

**TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION**  
**Career Schools and Colleges**  
**Student Complaint Record**

52044

DEPT. USE ONLY
School # _____

Complete page 1 & 2 of this form and mail to: TWC-Career Schools and Colleges, 101 East 15<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 104T, Austin, Texas, 78778-0001, phone (512) 936-3100, or fax a completed application to (512) 936-3111.

Unless you reveal your name and address, we are unable to investigate your complaint and may use this form for information only. Please submit a copy of your enrollment agreement with the school and copies of any other documents that may help us substantiate this complaint. DO NOT SEND ORIGINALS OF ANY DOCUMENTATION.

Your Full Name at Time of Enrollment R -- Redacted by HELP Committee	Name of School Court Reporting Institute of Houston
Address R -- Redacted by HELP Committee	School's Address 13101 Northwest Freeway, Suite 100
City The Woodlands	City Houston
State                      Zip Texas R -- Redacted by HELP Committee	State                      Zip Texas 77387
Home Phone R -- Redacted by HELP Committee	Phone R -- Redacted by HELP Committee
Work Phone (        ) N/A	Program Attended Court Reporting School
Social Security Number ██████████	Last Date of Attendance 2 June 2008
Please list the names and phone numbers of any witnesses or persons who can substantiate your complaint. R -- Redacted former CRIH student R -- Redacted by HELP CRIH student, R --                      . Both individuals attended the same mini-session I attended and were aware of my reasons for withdrawing. Prof. R -- Redacted by R -- Redacted by (no phone number given), instructor, CRIH, was aware of my concerns.	
Who else have you contacted regarding this complaint? R --                      , Campus Accountant, CRIH; R --                      , School Director, CRIH	
Have you used the school's complaint process? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No If no, why not?	
In your opinion, why was this complaint not resolved at the school?  When I spoke to the two individuals above, they stated that the requirement was coming from the Texas Workforce Commission and that they had to collect the 20% of tuition based on the school calendar year. When I asked how to proceed with a complaint, they explained that I should contact the Texas Workforce Commission and file a formal complaint.	
How much tuition have you paid? How did you pay this? If loans were used, please list the names of the lenders and account numbers of the loans.  I paid in full for the 6 week mini-session that precedes the regular school calendar year. I have receipts for payment totaling \$1553, plus an additional \$100 for registration. I paid with my credit card. I did not receive a loan or financial aid.	
Describe your complaint in detail. Include names of persons, locations, and dates involved. Please use additional sheets if you need more space. If this complaint is against specific person(s), please list their name and title.  Let me say up front that I am an adult with a twenty-year history of employment with both the US Government as a contract negotiator and for the state as an adjunct instructor of English, first in California and for the last three years in Texas. I decided to switch careers to court reporting after I determined it would provide more financial stability and security for my family in the event my husband, a tenure-track professor at R -- Redacted by HELP, did not achieve tenure status in two years and subsequently lost his job. I have left my adjunct teaching position with the intent to pursue my education full time. With this in mind, I signed up to attend the Court Reporting Institute of Houston's six-week mini-session starting May 19, 2008 and ending June 30, 2008, in advance of the summer term that was to begin July 7. At the time I signed up, I had intended to complete the program at CRIH. However, a number of factors affecting my ability to do so arose subsequent to this date (see below). I attended until June 2, then notified the school	

**STUDENT COMPLAINT RECORD CONTINUED**

that I was withdrawing from the program as of that date to transfer to another program, Alvin Community College's Court Reporting degree program in Alvin, TX. I decided not to continue with the CRIH course or the school for the following reasons:

