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They can run. But they cannot hide!

Preston University, which fled from Wyoming rather than attempt accreditation and then was ordered to “cease and desist” in Alabama, found a home in Los Angeles

by Dave FEATHERLY

Yes, these rascals think they've found safe harbor in the nation's largest state. But, have they?

And, if they have, how long will they be able to operate under the radar in a state with no current law regulating unaccredited post secondary degree granting businesses like Preston University?

Preston University has been operating out of a Ryder Truck for the past two+ years. When Wyoming enacted statutes that required unaccredited degree sellers to become accredited or at least be actively working toward accreditation or leave Wyoming, Preston hit the interstate for Alabama. That state, evidently unknown to the Preston scammers, had also enacted restrictive legislation to rid themselves of the degree sellers who had tried to make their home in the Heart of Dixie, Alabama.

As marketers, these scammers have been able to deceive students and potential students by claiming to have been “licensed” by a state. In Wyoming, children pulling wagons to sell soft drinks, candy bars and bottles of water at the Cheyenne Frontier Days parades, are licensed. And their license may have been harder to attain than a license from Wyoming's Department of Education to operate an unaccredited degree selling enterprise within our borders. **UNTIL THE LAW CHANGE IN 2006.**

Preston's Alabama “license” expired December 1, 2008. Nonetheless, they continued to operate until they were unceremoniously ordered to “cease and desist.” In spite of having told the State of Alabama that they would appeal that Order, Preston quickly checked statutes and must have determined that California was the best place to relocate to quickly. *(The Alabama letter is on our website.)*

Here's what the California Department of Consumer Affairs had to say about a lack of controlling legislation:

The Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education Reform Act (Act) became inoperative on June 30, 2007 and was repealed on January 1, 2008. Currently, in California, there is no regulatory body with oversight of private postsecondary schools. Currently no approval is required.

Assembly Bill 1525, which created the voluntary agreement and Senate Bill 45, which amended and extended Assembly Bill 1525, both became inoperative on July 1, 2008. While we encourage schools to comply with the Act as it existed on June 30, 2007, we are no longer accepting voluntary agreements.

Degree sellers other than Preston University are flocking to California. They won't be there for long. Legislation is in the pipeline to derail their free ride.

But, is Preston University really in California?

The note taped on the door at 3731 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 506, Los Angeles, California (allegedly Preston University's “campus” now) says: **PLEASE LEAVE PACKAGES FOR #506 AT ROOM #500 ON THE FLOOR. THANKS.**



3731 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, California

After I discovered Preston University's latest website (<http://preston.edu/>), I announced their Los Angeles address in the March 31st issue of the Cheyenne Herald. Then I began to seek an operative in Los Angeles who would visit the newest “campus” and confirm its illegitimacy. The picture at the left is one of the twin buildings (3701 and 3731 Wilshire) in the financial district - the one in which Preston University claims an office.

On February 26, 2009, Preston filed as an LLC with the State of California. In spite of showing on their new website that their address is in Los Angeles, on their recent filing with the State of California, their address is shown as 1204 Airport Parkway in Cheyenne, Wyoming. They conveniently make no mention anywhere (website or filing) of their short stopover in Montgomery, Alabama.

Preston University, on that latest website, shows their current address to be 3731 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 506, in Los Angeles. The photo below is of the office door to Suite 506. It is unoccupied (more than ten days after their new website showed that to be their new address) and neither security in the building, the building directory nor the neighbor where packages had been directed to, knew who or what Preston University is.

Gov. Schwarzenegger vetoed a measure passed by the 2008 California Legislature. A copy of his veto message appears on a following page (scroll down). That opened the door for nefarious operations like Preston to hunker down in California while there is no oversight. And their “campus” for now will be someone else's empty office. PU's 2009 “graduation” plans appear on the next page.



Scroll down, please

Continued ... More on the flight of Preston University from Wyoming to Alabama to California --

As reported by the Cheyenne Herald

Is there any department in California that can prevent bottom feeders like Preston University from using their state to suck the finances and hope from "students" around the United States and even the world?

Will apologists for these unaccredited degree sellers again go to bat for Preston University as they have so loudly for Kennedy-Western University, which in its death throes changed its name to Warren National University?

At least Warren National made a run at accreditation. Faced with that requirement or fleeing, Preston chose flight. But their home in Alabama was nothing like the song by Randy Owen and the group, *Alabama*.

