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EDUCATION SERVICES

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The official custodian of records for all Pacific Western University - California
HOME TRANSCRIPTS AND APOSTILLES DUPLICATE DIPLOMAS DEGREE VERIFICATION SERVICES
AND FEES

GAO RESPONSE : <https://www.gao.gov/about/what-gao-does>

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Question:

What was the history of the three Pacific Western Universities?

Answer:

Over the years there has been a great deal of questions and confusion about the similarities and differences of Pacific Western University - California, Pacific Western University - Louisiana and Pacific Western University - Hawaii. All three of these schools were separate universities and separate legal entities. They operated in three different states that had three different sets of state laws and regulations governing private postsecondary education. Each school had separate degree programs, separate curriculums, and separate academic standards by which they operated. Pacific Western University - California operated under the most regulated state standards. Pacific Western University - Hawaii had the greatest number of degree programs, students and alumni of the three schools.

Pacific Western University - California

Pacific Western University - California operated from 1976 until 1990 as a State Authorized Degree granting institution. In 1990 California law regulating private colleges and universities began to change. These laws required that all private colleges and universities in California become California State Approved under the newly formed State of California Bureau for Private-Postsecondary and Vocational Education (BPPVE). Schools were given several years to make this transition. Pacific Western University - California was granted Candidate status as a California State Approved institution in January 1991 and maintained this Candidate Status until it became California State

Approved in 1996.

Because this California State Approval status was rigorous, the Pacific Western University - California had a rather small school domestically. The school only offered five degree programs in Business Administration and Management from 1996 until it ceased operations in 2007. The University also had one international program that it started in early 2005, in Vietnam. The University sold its California State Approval status at the end of 2005 to California Miramar University of San Diego, California. After teaching out its active students, PWU - California formally ceased operation in May of 2007.

According to the CMU website, CMU was founded in 2005 and is a separate institution from PWU - California. Although CMU is an accredited institution, these accreditations cannot be grandfathered to Pacific Western University - California alumni.

CMU did not purchase the assets of PWU - Hawaii nor those of PWU - Louisiana. Therefore no PWU alumni from any of the three Pacific Western University institutions are eligible to be issued a diploma or transcript from CMU and therefore should not claim to be alumni of CMU.

Pacific Western University - Louisiana

Pacific Western University - Louisiana operated legally within Louisiana from 1990 to 1994. In 1994 the State of Louisiana changed its laws governing private post-secondary education via distance education. After the change of law, Pacific Western University - Louisiana voluntarily ceased all educational operations in Louisiana and those students who chose to continue their academic programs were given the option to transfer to Pacific Western University - Hawaii.

Pacific Western University - Hawaii also took over the maintenance of the Pacific Western University - Louisiana student records. These records came under Education Services custodial care in January of 2012.

Education Services has a letter from the State of Louisiana in its possession confirming that all degrees issued by Pacific Western University- Louisiana were legally issued and thereby, valid. For a copy of this letter, please contact Education Services at the email address listed below.

Pacific Western University - Hawaii

Pacific Western University - Hawaii began operations in Hawaii in 1988 and legally operated within the State of Hawaii until May 2006. This institution was by far the largest of the three Pacific Western University schools and offered degree programs in a wide range of disciplines. Pacific Western University - Hawaii offered degree programs through several partnerships including Japan,

Korea, Mexico, Argentina and Taiwan.

In 2001 Pacific Western University - Hawaii received official commendations from the Hawaii State Senate and the Hawaii House of Representatives commending the University for its innovative educational programs. Although these two commendations were not official State approval, and carried no official weight, it should be noted that it was an honor for the University to receive these commendations from these two prestigious Hawaii State bodies.

In 2002 the State of Hawaii began changing its policies on how it regulated private non-accredited colleges and universities. Rather than change its laws and education standards to put forth sound education standards and guidelines, much like the State of California and the State of Oregon had done previously, Hawaii chose not to change its education laws. Instead the State chose the path of filing law suits against many of the non-accredited colleges and universities that were operating within its borders.

These lawsuits often resulted in "settlements" with the State that allowed the institutions to continue operation after paying a significant "settlement fee". Often the fined schools did not have to change any of their policies to continue their operations. Since 2002, the State of Hawaii has litigated against and forced over 66 private non-accredited schools to cease operations.

Pacific Western University was the subject of two law suits with the State of Hawaii. The first law suit was settled when the University agreed to pay a six figure settlement fee. Curiously, the State found that the University had not violated any of Hawaii's State laws. The state brought another law suit against the University in early 2005. The State was again prepared to settle for a large multiple six figure settlement fee, however, this time Pacific Western University - Hawaii chose to fight back fearing an endless string of law suits in the future.

After several years of fighting and hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal costs, along with the state imposed inability to recruit new students until the law suit was finished, Pacific Western University - Hawaii ran out of funds to fight the State. In May of 2006, the State of Hawaii obtained a default judgement against the University and Pacific Western University - Hawaii officially closed its' doors.

It is rather puzzling that none of the issues set forth in the lawsuit that the State of Hawaii brought against Pacific Western University - Hawaii - concerned the quality of the education. In retrospect, both law suits seemed more about the large settlement fees rather than the quality of the education or any other issue.

The issuance of the commendations by both the Hawaii Senate and the Hawaii House in 2001, perhaps has created the most confusion to many university alumni and even the general public.

How can two important segments of the Hawaii government be officially praising the university's programs while another single section of the State government is litigating and looking for substantial settlement fees. And not once, but twice.

Question:

Were any of the three Pacific Western Universities Accredited?