1. At the time of enrollment, I believed that CRIH's program was the only Court Reporting program within my geographical area. While I was aware a private college would be expensive, at the time I believed I would have the resources to pay the tuition and had no other options to complete the program locally. I subsequently learned after enrolling that funds I had anticipated using to pay for school from the sale of property in my mother's estate would not become available for some time due to complications, making the fees at CRIH too high for me to afford. While at the school, I discovered that there was a community college program in Court Reporting at Alvin Community College (indeed, one of my instructors was a graduate of their program). I had been unaware of Alvin's program prior to that time. I learned that the tuition and fees were half those of CRIH, and I also discovered Alvin's graduation rates and state certification pass rates were higher than CRIH. I determined that due to the difference in cost and a greater need for assurance that I would be qualified to pass the state exam upon completing the program, to withdraw from CRIH's program and register at Alvin CC. I have since been accepted into Alvin's Court Reporting degree program and will attend in fall 2008. In addition, Alvin has already stated that my previous degrees (a Bachelors and Masters in English) will allow me to receive credit for the academic portions of the AAS degree in Court Reporting, saving me the added expense of taking those courses, while CRIH had not yet calculated my transcript credits (see incomplete transcript credit forms attached), despite my request, saying that would "come later." While I had a general idea of what CRIH's program would cost, the full tuition costs were not disclosed to me until after I had already committed to the program, and there was no indication of the courses I would be required to take based on previous transfer credit.
2. I was dissatisfied with the progress of the mini-session I was attending at CRIH. When I originally contacted CRIH and informed them of my desire to attend court reporting school, they advised me that they had a "quick start" mini-session which began May 19, 2008 which would give me a good sense of what the program was like and help to prepare me for the summer quarter session beginning in July. It was my belief that the mini-session was not considered a part of the main program, but instead an introductory session to the program, with two sections in "Career Strategies" and one in "Reporting Technology I" being the only offered courses. The other two students I have listed as contacts have stated to me that was also their belief. No hands-on theory courses were offered, which is the "meat" of the Court Reporting program where one learns the steno fingering techniques. While I appreciated the efforts of my instructors in class who were generous with their time and information, and I believe they were sincere in their desire to teach students, it became very clear to me that the intent of the mini-session was not to prepare me for a "quick-start" into the regular term as advertised, but to collect additional monies from me before I actually started the program. I believe the instructors were handicapped by the constraints of the mini-session. (Remember—I have taught students in a professional capacity for many years, so I am making this judgment based on my experience as an educator.) The students were told we were not allowed to receive books or rent a machine on which to work until the last day of class, "in case we left." What work we did in class for the first two weeks consisted of a few vocabulary exercises, discussions about the various career paths in court reporting, and reviewing a tutorial for the CAT 4 reporting software. Frustrated with the slow progress of the class, I then asked other students who had already completed the mini-session prior to attending the main theory course if they felt it was a necessary part of the program needed to prepare them for the regular quarter courses, and the universal answer was no. I determined very quickly that as far as the mini-session was concerned, instruction on court reporting was not the priority, but rather the collection by the school of additional funds from students.
3. Once enrolled and attending CRI, I learned that CRI of Houston had low graduation rates for their Court Reporting program. One instructor said that there was a 70–90% drop out rate by the end of the theory course, which we couldn't take until the next full quarter session began in July 2008. I have subsequently learned that in the class of eight students in my mini-session, the majority have withdrawn or transferred to other programs—at last report there was only three students left in the class. One presumes that the school will try to collect money from each of those students for the calendar year they did not attend, reaping a nice financial benefit for the school without actually having to provide instruction to those students for the school year.
4. I also recently checked the state certification website and discovered that out of 10 students who had gone forward for the state exam in the past quarter, none have passed. Additionally, the majority of CRIH's students do not complete the course of study within the 2 ½ years for which the program was designed (indeed, the most frequent attendance period was quoted by one of the instructors as 3 to 5 years). When signing my enrollment forms, only then was I shown a form that had the pass rates previous to the last quarter compared to the state's average, and while I don't remember the specific number, I remember expressing my concern as to how low it was compared to graduates of other Texas schools and out-of-state graduates (my memory says it was only one or two students in the previous year, but I might be mistaken). I was told by my admissions counselor at the time, R -- that the low pass rate was not "unusual," and that students "get nervous" and that's why they weren't passing the state exam. However, speaking to Alvin's admission counselor has since revealed to me this is indeed unusual. I discovered

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Alvin's state pass rates and graduation completion rates are more competitive with other statewide programs, that their classes start teaching court reporting techniques from the first day, and that the majority of their students on average completed the program in three years or less (in line with the national average for completion rates according to the CRS Report for Congress White Paper dated May 2003)), with a reasonable percentage completing the program within the intended two-year period for which it is designed. I am in a situation in that I may be the main financial support for my family in two years if my husband doesn't receive tenure, and I need a program that will put me in a position more likely to complete the course in 2 to 2 1/2 years and pass the state certification exam, which I no longer believe I'd be able to do with CRIH.