"Yeah, I held on to my music; I let the ladies walk away
Took my songs and dreams to Nashville and then on to L.A.
Up to New York City, all across the USA
lost so much of me but there's enough of me to say
That my home's in Alabama, no matter where I lay my head
My home's in Alabama, Southern born and Southern bred"

The Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education made these comments about Preston University:

- Preston University does not appear to have an independent governing body. There are not sufficient institutional controls within the organization for separation of duties.
- The admissions policies are not rigorous and are unacceptable. There are no entrance test thresholds applied, there are no assurances that the student possesses the necessary skills to achieve and succeed in a given program of study.

- All assessment decisions are based on a fee for a diploma rather than class attendance, lecture participation and projects; no quantifiable tests are used to assess student and program effectiveness.

- Evidence has been received by the Department that Preston University issues Honorary Degrees for a fee.

- Evidence has been received by the Department that Preston University is operating and is domiciled in the State of Wyoming without proper licensure from the Wyoming Department of Education.

And, "The number of violations has been determined to be serious both individually and cumulatively. It is required that Preston University cease and desist all operations in Alabama." (*Order dated February 6, 2009*)

Obviously knowing the order to shut down was imminent from the State of Alabama, Preston University filed as a Limited Liability Corporation in California twenty (20) days later. It was planned.

In Warren National University's announcement of closing, they assured "students" they could continue their pursuit of a degree from an unaccredited "institution" through Preston University. It now appears that both of the



Preston University, 3731 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 506, Los Angeles, CA 90010 USA
Toll Free: 1-800-549-2111

During the on-site visits, it was determined that the location for the institution is based out of a virtual office setting which is not staffed properly nor has operating equipment, the school is not accredited nor it is in the process of accreditation and no up to date records were available for viewing.

from ADPSE 2/6/2009 letter to Preston University

illegitimate operations knew, or should have known, that Preston University would no longer be allowed to operate from Alabama and WNU was just trying to stall for more time with students who would be upset when they learned that they had paid fees for which they could not complete their studies - such as they were.

Litigation is in the works on behalf of WNU students who feel entitled to a refund or rebate of fees. Rothgerber, Johnson, Lyons of Denver is the law firm.

From the latest Preston University website (<http://preston.edu/>)

Why Choose Preston University?

Preston University is an established U.S. school with a rich educational history. We were founded in 1984 and have awarded thousands of degrees to students just like you from around the world. We provide a challenging education through carefully-selected course materials and excellent, personalized instruction. Preston's ease of entry is another key feature. Our applicant screening process is straightforward, designed to admit all qualified students quickly and simply. Our comparatively low tuition is a final reason to choose Preston. We strive to keep our programs economical and financially accessible to our students worldwide. Preston University provides a quality education at a remarkably fair price. We invite you to apply today.

OTHER INFORMATION

If you are able to travel to the USA, we invite you to receive your diploma at an official graduation ceremony held near our International Headquarters. (Students are responsible for visa arrangements, travel and lodging costs.)

All official academic documents (transcripts, certificates and diplomas) are embossed with the Preston University corporate seal.

And then, in what seems a major contradiction ...

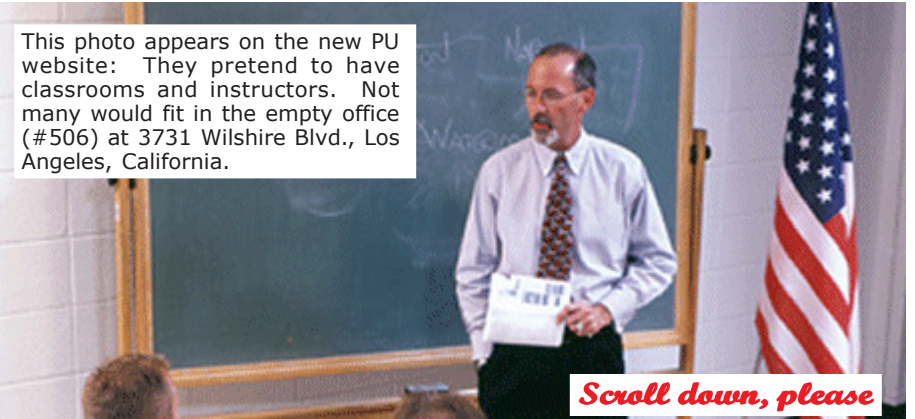
Preston University Seventeenth Annual International Graduation Ceremony

1. Preston University is pleased to announce its Seventeenth Annual International Graduation Ceremony, scheduled for Wednesday, May 27, 2009 at 3:00 p.m. The ceremony will be held at the Marriott Hotel in Fort Collins, Colorado USA. This special event is open to all Preston University graduates and to those students who will graduate during 2009. For those who graduate after May 27, 2009, their degree documents will be issued when all course work and degree requirements have been met.

