

# Education Disconnection

Joel Foster

One thing to keep in mind is that college is a business. And like any type of business, colleges depend on customers. No more is this true than in the world of for-profit colleges. You will recognize some of the names: Everest, Lincoln Tech, ITT Tech, Kaplan.

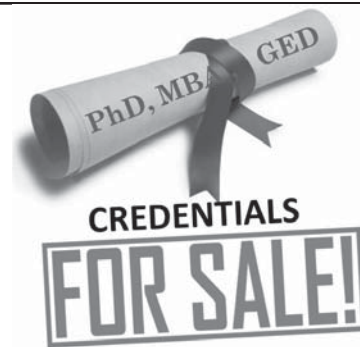
While taking on the appearance of a normal college, these schools are actually financed by Wall Street firms. They often prey upon disadvantaged students to sign onto loans, even though these students usually don't complete the program but still have to pay up. Leaked government data showed a 40 percent default rate among students who took out loans for a for-profit university. Defaults, or being unable to pay back the loan, can lead to headaches down the road, such as a bad credit score, which can prevent you from getting a mortgage or a personal loan.

One of the best known peddlers of for-profit universities is Education Connection (*aka* Schoolin-pjs.com). I'm sure you've seen the commercials. Education Connection may take advantage of those who are unsure of what they want to do

with their future and match them up with overpriced schools that guarantee a job and a decent education, but don't necessarily provide either.

The price of these schools is another aspect to consider. According to Jeremy Dehn writing in the *New York Times*, one institution charged \$14,000 for a certificate program that was offered by a local community college for \$520.

Alex Horton, a soldier who served in Afghanistan and now investigates for-profit institutions, said it best in *Mother Jones* magazine: "Take a look at the CEOs and directors of those for-profit schools, Kaplan, DeVry, Ashford. Where did they go to school? Harvard, Stanford, Oxford. Zero are for-profit graduates."



Joel Foster teaches at GED Plus in Boston, MA.

**Sources:** < <http://unitedrepublic.org/2012/ny-times-romney%E2%80%99s-financial-connection-to-for-profit-colleges/>>; <<http://chronicle.com/article/Many-More-Students-Are/66223>>; <[www.nytimes.com/2010/10/11/opinion/11dehn.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/11/opinion/11dehn.html)>; <<http://motherjones.com/politics/2011/09/gi-bill-for-profit-colleges>>.

## Top Warning Signs of an Education Scam

- Too little time required
- The school offers college credits solely for lifetime or real world experience
- Does the website have an .edu suffix?
- Are there many negative reports at the Better Business Bureau?
- The location is outside the U.S. or in certain states, like Wyoming or Alabama
- Tuition paid on a per-degree basis
- School's address/phone and other basic information is missing
- Names that are similar to well known reputable universities
- Is the school REALLY accredited?
- Unprofessional website?
- Offers a huge list of degrees or majors
- Has it been identified on a list of scam schools?
- No need to speak with a professor
- Have you or anyone you know heard of the school?

**Source:** <[consumerfraudreporting.org](http://consumerfraudreporting.org)>