

Macias, Wendy

From: [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, June 16, 2009 9:11 PM
To: negreg09
Subject: [redacted] and his Ashford Online experience

Dear Department of Education,

I am a graduate of Ashford University's online program and I am submitting my comments in regards to the DOE's 34 CFR Chapter VI Negotiated Rulemaking. I would like to provide my experience in regards to the online program at Ashford and encourage you to take my email into consideration in your deliberations.

When I was a young boy, I spent four years in foster homes due to an abusive parent. Besides the years in foster homes, my four siblings and I were passed from one family member's home to another. We were (as they would call us today)...extremely "at-risk" kids. However, I had a few teachers...in my middle and high school years...that mentored me and were to me...more than just teachers. They were more of fathers and mothers to me. So, because of them...I wanted to grow up to become a teacher.

Anyway, I would have never believed as a man I would graduate with honors and with distinction...from such a fine university as Ashford. They provided the means and encouragement to reach my most valued dream. Today, I am a Special Education teacher in Missouri...because of my mentors, and the staff members of Ashford University.

My enrollment advisor, [redacted], was as kind to me as if she was my own daughter. After almost two years of knowing her and her loving service as my advisor...she has become as one of my family. My wife is also an Ashford student and will verify the same feelings as I have to you. Staff members such as [redacted] went *beyond the call of duty* to help me get financial assistance for my classes, helped me to deal with online "bumps-in-the-road" that none of us could foresee, and she was there on the day of my BASS-ED graduation day ceremony. My wife and I traveled from southeast Missouri to Clinton, Iowa for my graduation ceremony and "Greet and Meet". This trip was over 800 miles...and when we got to Clinton, Iowa...[redacted] was there to greet us at a restaurant. Meeting her for the first time was like finding a daughter that you had lost years ago. She greeted us once we got to town, had lunch with us, and showed us the campus. At my graduation ceremonies, [redacted] attended and sat with my wife during the ceremonies.

Once I graduated with my BA in May of this year, I was reluctant and doubtful as to whether I would be able to go on and complete a Masters program...anywhere. I wanted too, but, could not figure out what would be the best route to assist me in my classroom experiences. However, I made my decision to attend Ashford University, again, simply because...once again...I was met with tremendous service and professionalism by the Ashford staff. My Masters program advisors and ombudsman...where there to advise me. [redacted] (my financial advisor) and [redacted] (my ombudsman, who also was at my BA graduation ceremonies) have been with me every step of the way...by getting me enrolled in an Ashford Masters program called Teaching and Learning Technology.

I was very skeptical of the prospects of "online" college experiences two years ago, because of horror stories that my friends and fellow teachers had encountered at their "online" universities. Yet, my experiences...as a whole...at Ashford University have been "God sent". Precious staff members, such as [redacted], [redacted], and [redacted], have gone beyond the call of duty in making my overall online experience one that my wife and I will remember...and pass onto our children and grandchildren. I would direct no one or advise any of my own students to attend anywhere...except Ashford University. My hopes and dreams, from the time I was a little boy, have manifested into reality...because of Ashford University and its wonderful staff members.

Let me say this about costs. Who can put a price tag on staff members who treat you as family...instead of as a number? The answer is...you cannot put a price on that kind of service. Even though other Universities where cheaper and some better known...I am so glad that I chose Ashford. Any price differences have--by far--been off-set by the support and family atmosphere...that the online teachers and administrative staff members...give to their students.

I feel I have found a new family...at Ashford University...a new family that cares more about "me" than they do about dollars and cents. My plea to you, dear Department of Education, is that your rulemaking will allow future students to have the same access, as I had, to an Ashford University education. They have made an "at-risk" boys dreams...come true. Please do not deprive future "at-risk" students of a wonderful college experience.

Sincerely,