2. The fee for each graduate to participate in the ceremony is US\$ 150. This fee includes your dinner and the purchase of the regalia (cap, gown, hood and tassel). The regalia is yours to keep following the ceremony. Family members and friends may participate in the buffet dinner and entertainment following the ceremony for a fee of US\$ 35. Please submit these fees when you reserve your place at the graduation.

3. A formal letter of invitation will be sent to the graduate upon request. Please submit your invitation request including your home address, passport number, and name as it appears on your passport by email, fax or letter to Dr. Gary Lane at: dean@preston.edu Fax: +1-307-634-3091 or Mail: PGI, 1204 Airport Parkway, Cheyenne, WY 82001. The invitation letter may be used to support your request for a travel visa to the USA. **Requests for formal invitation letters should be made as soon as possible to enable timely application for US entry visas.**

This photo appears on the new PU website: They pretend to have classrooms and instructors. Not many would fit in the empty office (#506) at 3731 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, California.



Scroll down, please

The Terminator's termination of oversight on degree sellers in California

BILL NUMBER: SB 823 VETOED DATE: 09/30/2008

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I am returning Senate Bill 823 without my signature.

This bill would establish the California Private Postsecondary Education Act of 2008 (Act), which would create the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (Bureau) within the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) to regulate private postsecondary educational institutions in California and establish various requirements, prohibitions, and standards for these institutions.

I have repeatedly stated that a reform act must be written clearly, should not be subject to varied interpretations, should treat schools as uniformly as possible, and provide reasonable roles and responsibilities for the Bureau. Our collective objective should be to successfully strike a balance between protecting students, while being firm, yet fair to schools. Unfortunately, this bill does not meet those goals. Instead, this bill would create a statute that would be a challenge to successfully implement.

If a statute is not clearly drafted, reasonably enforceable, or easily understandable to students, schools, and regulators, no one is well served.

Though I am vetoing this bill, I am directing the Department of Consumer Affairs to continue its efforts to educate students about their rights and responsibilities, and to encourage schools to provide students with meaningful disclosures and engage in sound business practices. I am also encouraging the DCA Director to use her existing authority to investigate complaints from students and schools. I encourage the Legislature to pass a bill early in the next session that proposes a regulatory framework that can be successful.

For these reasons, I am unable to sign this bill.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger

3731 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles CA

The new Preston University "campus" is supposed to be in a 5th floor office in this building.

The Cheyenne Herald could not have put it any better than the bus bench in front of the building does - at lower right, behind the red car.



One of the most interesting aspects of the quest to rid not only Wyoming but the United States of unaccredited degree sellers, has been reading some of the comments made by individuals, both competent and incompetent who post on internet forums and blogs on this subject.

Some of the most respected authorities on the subject of diploma mills and/or unaccredited "institutions" post to certain forums and it is both interesting and educational to read what they have to say on this subject. Others are either less credible or wholly unreliable.

A couple of examples from tortured souls, one who may well live in a basement bedroom at mom's house, follow:

1.) As for the Cheyenne Harold, I think I say some thing about that paper on a cow boy show I was watching the other day. I know I did, it was the Lone Ranger show. Tonto said that those who work for paper (David Featherly) speaks with forked tongue, drinks too much white man fire water, walks like eagle that can't fly (Full of Crap), a one person rag paper which continuously prints hear say information.

2.) One more time, for the thinking impaired, this "article" from the Cheyenne Herald is written by a biased source who actually lied at least once. I actually emailed this goofball and he had the gall to tell me that "using" a degree from WNU was "illegal" in my state. I emailed him back asking for him to state what statute it was violating. And it was like (crickets chirping).

I can't be sure who the anonymous poster is of No. 1 above but No. 2 is a longtime defender and apologist for unaccredited degrees and degree sellers. He has posted literally tens of thousands of times to various forums and blogs, using names such as "Criminal," where he embellishes with "DA State Alchemist," and "History DL Emeritus." His MySpace page indicates he relishes Nazi movies, socialists and socialist ideals.

