

The Colorado Attorney General's Assault on CollegeAmerica

The Colorado Attorney General (“AG”) has been attacking CollegeAmerica for more than five years and has done untold damage to the college, its staff, instructors, and students.*

This attack is led by Assistant Attorney General Libby Webster (formerly DeBlasio). She was part of the team developing the rules that, as the *Wall Street Journal* recently wrote, “were aimed at destroying for-profit colleges.”

Webster and her team of as many as fifteen high-paid lawyers and paralegals have spent millions of taxpayer dollars on the assault, which is not merely a waste of time and money, but the misuse of taxpayers’ money to destroy a private, free-market college.

The Assistant AG’s absurd claims against CollegeAmerica include the following:

“Tuition at CollegeAmerica is too high.” This claim is bizarre. When everything is included—length of program, tuition, opportunity costs, and living expenses—CollegeAmerica is *much less expensive* than Colorado community colleges. In addition, community colleges get massive taxpayer subsidies. Yet Webster is not huffing and puffing to blow those schools down.

“CollegeAmerica’s graduation rates are too low.” Really? CollegeAmerica’s graduation rates are *two to three times higher* than those of Colorado community colleges. And CollegeAmerica students graduate up to *twice as fast* as community college students. Yet Webster is not trying to bleed Colorado community colleges dry.

“CollegeAmerica’s default rates are too high.” Although default rates at CollegeAmerica are higher than at elite colleges (e.g., Williams, Harvard, MIT), that is not a valid comparison. (Among other reasons: students who attend elite colleges typically come from wealthier and more-educated families, have access to more money, and have greater skills in managing money.) The valid comparison is between default rates at CollegeAmerica and Colorado community colleges. *That* comparison shows default rates at CollegeAmerica to be *much lower* than those at Colorado community colleges.

* CollegeAmerica is a private-sector career college with campuses in Colorado, Idaho, and Arizona, offering Associate’s and Bachelor’s degree programs in healthcare, business, and information technology. Its Colorado campuses are located in Denver, Fort Collins, and Colorado Springs.

“CollegeAmerica uses false and misleading advertisements to recruit students.” This claim itself is false and misleading. CollegeAmerica cites accurate, government-supplied statistics in its ads. The Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (“ACCSC”), the state, and Colorado District Court Judge R. Michael Mullins scrupulously examined CollegeAmerica’s advertisements and found them to be truthful and accurate. As Judge Mullins wrote when he denied every last one of the twenty-one injunctions Webster demanded against CollegeAmerica: “The State has not met its burden” of proof on this matter. Given Assistant AG Webster’s stubborn refusal to acknowledge common-sense facts of this matter, Judge Mullins stated openly in court that she has a “tainted” view and is “biased” against CollegeAmerica.

“CollegeAmerica’s graduates don’t get good jobs.” Although some CollegeAmerica graduates don’t get good jobs (just as some Yale graduates don’t get good jobs), most CollegeAmerica graduates *do* get good jobs. The average percentage of graduates from CollegeAmerica programs in Colorado who are employed in the field of their degree is 74.3%. Some CollegeAmerica programs are at 100%. (CollegeAmerica is required by the ACCSC to report as employed only graduates who are *employed-in-field*. Colorado community colleges have no such requirements at all. Community colleges are free to report as “employed” any graduate who has *any job at all*.)

The bottom line is that CollegeAmerica is a good college run by good people who do good work helping underserved students to earn a degree, improve their lives, and make more money. The Colorado AG’s assault on CollegeAmerica is an assault on the good for being good.

The AG’s sustained, five-year assault on CollegeAmerica has damaged its reputation and caused massive financial harm. Most tragically, the AG has diverted many millions of dollars away from CollegeAmerica’s mission of educating students, helping them graduate, and helping them launch or advance their careers. Webster’s ultimate victims are CollegeAmerica students.

There is much more to this gross injustice. For a detailed report, contact the Center for Excellence in Higher Education. Matt Gerber (CEHE’s General Counsel) can be reached at matthew.gerber@collegeamerica.edu; Carl Barney (CEHE’s Chairman) at carl.barney@independence.edu; and Eric Juhlin (CEHE’s Chief Executive Officer) at eric.juhlin@collegeamerica.edu.

Please share this with anyone and everyone you think might be interested in countering this massive and ongoing injustice.