Answer:

Degrees from all three Pacific Western University schools are valid and were legally issued and each university in each of the three states was legally entitled to award degrees. Although legally issued, the schools were, however, all non-accredited institutions. You should understand, however, that accreditation is a voluntary process and not a requirement of the law.

A college or university cannot legally operate without first being recognized by the state in which they are incorporated. This is the law. Different states have different laws, some very simple and some very complex. In California, for example, there were laws regulating private postsecondary education and a school had to be either State Authorized or after 1996, State Approved, to legally issue degrees within California. Successful operation of a school for two full accounting years under state law is also a requirement for a school who elects to apply for accreditation.

Accreditation is a voluntary process. No school is required, by law, to become accredited.

Accreditation does offer quality assurance, and one of the main reason accreditation is sought by schools, is so they can have access to federal student grants and loans. Almost all accredited schools earn the majority of their tuition dollars (some as high as 90%) from these federal grant and loan programs.

Question:

Is it legal for me to use my Pacific Western University - California degree?

Answer:

Degrees from all three Pacific Western University schools are valid and were legally authorized when the degree were issued. Using a California State authorized or approved degree in California is perfectly legal. Some employers now require that your degree be accredited, however.

Here is what the United States Department of Education says about non-accredited schools:

"non-accredited institutions are not reviewed against a set of standards to determine the quality of their education and training. This does not necessarily mean that an non-accredited institution is of poor quality, but earning a degree from an non-accredited institution may create problems for students. Some employers, institutions, and licensing boards only recognize degrees earned from

institutions accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. With this in mind, it is recommended that students check with other institutions regarding the transfer of credit policy to determine if that institution would accept the degree and/or credits earned from any institution they plan to enroll in."

Remember: In some states, it can be illegal to use a degree from an institution that is not accredited by a regionally or nationally recognized accrediting agency, unless approved by the state licensing agency.

Education Services advises everyone holding a Pacific Western University degree from any of the three PWU institutions to do some simple research and make sure you are not restricted from using your degree. Simply go on-line and check which states restrict use of non-accredited degrees and see if these are states in which you use, or intent to use, your academic credential. We do know that Oregon and Texas restrict use of non-accredited degrees within their state borders.

Question:

Will an accredited school accept the degree from one of the three Pacific Western Universities?

Answer:

Changes in policies of accredited schools accepting credits and/or degrees from non-accredited schools has changed dramatically over the years. Prior to 2000, many accredited schools accepted transfer credits and degrees from non-accredited colleges and universities including Pacific Western University - California, Pacific Western University - Louisiana and Pacific Western University - Hawaii. The United States Federal Government also paid for and accepted degrees from these institutions for job promotions and pay increases. After 9/11/2001, when several of the terrorist were found to have attended non-accredited flight schools, U.S. policy changed dramatically toward non-accredited colleges and universities. Congress passed laws prohibiting the Federal Government from accepting and paying for degrees from non-accredited schools for job promotions and pay increases.

The U.S. Department of Education which evaluates and recognizes all of the accrediting agencies in the U.S. followed suit and placed restriction on these accreditation agencies.

Today accredited schools are not allowed by their accrediting agencies to accept degrees or credits from their non-accredited counterparts. There have been some exceptions to this rule, but you should not expect an accredited school to accept your Pacific Western University degree or transfer credits. Again, this was not the policy of many accredited colleges and universities when the majority of students attended their Pacific Western University degree programs.

It should be noted that this 2002 federal law quoted above, did not prevent government employees from receiving non-degree training from non-accredited schools, however. This seems a curious

and almost contradictory decision.

Question:

Pacific Western University seemed to have many famous alumni. Which alumni attended which Pacific Western University?

Answer:

There has been a great deal of confusion on this issue as often alumni degrees were attributed to a generic Pacific Western University. The three institutions had very different degree programs, curriculum requirements and educational standards. Pacific Western University - Hawaii had the largest degree program offerings (more than 40) where Pacific Western University - California offered California State Approved degree programs in Management, Business Administration and Public Administration from 1996 until it ceased operations in 2007.

Below is a partial list of some of the famous alumni of each of the three Pacific Western University schools that have been referenced on other internet websites.

Pacific Western University - California Alumni

Earl Ofari Hutchinson a author, broadcaster and journalist *Ph.D. Sociology 1989

Bingu wa Mutharika - President of Malawi *Ph.D. Economics 1984

Eddie Shell - Louisiana educator *Ph.D. Education 1983

Romulus F. Whitaker - wildlife conservationist * Bachelor of Science Wildlife Management 1986

Pacific Western University - Hawaii

David Reardon - abortion opponent *Ph.D Biomedical Ethics 1995

Jun Tang - former head of Microsoft in China *Ph.D Electrical Engineering 1995

Dan Voiculescu - Romanian politician *Ph.D Economics 1991

David R. Bishop - Arizona Professor * Ph.D Religious Studies 1994

David G. Iadevaia - Arizona Professor * Ph.D Science Education 1992

Pacific Western University - Louisiana

Einbarr "Barry" McSweeney - Former Chief Science Officer for the Government of Ireland *Ph.D.

Biochemistry with emphasis in Biochemistry 1992

Those Claiming to be Alumni of PWU who Are Not

A former Australian Judge, Marcus Einfield, who apparently has a history of presenting false credentials, is referenced online, claiming to be an alumnus of Pacific Western University. Education Services has no record of Mr. Einfield enrolling or attending any of the three Pacific Western University institutions and we can absolutely confirm that Mr. Einfield's claim of being an Alumnus is false.

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