On Writers.Net, he offers: "Enthusiastic blogger and story writer" and admits that, while his interests are "Science Fiction, Historical Fiction, Social Issues," he has never been published. As I have so often pointed out in the Cheyenne Herald, these tormented beings use the invention of the internet to rid themselves of anger and frustration that is bubbling inside them. Better anonymously on the internet than somewhere else that might manifest those emotional hurts into violence.

He e-mailed the Cheyenne Herald four times. His first message was in defense of Warren National University, of where he claims to have earned a Bachelor's Degree in Electrical Engineering. It is interesting that he has taken such a defensive posture about WNU - his "degree" is from Kennedy-Western University and is in a field Warren never offered. He never asked me for the Illinois statute on use of unaccredited degrees.

I did not tell the thumbsucking bedwetter that "using" his WNU degree (which it wasn't anyway, it was a KWU degree) was "illegal." What I wrote, in response to his first e-mail, was: "Do be careful in Illinois, they have laws about how you dare present a degree from an unaccredited 'institution'." And they do.

Before I go back to Preston University, the guy also misled about his employer accepting his KWU degree. In other places, he repeatedly writes that his job at Panasonic began in 1996, ten years before he bought this degree from KWU. It didn't help him. Or hurt him.

How is Warren National University (nee Kennedy-Western University) tied to Preston University?

When Warren National made a public announcement in late January that they were pulling the plug on their operation because they had not been accepted for candidacy for accreditation, WNU posted on their website:

Transcripts WILL continue to be available to alumni and former students of the University after March, 2009. Preston University has agreed to act as the registrar of record for Warren National University. This web address will remain active as a means to direct alumni and former students to transcripting and other University registrar services.

Active students have been sent notification by Warren National University informing them of the opportunity to transfer to Preston University. More information on Preston University can be found at www.preston.edu

Within a week, Preston University in Montgomery, Alabama had been notified that they could no longer operate in Alabama - the infamous "cease and desist" Order. Within a week of that Order being issued, on February 13, 2009, the Cheyenne Herald posted the three page document on our website. Four days later, Warren National posted this on *their* website:

Update - February 17, 2009; Preston University recently informed Warren National University that Preston University did not receive a required extension of their license from the State of Alabama. Until such time as Preston University receives necessary and appropriate degree granting authority, the University cannot recommend Preston as a transfer destination for our students.

Notice the wording in this announcement. WNU does not say "when Preston University again becomes licensed in Alabama." The Alabama rejection was not about an extension - it was about a *renewal* and Preston was such a terrible operation that it was ordered to immediately cease its operations in the State of Alabama. WNU "students" must be on guard for a demand to now

accept a unilateral transfer of credits (by WNU) to Preston University, which may be able to operate in California because there is no prevailing law that will stop them immediately. That could change suddenly and with little warning. There is no reason to believe California will be any more patient or lenient with Preston than was the State of Alabama. It is easy to see through this operation. At least Warren National University made an effort to gain accreditation. Perhaps that futile effort was predicated on the owner's belief that he "had greased the skids" and because of the strength of his Board of Trustees and a picture of him with then vice president Dick Cheney and close connections to several current and former Wyoming legislators - that the approval for accreditation was a "slam dunk." It wasn't.

Preston University has no business continuing to ply their trade in Wyoming. They are not licensed. They are not registered. *And, contrary to internet forum posters, Wyoming has no "Board of Regents" who stood guard over the interests of students from around the country and from around the world, as is mostly the case with PU.*

For Preston to be arranging a "graduation" ceremony in nearby Fort Collins is of questionable legality. The fact that PU is an active corporation in Wyoming does not alter the fact that they are not licensed or registered to conduct any education-related business. However, Wyoming's State Superintendent of School, under whom the Department of Education operates, is without the ability, fortitude or knowledge to do anything about it. He came to Wyoming disgraced in his last education job. Those interested can read about the quality of Wyoming elected officials (at least this one) at http://cheyenneherald.com/_pdf/October%202006/McBrideEvaluation.pdf

And the same Wyoming Legislature that did nothing to protect unsuspecting and gullible "students" from being fleeced by the accomplished con artists of the unaccredited degree sellers' businesses, did wronged students no favor in the 2006 legislation. The required "performance bond" from WNU was reduced from \$100,000 to \$10,000. One more reason to apologize to students who relied upon the State of Wyoming to provide protection against scammers from within our state.

They must take anybody!



On their new website, Preston University has included the U.S. Chamber's slug. It is inconceivable that the Chamber is so desperate as to accept these nomads as a member. Anything for a buck? Kind of damages the U.S. Chamber's credibility.