5. I have recently received a letter from CRIH dated June 30, 2008, stating that I had an outstanding balance of \$640.40 and that if I did not pay it, it would be sent to a collections agency. This was the first contact I received regarding my withdrawal and any owed tuition amounts. I already have paid over \$1500 in tuition for a six-week mini-session, and expected to receive at least a partial refund for the remaining weeks I did not attend based on the above. I attended CRIH's mini-session program from May 19 to June 2. This is a total of 11 days. Another student, R -- who was also contemplating withdrawal from the school (and has since done so, registering at Alvin CC as well), inquired from the school's financial person that if, hypothetically, a student withdrew as of 2 June, what could they expect in the way of a refund? The financial person told her that a withdrawal of that date would return \$361 in a refund. There was no indication to her, when she asked, that she would be required to pay tuition based on a calendar year which she was neither enrolled in or attending (R -- was a financial aid student and I was not, by the way). It is my belief that at the time the school intended to refund her money based on the fact that she was enrolled in the mini-session and not the school's regular calendar year, and that she was a financial aid student who would likely be unable to pay if she withdrew. I have since spoken to R -- and she stated that even though she withdrew the day after I did, she has not, as of 11 July 2008, received a request for any additional funds. I wonder if the school has decided since I paid in advance, they are more likely to get the additional funds out of me than a student dependent on financial aid, but that is just speculation.
6. When I reviewed the refund statements in the catalog and enrollment agreement, it stated calculation amounts as being based on the school's "calendar year," with attendance being determined by how much of a "quarter" session was completed. However, the mini-session is not a "quarter" (i.e., three months), but rather a six-week introductory session, and I could find no clear indication of any calculation amount being based on the six-week mini-session attendance. In other words, there was no mention of the mini-session as part of that calculation period of a full calendar year of attendance. Many CRIH students, in fact, do not attend the mini-sessions at all. The question becomes, then, when does the school's real calendar year begin?
7. When I called CRIH to inquire as to why they were attempting to collect additional money, R -- Redacted the campus accountant, said it was based on the Texas Workforce Commission's requirement to collect 20% of the calendar year tuition. I was very surprised the mini-session is considered part of the regular calendar school year, and I argue it is not a part of the calendar year based on timing and content. In addition, at no time was it made clear to me when signing up for the mini-session or when paying for it that I would be required to pay additional funds if I did not complete a full year of the program with the beginning date being the start of the mini-session. I do grant that I signed the enrollment form which contains a statement of how refunds are calculated, but I did not have an understanding that the six-week mini-session was to be part of this calculation period.
8. It was never my understanding that the mini-session was anything other than what it was—an opportunity to decide if a Court Reporting degree and career was something I wished to pursue. If I, as a former contract negotiator and someone holding an advanced English degree who taught in the educational system did not perceive this, it is unlikely that the majority of the students signing the enrollment forms under the same conditions I did would understand it either. The other two students I've listed as contacts had the same understanding as I did about the mini-session's intent. The fact that the school would not allow students to buy books or rent or purchase machines until the last day of class "in case they leave" (as one instructor and a counselor both stated) is a clear indicator of the same. I also do not believe after paying the school over \$1500 up front for eleven days of instruction that it is equitable to require me to pay another \$640 for a program I will not complete, and can ill-afford to pay as I am now unemployed. Finally, as I am enrolled in another state program under the community college system, I believe any funds expended by the state on my behalf in allowing me to pursue my degree will be adequately addressed by that program. I have not accepted financial aid or a loan and therefore I am uncertain why CRIH is allowed to request an expenditure totaling almost \$2200 on my part for withdrawing from the program after eleven days. I would like the Texas Workforce Commission to address this issue of equity when it considers its decision.

**STUDENT COMPLAINT RECORD CONTINUED**

What relief or resolution would you consider fair?

As a minimum, I believe it would be fair to require CRIH to cease and desist in their attempts to collect the additional \$640 they claim I owe them. In addition, I believe it would also be fair to base the refund amount solely on the mini-session, not on the entire calendar year. If they wish to retain 20% of the tuition amount for the mini-session and retain the \$100 registration fee, I would be amenable to that. That would be a total of \$310.60, requiring them to refund me the remaining \$1242 of what I have paid. Finally, if CRI is allowed to claim the mini-session as a part of the full calendar year, they should be required, in advance of a final commitment on a student's part, to make a specific effort at full disclosure to any students enrolling in the mini-session and inform them expressly that withdrawal from the mini-session will require the student to be liable for paying a percentage of the entire school calendar year's tuition. They should also be required to state up front the specific amount in dollars of how much that penalty payment will be, based on the number of days completed in the mini-session.

I hereby certify that the above information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and grant permission for the complaint to be forwarded to the school for a response.

R -- Redacted by HELP Committee

Date July 11, 2008

Completed forms, inquiries, or corrections to the individual information contained in this form shall be sent to the TWC Career Schools and Colleges, 101 East 15th Street, Room 104T, Austin, Texas 78778-0001, R -- Individuals may receive and review information that TWC collects about the individual by emailing to [open.records@twc.state.tx.us](mailto:open.records@twc.state.tx.us) or writing to TWC Open Records, 101 E. 15th St., Rm. 266, Austin, TX 78778-0001.

**TWC - CSC**

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PREVIOUS EDITIONS OF THIS FORM WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED

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