

Newport International University

Another one bites the dust in Wyo!



How - and why - the Wyoming Department of Education beat the Cheyenne Herald to the punch on this announcement

Story introduced on the Cheyenne Herald website - May 14, 2009

by Dave FEATHERLY

The nation, hell, make that the world, is used to reading announcements originating in Wyoming having to do with diploma mills (I prefer "degree sellers") coming from the Cheyenne Herald.

The daily newspaper in Cheyenne just has no interest in this subject and the Wyoming Department of Education does the minimal amount required to deal with it. TV? Hardly.

So, when a press release came from the Department of Education on Tuesday, May 12, 2009, announcing that one of the last of the illegitimate operations selling degrees was ceasing to do business in Wyoming, calls and e-mails came to the Cheyenne Herald, asking: "How could you let those guys beat you to the punch?"

I will tell readers, local and on the internet, just how this happened - how and why (in my opinion) the WDOE finally acted like they were on top of something and made a public pronouncement.

Newport International University operated from Laramie, not Cheyenne, so I didn't have to trip over them every time I turned around here in the Capital City. Because they were 45 miles away, they were down my list of "to do's."

Getting rid of the multiple degree sellers that called Cheyenne home, while they opened their mail and deposited the ill-gotten checks from basement and second floor offices in mostly run-down downtown office buildings, has been my priority. Once action was forced on the Wyoming Legislature, bogus operations in the other Wyoming towns and cities would have to follow suit and amscray.

Warren National University announced to their "students" and the world that they had been put out of business in Wyoming and even directed their unsuspecting students to transfer their credits to another former Wyoming degree seller, Preston University. At the time WNU told their students about transferring credits to the Alabama vagabond, Preston's license to sell degrees from Alabama had expired. Before many tried to transfer credits, Alabama lowered the boom on Preston and told them to rent a U-Haul and get out of Montgomery. As Cheyenne Herald readers know, PU did just that - claiming an office in Los Angeles as their new home. Tomorrow, it could be another.

Warren National University is "appealing" the decision of the State of Wyoming to revoke its license and registration to sell degrees from their downtown Cheyenne basement office. They have the same chance of getting that "conviction" overturned as other thieves do when caught on video.

Besides showing Warren National University on the WDOE website (under private post secondary degree granting "institutions" still operating, albeit on life support), "Newport International University" also appeared - also showing that they had made application for accreditation. Knowing that NIU had appealed the Legislature's authority to make a law requiring nefarious operations such as theirs to become accredited or cease operations in Wyoming and had lost at the Wyoming Supreme Court, it was obvious that the WDOE website needed updating. *Another unaccredited, but new, real college is also shown. It is Catholic College and it is seeking legitimate accreditation and will gain it as the process moves along. CC Students will earn degrees, not buy 'em.*

The WDOE unexpectedly put out a press release about NIU on May 12, 2009. It said:

Newport International no longer operating in Wyoming

Cheyenne -- Wyoming Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dr. Jim McBride, announced today that another non-accredited private post-secondary institution has left Wyoming.

Effective April 24, 2009, Newport International University voluntarily withdrew its registration with the Wyoming Department of Education.

As a result, this school and any affiliated organizations or campuses which utilized registration 09-148-30 to operate are no longer authorized to conduct business as a private post secondary educational institution in the state of Wyoming.

"We are one step closer to ensuring that all Wyoming private post-secondary degree granting educational institutions are compliant with the legislative requirements set in 2006," McBride said.

"The Department of Education and the Wyoming Legislature have worked toward this goal for the past three years and we will continue these efforts until all private degree granting institutions are accredited."

McBride did not mention in his press release two things: First, that NIU's appeal of the Legislature's law-making authority was decided by the Wyoming Supreme Court on June 25, 2008 (almost a year ago) and modified on July 15, 2008. And, that the Cheyenne Herald has been pursuing this NIU story of desertion for several days.

Apparently, McBride is determined to try to prevent this specialty publication from releasing news his office should be aware of first - not knowing that Preston continued to operate from Wyo, etc.

The chronology and communications made between the Cheyenne Herald and McBride's WDOE regarding Newport International University:

Cheyenne Herald to WDOE - May 3, 2009, 5:35 pm

If a cease and desist letter has been sent by the Wyoming Department of Education to Newport International University, will you forward me a copy of that letter.

Thank you for your continuing cooperation. I appreciate it.

WDOE to Cheyenne Herald - May 4, 2009, 8:20 am

Thank you for your e-mail. At this time no cease and desist has been issued to the school. Newport International University has voluntarily agreed to discontinue any operation in the state.

Thank you.

Cheyenne Herald to WDOE - May 4, 2009, 8:34 am

If Newport has reduced that "promise" in writing to WDOE, can you provide me a copy of that letter? Thanks.

WDOE to Cheyenne Herald - May 4, 2009, 8:41 am

We do have this information in writing. However, I am not sure if there is a confidentiality issue regarding this particular school. If you could write a formal letter requesting information and documentation relating to Newport International University and send/fax it to the Wyoming Department of Education I'll be happy to fulfill your public records request to the best of my ability. If you need fax or address information, please don't hesitate to let me know. Thanks.

