (and whether it is from a nationally accredited or regionally accredited school). If I receive a new degree under the new regional accreditation of ECPI College of Technology, I could attend a university of my choosing. So far, Redacted has been of absolutely no assistance on this matter, and so I am writing to you to see if you might be able to offer me any assistance in talking with the school and in resolving this matter.

The fact that ECPI wants me to take on an additional \$12,500 in loans is not acceptable for two reasons: 1) I am already struggling with payments on my \$40,000 of student loan debt from ECPI for a degree they granted to me and which is now basically worthless. I make \$25,000 gross per year and the loan payments are \$486 per month - a lot of money. I still live at home with my parents because I cannot afford to move out due to this high debt load. 2) My second reason for not agreeing to pay this tuition fee myself is because my plan had always been to go to ECPI, and then to a university where I was aware I would have to take out more loans. I never counted on my first degree from ECPI being a sham, and so did not (and could not have based on the amount I make) make financial allowances for having to pay ECPI twice.

My issues with ECPI do not end here. Upon meeting with the financial aid department when I first enrolled at the school in August 2005, I was told all of the loans they helped me obtain would be deferred free of interest as long as I was in school and attending full-time (which I did the whole time I was there). One of the loans they helped me obtain was in my mother's name, as I could not qualify for any further loans on my own. Unfortunately, the financial aid department also misled me by telling me this loan would be deferred my whole time in school, but payment came due after I had been in school only 6 months. Because we had to apply twice for a 6-month hardship forbearance, hundreds of additional dollars in interest piled up on the original loan. Again, I have encountered financial hardship because of misinformation.

So I am writing to you today for your assistance. As I stated earlier, I am aware my request of the school is not completely unusual as ECPI has refunded a student's tuition in the past for a matter similar to this one. In addition, I am aware of a class action lawsuit with 40-plus plaintiffs in South Carolina related to the same issue with an ECPI campus there. I am not the only person facing this same problem, by any means. The judge overseeing the South Carolina case over-ruled the arbitration agreement that ECPI forces all new students to sign and the case proceeded, though I am unsure of how it concluded.

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I would prefer not to have to go to court to settle this matter, as I do not believe that is the necessary or even mature thing to do. Instead, all I ask is that ECPI will make right (by waiving the \$12,500 tuition fee) the fact that my first degree from them is now essentially worthless because of the misinformation fed to me by their enrollment advisor. I will complete the 30 credits required for my replacement degree and move on. My goal is certainly not to cause trouble or tarnish the name of the school.

I have no problems with the quality of the education I received while at ECPI; it was actually top-notch. However, upon graduating and after unsuccessfully trying to enroll in several universities, I am very discouraged. I would never have gone to the school had I know that I could not continue on toward my Master's degree; regrettably in hindsight, I trusted what I was told. I have already paid ECPI \$50,000 (\$40,000 of that in high-interest loans) and don't feel I owe them a single penny more as I was misled by them. If I am unable to continue my education based on this degree, I have basically wasted \$50,000 and 2 years of my life which I will never get back - all for a supposed college degree that is worthless to me and not accepted by any other legitimate university.

They have not listened to me. Will you please help me? My higher education dreams have been crushed, and it looks like I can go no further with my education, which is very depressing. I am desperate and don't know who else to turn to for assistance.

Sincere regards,