BPPE

CALIFORNIA BUREAU FOR PRIVATE POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

STRATEGIC PLAN
2016–2020

APPROVED: JOANNE WENZEL, CHIEF
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Advisory Committee Members of the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education

Shawn Crawford, Institutional Representative, Chair

Margaret Reiter, Consumer Advocate, Vice-Chair

Diana Amaya, Public Member

Tamika Butler, Public Member

Mitchell Fuerst, Institutional Representative

Senator Jerry Hill, Ex Officio Member

Sylton Hurdle, Employer Member

Katherine Lee-Carey, Institutional Representative

Ken McEldowney, Consumer Advocate

Assemblymember Jose Medina, Ex Officio Member

Marie Roberts De La Parra, Past Student of an Institution

Patrick Uetz, Consumer Advocate

David Wood, Past Student of an Institution

Edmund G. Brown Jr., Governor

Alexis Podesta, Acting Secretary, Business Consumer Services and Housing Agency

Awet Kidane, Director, Department of Consumer Affairs

Joanne Wenzel, Bureau Chief, Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education

MISSION

The Bureau protects students and consumers through the oversight of California's private postsecondary educational institutions by conducting qualitative reviews of educational programs and operating standards, proactively combating unlicensed activity, impartially resolving student and consumer complaints, and conducting outreach.

Message From the Bureau Chief

It is with great pleasure that I present the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education's (Bureau's) 2016–2020 Strategic Plan. In support of our mission, we have developed a realistic and achievable plan that focuses on accountability and attainable goals. This document will serve as a guide for the Bureau to continue to move forward as an effective and efficient organization.

I would like to thank the Bureau's Advisory Committee, staff, managers, and other stakeholders for their contributions to this document. Their willingness to provide feedback and ideas is greatly appreciated.

As Bureau Chief, I look forward to working with our stakeholders as we strive to achieve the Bureau's vision: To be the national leader in regulating private postsecondary institutions and maximize Californians' confidence that institutions approved by the Bureau provide a quality education.

Joanne Wenzel, Bureau Chief
Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education
Department of Consumer Affairs

About the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education

Beginning January 1, 1998, regulation of private postsecondary educational institutions was carried out by the Bureau for Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education (BPPVE), within the Department of Consumer Affairs (Department or DCA). On June 30, 2007, following criticisms of inadequate student protection and overly burdensome regulations, the Legislature and the Governor allowed the BPPVE to sunset. Between July 1, 2007, and December 31, 2009, private postsecondary educational institutions were unregulated.

Effective January 1, 2010, Assembly Bill 48 (Portantino, Chapter 310, Statutes of 2009) established the California Private Postsecondary Education Act (Act) and created the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (Bureau or BPPE) within the Department to provide oversight of private postsecondary educational institutions operating in California.

Specifically, the Act directs the Bureau to:

- Create a structure that provides an appropriate level of oversight, including approval of private postsecondary educational institutions and programs;
- Establish minimum operating standards for California private postsecondary educational institutions to ensure quality education for students;
- Provide consumers a meaningful opportunity to have complaints resolved;
- Ensure that private postsecondary educational institutions offer accurate information to prospective students on institutional and student performance, thereby promoting competition between institutions that rewards educational quality and employment success;
- Create opportunities for stakeholders to have a voice and be heard in the operations of and rulemaking process by the Bureau; and,
- Proactively combat unlicensed institutions.

The Bureau oversees and has statutory authority over private postsecondary educational institutions operating with a physical presence in California except for those specifically exempted by the Act. Nevertheless, exempt institutions may seek Bureau approval. If they seek approval and are approved by the Bureau, they are then subject to the Bureau's authority as any other non-exempt institution. The Bureau exercises its oversight authority through its various divisions.

MISSION

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VISION

To be the national leader in regulating private postsecondary institutions and maximizing Californians' confidence that institutions approved by the Bureau provide a quality education.

VALUES

Accountability
Consumer Protection
Effectiveness
Quality
Integrity
Transparency
Consistency

Strategic Goal Areas

1. **LICENSING**
   The Bureau promotes and enforces licensing standards for institutions by conducting application workshops and through the comprehensive review and approval or denial of applications.
2. **COMPLAINTS**
   The Bureau protects the interests of students and consumers through the intake and investigation of complaints submitted against institutions while thoroughly and efficiently investigating complaints.
3. **DISCIPLINE**
   The Bureau initiates disciplinary actions against institutions for violations of the law or regulations resulting in student harm and provides due process for institutions to respond to disciplinary actions.
4. **COMPLIANCE**
   The Bureau enforces compliance of approved institutions with statutes and regulations by conducting announced and unannounced compliance inspections, and by providing technical assistance where and when appropriate.
5. **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**
   The Bureau promotes the quality of educational programs through the qualitative review of new or renewal applications, approval and monitoring of accreditation plans, and changes to educational objectives for non-accredited institutions.
6. **REGULATIONS AND LEGISLATION**
   The Bureau enforces statutes, promulgates and enforces regulations, and develops and implements procedures that strengthen and support the Bureau's mandates and mission.
7. **OUTREACH AND CONSUMER EDUCATION**
   The Bureau seeks to keep students, institutions, and stakeholders informed of the private postsecondary industry and of related laws and regulations through community outreach events, the Bureau's website, and informational workshops.
8. **ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**
   Overall organizational effectiveness refers to business operations for the entire Bureau.