Cheyenne Herald to WDOE - May 4, 2009, 10:59 am

What is the fax no. there and I'll make the request this afternoon.

WDOE to Cheyenne Herald - May 4, 2009, 11:00 am

Sure, the number is 1-307-777-xxxx

FAX was sent later that night - Scroll down

Cheyenne Herald to WDOE - May 5, 2009, 11:37 pm

Did you receive my FAX for the public records request? My confirmation page didn't print so I couldn't tell.

WDOE to Cheyenne Herald - May 6, 2009, 8:22 am

I did receive the fax and I apologize for not responding yesterday. I am actually working on compiling everything that I have that fulfills this request. Typically what happens is I arrange a time for you to come to the WDE and look through all the documentation. I will make copies of anything that you want to keep and have them to you by the end of that day - usually before you leave.

It's going to take me a little time to produce everything, but would prefer that I e-mail or call you to set up an appointment.

Cheyenne Herald to WDOE - May 6, 2009, 10:12 am

You can call me on my cell phone (xxx-xxxx) or just e-mail me at this address when you're ready. Whichever is easier for you.

WDOE to Cheyenne Herald - May 11, 2009, 8:29 am

I haven't forgotten about you. I'm working on your request as quickly as I can. I'll be in touch this week. Thank you for your patience.

CH Note: The WDOE press release was e-mailed May 12, 2009 at 11:03 am.

Add: On Monday, May 18, WDOE e-mailed me that the files were ready for review. I made arrangements to visit the WDOE office and review the files on Thursday morning, May 21. I spent less than an hour reviewing communications between Newport International University

and WDOE, dated after the Wyoming Supreme Court ruling. My thinking was that anything prior to that ruling would have been covered in the ruling and it is available on the Supreme Court website.

WDOE made available for my review the

WIU Preliminary Information Form (PIF) that was submitted to HLC for the accreditation application.

I marked four pages for copying and departed WDOE with those pages. One was the letter from HLC wherein NIU was

informed they would not be considered for accreditation. On the following page are further comments about the NIU operation and the data disclosed in their accreditation application. This operation made WNU look like Harvard.

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Providing medical treatment to one who doesn't want it but withholding medical treatment from those who do

Isn't it interesting that authorities can go into court to force medical treatment on an unwilling patient but can't use that course of action for patients who beg for treatment but aren't provided it?

What a deadly contradiction.

Millions of television viewers recently watched a two-hour program featuring Farrah Fawcett's pursuit of treatment for her horrific cancer. How envious we are that a celebrity with the money can seek both standard and alternative methods of treatment. Being able to fly to Germany to undergo treatment not available in the United States. Money allows that.

There is a 13 year-old boy from Sleepy Eye, Minnesota who has Hodgkins lymphoma and does not want to undergo further chemotherapy in spite of the strong likelihood that such treatment will prolong his life. He's a juvenile and his parents claim a religious belief that precludes such continuing treatment. (At this writing, his mother and he are on the run.)

Pictures of the young boy show that he has already undergone chemotherapy. He is bald. Many cancer patients, not for religious beliefs, question whether they want to continue chemotherapy treatments - such is often the devastating and contradictory feelings of hope and despair brought on by chemotherapy.

Statute books are replete with protection provisions for children. Had this young Minnesota boy been 21, treatment would not be forced upon him. Nor given him.

Who can forget the unseemly behavior and posturing exhibited by politicians in the Terri Schiavo case? How a physician in the Senate, Bill Frist, diagnosed her condition without ever seeing her? How the country was polarized about whom should decide her right to die with dignity? Husband? Parents? Courts? Day after day, the uncomfortable story played out before the nation. Politicians and courts were deciding how she should be treated - whether she should be treated.

In Minnesota, the boy's parents have said he will not undergo further chemotherapy - at least for now. In most cases, that is the parent's right. And their responsibility. Fathers who require sons to play football when the boy doesn't want to and is afraid to, are praised, not vilified. The Minnesota boy himself has said he will kick and "punch" if they try to administer more chemotherapy drugs to him. Parents are chided for not "caring" for their children - these parents are trying to care for their son in a way they have chosen.

In Cheyenne, mall officials have banned youth, evidently because they didn't believe parents had raised their children properly - had neglected their children.

A Laramie County district court judge has opined that if one parent in a child custody case wanted a young boy (her son) to attend ballet class, the other parent wouldn't have to pay his share of that cost. The judge believes boys are born to be cowboys - not ballet dancers.

Fingers are pointed at parents for not caring enough. Now, in Minnesota, they are pointed at parents for caring "differently." We have repeatedly seen in Laramie County how judges should not be the final arbiter in matters involving children. These judges, at least one, are abjectly incompetent in that area.

A judge in Minnesota has ruled that this young boy will not have to undergo chemotherapy if tests show the cancer has spread too far to render the treatment effective. Is that judge closer to Laramie County judges or Judge Learned Hand?

