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Brightwood College Permanently Closes Three Local Campuses One Day Into Semester

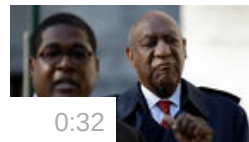
By [Andrew Johnson](#)
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A college with three campuses in San Diego shut down nationwide just one day into a new semester.

[Brightwood College](#) closed its doors to students forever Wednesday, some weeks away from finishing their programs.

One student told NBC 7 about the moment she found out her Kearny Mesa campus was closing.

“The dean of nursing comes in and says, starts crying and tells us, ‘Oh, the school’s being shut down. We need everyone off campus,’” Michelle Zavala said. “We didn’t think this was going to happen because today was the first day of class.”

Rumors were going around campus about a possible closure the week before but many didn't believe them, another student said.

"You had a hint something might happen but not a definite answer, and then all of a sudden, BAM, here we are," said student Alan Whaley.

Whaley, a veteran, was studying to be a patient care technician. He was one month away from graduating.

"I don't blame the teachers and staff here," Whaley told NBC 7. "I don't blame them at all because it's not really up to them but the corporation is what we're upset with."

Education Corporation of America owns the private for-profit school, with 74 campuses across the nation.

The Kearny Mesa campus was one of three Brightwood College locations in the San Diego area. The other schools were in Vista and Chula Vista.

The president and CEO of Education Corporation of America, Stu Reed, sent an email to students saying new requirements from the Accrediting Council of Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) became "challenging," resulting in its closure.

ACICS was founded in 1912 and is the largest national accrediting organization of degree granting institutions, according to [its website](#).

The accreditation loss resulted in "an inability to acquire additional capital to operate our schools," Reed said.

At least 20,000 students across the country were affected.

"Teachers are losing their jobs, they're losing their jobs, and we're losing our schooling," Zavala said. "My heart sunk and I started crying. I didn't know what else to do."

Brightwood College urged students to order their current transcripts and to contact "local schools to determine transferability."

"People that were going to graduate in the next three months just got told today, 'Oh yeah, you're almost done with your program and you can't finish it off here,'" Zavala said.

Read the full statement from Brightwood College below:

Dear Students,

In early fall, we undertook a path to dramatically restructure Education Corporation of America (parent company of your school) in an effort to best posture it for the future. This plan entailed the teach out of 26 of our campuses and then the commitment of capital from our investors additional funds from investors.

However, recently, the Department of Education added requirements that made operating our schools more challenging. In addition, last night ACICS suspended our schools' accreditation with intent to withdraw. The uncertainty of these requirements resulted in an inability to acquire additional capital to operate our schools.

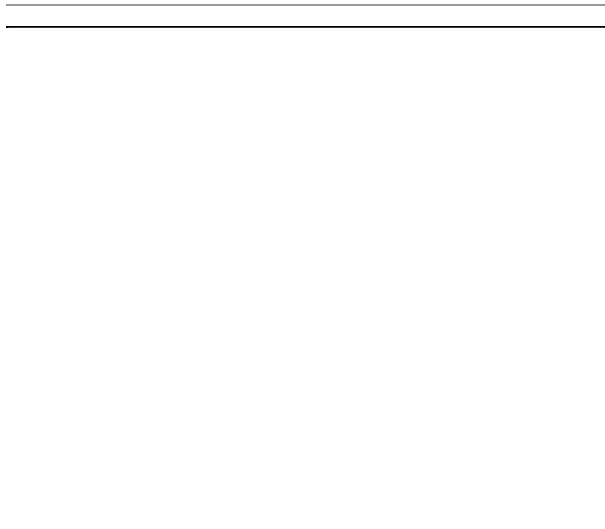
It is with extreme regret that this series of recent circumstances has forced us to discontinue the operations of our schools. Your campus will close this month. Please contact your Dean or Program Director for the specific closure date of your campus.

You will receive credit for all courses that you completed and passed by the closure date. Information on how to request your transcript will be posted at www.ecacolleges.com within the next few weeks. If you do not graduate this month, we encourage you to continue your career training by requesting your transcript and contacting local schools to determine transferability.

This is clearly not the outcome we envisioned for you or our schools, and it with the utmost regret that we inform you of this direction.

Stu Reed,

President & CEO



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