VISION

To be the national leader in regulating private postsecondary institutions and maximizing Californians' confidence that institutions approved by the Bureau provide a quality education.

Goal 1: Licensing

The Bureau promotes and enforces licensing standards for institutions by conducting application workshops and through the comprehensive review and approval or denial of applications.

1.1 Amend the regulations to create an application that clearly identifies all the information that an institution needs to submit in order to reduce multiple communications with the institutions requesting additional information.

1.2 Continue to work toward the elimination of the application backlog, reduce the applicants' financial burden, and increase consumer protection.

1.3 Reduce Licensing's processing timeframes and duplications of effort by collaborating with other Bureau units for application-related information.

1.4 Identify key communication strategies and time points to improve customer service to applicants.

1.5 Develop an environment that encourages Licensing staff to promote solution-based process improvements in order to give employees ownership of and accountability for their work.

Goal 2: Complaints

The Bureau protects the interests of students and consumers through the intake and investigation of complaints submitted against institutions while thoroughly and efficiently investigating complaints.

2.1 Review (and update if needed) Bureau processes for following up with complainants as well as the information provided to complainants about the nature, status, and resolution of complaints to be transparent with complainants.

2.2 Review (and update if needed) Bureau processes for following up with institutions regarding the information provided to institutions about the nature, status, and resolution of complaints to provide transparency to institutions and provide institutions an opportunity to review their internal procedures in order to stay in compliance.

2.3 Identify training needs and expand on training that was implemented in 2015 for the Complaints Unit in order to reduce complaint resolution time.

2.4 Develop an environment that encourages Complaints Unit staff to promote solution-based process improvements in order to give employees ownership of and accountability for their work.

2.5 Collaborate with the DCA Office of Information Services to develop a complaint prioritization reporting system.

2.6 Review and update complaint intake and assignment processes to consolidate complaints against institutions, in as much as possible, to a single point of contact to improve efficiency.

2.7 Improve efficiency by reducing the amount of time investigation reports spend in the Complaint Investigation Manager Review phase by improving the quality of investigation reports.

Goal 3: Discipline

The Bureau initiates disciplinary actions against institutions for violations of the law or regulations resulting in student harm and provides due process for institutions to respond to disciplinary actions.

3.1 Develop and implement written procedures for post-citation follow-up to delineate staff roles and responsibilities, provide better consumer protection, and verify compliance with orders of abatement.

3.2 Develop and implement written procedures for post-discipline follow-up to delineate the roles and responsibilities for verification of compliance with disciplinary decisions.

3.3 Increase the Bureau's frequency and efforts to collect fines levied through citations or other disciplinary actions to improve the effectiveness of the disciplinary program and further protect consumers.

3.4 Explore additional tools to implement action for equitable relief, where appropriate, for increased consumer protection.

3.5 Review and modify processes and procedures related to the frequency of citation committee meetings in order to avoid bottlenecks in the citation process.

Goal 4: Compliance

The Bureau enforces compliance of approved institutions with statutes and regulations by conducting announced and unannounced compliance inspections, and by providing technical assistance where and when appropriate.

4.1 Revise processes and train staff for conducting uniform compliance inspections to promote fairness and objectivity for institutions.

4.2 Increase the number of annual compliance inspections, while maintaining inspection quality and consistency, to mitigate the risk of noncompliance by institutions.

4.3 Collaborate with the DCA Office of Information Services to create and implement an inspection prioritization system to identify the order in which institutions should be inspected, making the best use of the Bureau's resources.

4.4 Develop a compliance academy for all new inspectors to provide consistent training and guidance for completing inspections to improve the consistency of compliance inspections.

4.5 Improve efficiency by reducing the amount of time compliance inspection reports spend in the Manager Review phase.

4.6 Explore alternative methods for administering student surveys during compliance inspections and for compiling the results in order to reduce the manual workload.

Goal 5: Quality of Education

The Bureau promotes the quality of educational programs through the qualitative review of new or renewal applications, approval and monitoring of accreditation plans, and changes to educational objectives for non-accredited institutions.