Medical people practice medicine. To almost all of them, religion can get in the way but it is not a replacement for what they do. Unfortunately, regardless of the level, competence, quality or frequency of medical care, we all die. No one gets out of here alive.

The decision to force treatment on this boy has more to do with his age than his health. An adult with the same disease, at the same point of advancement, would

be allowed to refuse chemotherapy. He/she could be deeply religious, atheist or agnostic - it would be his/her decision.

A few years ago, Wyoming allowed a young woman with a young daughter to die for lack of an organ transplant. There was no provision to use the courts to order an organ transplant for that willing and eager recipient. It was subhuman to allow her to die. She was a patient in desperate need of care and the government would find no way to provide it. She was allowed to die for one simple reason: She could not afford to pay for the organ transplant that may have prolonged her life. She didn't have the money.

If courts can order treatment for one who doesn't want it, why can't courts order treatment for those who do?

Understanding religious beliefs and taking a position on how they should be considered in everyday life is above my pay grade. Some use "beliefs" as a shield to avoid doing what is right. How sincere are the beliefs of those parents in Minnesota? They had allowed one chemo treatment so their beliefs must be soft. And they've said they'll allow more "in an emergency." Their beliefs should not prevent this treatment. The Minnesota court is right. But where were the courts for Cathi Blevins? They should have been there for her, too. She'd still be alive.

The end of Herald coverage on diploma mills?

I can see the end of the tunnel from here. About all I'm planning to cover on the subject of diploma mills (degree sellers) from here on is the lawsuit filed against Warren National University (WNU) by former students. Knowing that Cheyenne's daily newspaper will not provide decent, if any, coverage, I will see that part of the story through to an end.

With the confirmation I was seeking that Newport International University (NIU) had actually stopped being in Wyoming and was ordered to stop using a Wyoming address on its website, that should take care of those bums. Mostly. All that remains for Wyoming to be rid of all of these frauds is for a ruling on the WNU appeal of WDOE's revocation of their license/registration to sell degrees from Wyoming. That should come soon.

From the tenor and tone of the exchange of communications among NIU, their Laramie attorney, WDOE and a staff attorney from the Wyoming Attorney General's office representing WDOE, this was obviously not an amicable divorce. The young woman at WDOE has been tenacious. She was unrelenting in requiring that NIU do what they were supposed to do and do it on the schedule required of them. I was impressed.

However, because Wyoming allowed these dirtbags a "teach out" period after they fail to proceed toward accreditation, an outfit like NIU could "withdraw" instead of being tossed out on their keister. And withdraw they did. Damn!

On March 3, 2009, a letter from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) informed NIU that **"the evidence that you put forward was not sufficient to warrant an on-site visit at this time."** Wasn't even worthy of a visit! The PIF was merely a 3-ring binder with dividers and a bunch of garbage presented to HLC. It was pathetic. If these degree sellers think they can somehow gain accreditation on the basis of bogus applications, HLC is showing them they can't. It, the PIF, was a typical, "baffle them with BS" try.

Had this happened in Alabama, NIU would have been ordered to cease and desist that day. But Wyoming is more tolerant. Maybe the fact that we aided and abetted the success and survival of these rats leads us to extend their lives.

So, in an April 8, 2009 letter from NIU to WDOE, in bold letters it says: **"NIU has and does hereby voluntarily withdraw its registration as a Wyoming Private School registered under Wyoming's Private School Licensing statutes and rules."** We allowed them to "withdraw" in a previous "settlement agreement." We should have shown them the door. Immediately! Why we kept cooperating with these bogus operations when we no longer had to? I can't answer that. But I am terribly, terribly ashamed for my state.

Another degree seller put one over on us. Permitted to "withdraw" even though Wyoming statutes required their departure, NIU can make this deceptive statement on their new website Home Page:

"NIU has recently made difficult but appropriate decisions with respect to what State would provide it the best opportunity to continue to provide its unique form of education to students throughout the world. For that reason, NIU has determined to voluntarily withdraw from its registration as a degree granting institution in the State of Wyoming, and to relocate its headquarters to the State of California."

Wyoming allowed NIU to mislead (lie to) "students" around the world about the real reason they had to leave our state. NIU relocated to California for the same reason Preston University, Breyer State University and others have. It's simple.

California has no laws controlling diploma mills at this time. That could change at any moment and these nomads will have to rent U-Hauls again and move elsewhere. On behalf of the residents of the State of Wyoming, good riddance.

Notes: NIU claims they have an accreditation application pending with DETC. Their revenues were piddling compared to K-WU. For FYE 9/30/2008, NIU had \$341,517 revenue from tuition and fees. Profit was \$25,841. For the 15 month period ending 12/31/2009, they projected to HLC revenues of \$1,760,500 for tuition and fees (almost \$1 million in Wyoming) and a profit of \$525,650. An NIU "profoma" (the term is "pro forma") for 2010 projected revenues of \$1.9 million and profit of \$468,680. Right.

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