5.1 Educate other units on the roles and responsibilities of the Quality of Education Unit (QEU) to provide awareness of the QEU's roles as well as opportunities for collaboration.

5.2 Create opportunities for Compliance, Complaints Investigation, and QEU staff to collaborate to reduce duplication of efforts, share knowledge, and increase consumer protection.

5.3 Enhance the application-review procedures by collaborating with the Licensing Unit to incorporate review methods from both the licensing and QEU units that will improve consistency, eliminate redundancies, and increase productivity within both units.

5.4 Continue to train Education Specialists on statutes, regulations, and accreditation requirements to increase efficiency, knowledge, and improve continuity.

Goal 6: Regulations and Legislation

The Bureau enforces statutes, promulgates and enforces regulations, and develops and implements procedures that strengthen and support the Bureau's mandates and mission.

6.1 Review (and amend as necessary) regulations for applications and minimum operating standards to reduce multiple communications with the institutions for additional information and to stay current on industry standards.

6.2 Improve and increase external/internal outreach when changes are made to statutes and regulations in order to reduce confusion and increase compliance with the law.

6.3 Modify the website to include information educating stakeholders about the regulatory process.

6.4 Increase stakeholder input during the regulatory process so the Bureau can obtain feedback necessary to make appropriate decisions.

6.5 Promulgate regulations to implement the complaint prioritization statute.

Goal 7: Outreach and Consumer Education

The Bureau seeks to keep students, institutions, and stakeholders informed of the private postsecondary industry and of related laws and regulations through community outreach events, the Bureau's website, and informational workshops.

7.1 Explore additional opportunities to increase consumer awareness of the Bureau's role so consumers can understand their rights and make informed decisions before enrolling in a school.

7.2 Develop annual report training for institutions to improve their understanding of how to provide accurate information to consumers and the Bureau.

7.3 Evaluate and improve the effectiveness of the existing workshops to increase compliance with statutes and regulations in order to safeguard consumer protection.

7.4 Provide information and outreach in additional languages to meet the diverse needs of California students.

7.5 Develop online training for institutions based on Frequently Asked Questions, violations commonly cited, and common deficiencies in applications to provide additional resources for institutions to obtain information and guidance.

7.6 Develop online resources to aid consumers in making informed educational choices.

7.7 Evaluate and expand current outreach materials in order to provide students with a more balanced perspective on private postsecondary institutions.

7.8 Revisit closed institution outreach materials to provide students with a balanced perspective of their options.

Goal 8: Organizational Effectiveness

Overall organizational effectiveness refers to business operations for the entire Bureau.

8.1 Improve internal communication to increase consistency and eliminate silos throughout the Bureau.

8.2 Continue to train staff on the accurate interpretation and application of the statutes and regulations so that employees are consistent in providing accurate guidance to stakeholders.

8.3 Reduce the impact from turnover to increase Bureau-wide productivity and effectiveness.

8.4 Develop an environment that encourages staff to promote solution-based process improvements in order to give employees ownership of and accountability for their work.

8.5 Develop a needs assessment survey for staff to determine training necessary to carry out job duties in order to further develop staff.

8.6 Develop and assign subject matter experts (by industry type) within each unit to provide each unit with a "go to" person for knowledge in a specific industry.

8.7 Prepare for the replacement of the Schools Automated Information Link database to meet the Bureau's current and future needs.

8.8 Identify and eliminate redundancies and inefficiencies in Bureau processes by creating Bureau-wide process action teams composed of staff from different units to review Bureau processes.

8.9 Develop methods to promote Bureau-wide employee engagement to retain quality employees.

Strategic Planning Process

To understand the environment in which the Bureau operates and identify factors that could impact the Bureau's success, the California Department of Consumer Affairs' SOLID Unit conducted an environmental scan of the internal and external environments by collecting information through the following methods:

- An online survey sent to Bureau stakeholders, which included institution representatives, professional associations, students, and members of the public, in December 2015. The online survey received 177 responses.
- An online survey sent to all Bureau employees in December 2015. This survey received responses from 43 employees.
- Focus groups conducted with Bureau executives and management teams in December 2015.
- Phone interviews with seven members of the Bureau's Advisory Committee Members in December 2015 and January 2016.

The most significant themes and trends identified from the environmental scan were discussed by the Bureau's executive team during a strategic planning session facilitated by SOLID on January 20, 2016. This information guided the Bureau in the development of its strategic objectives outlined in this 2016–2020 strategic plan.

BPPE

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This strategic plan is based on stakeholder information and discussions facilitated by SOLID for the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (Bureau) in November and December 2015 and January 2016. Subsequent amendments may have been made after Bureau adoption of this plan.

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