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| 9 | | RE THE CONSUMER AFFAIRS |
| | FOR THE BUREAU FOR PRIVAT | E POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION |
| 10 | STATE OF C | CALIFORNIA |
| 11 | • | 1 |
| 12 13 | In the Matter of the Statement of Issues Against: | Case No. 1002256 |
| | AU LAC INSTITUTE, | |
| 14 15 | Application for Renewal of Approval to Operate an Institution Non-Accredited | STATEMENT OF ISSUES |
| 16 | Institution No. 4307321 | |
| 17 | Respondent. | · |
| 18 | respondent | |
| | | |
| 19 | Complainant alleges: | |
| 20 | PAR | TIES |
| 21 | 1. Leeza Rifredi (Complainant) brings | this Statement of Issues solely in her official |
| 22 | capacity as the Deputy Chief of the Bureau for P | rivate Postsecondary Education, Department of |
| 23 | Consumer Affairs. | |
| 24 | 2. On or about March 26, 2012, the Bu | reau for Private Postsecondary Education |
| 25. | received an Application for Renewal of Approva | al to Operate an Institution Non-Accredited from |
| 26 | Au Lac Institute (Respondent). On or about Ma | rch 19, 2012, Daniel Vien certified under penalty |
| 27 | of perjury to the truthfulness of all statements, a | nswers, and representations in the application. |
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STATEMENT OF ISSUES (AU LAC INSTITUTE)

- 3. On or about April 26, 2012, the Bureau issued a deficiency letter to Respondent. On or about May 14, 2012, the Bureau received a response to its April 26, 2012 letter. On or about August 12, 2015, the Bureau issued a deficiency letter to Respondent. On or about June 20 and 27, 2016, the Bureau received from Respondent a response to its August 12, 2015 deficiency letter.
- 4. On or about September 20, 2016, the Bureau issued Respondent a Notice of Denial of Application for Renewal of Approval to Operate. On or about November 21, 2016, the Bureau received a request for an administrative hearing from Respondent.

JURISDICTION

- 5. This Statement of Issues is brought before the Director of the Department of Consumer Affairs (Director) for the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education, under the authority of the following laws. All section references are to the Education Code unless otherwise indicated.
 - 6. Section 94886 provides:

"Except as exempted in Article 4 (commencing with Section 94874) or in compliance with the transition provisions in Article 2 (commencing with Section 94802), a person shall not open, conduct, or do business as a private postsecondary educational institution in this state without obtaining an approval to operate under this chapter."

7. Section 94887 provides:

"An approval to operate shall be granted only after an applicant has presented sufficient evidence to the bureau, and the bureau has independently verified the information provided by the applicant through site visits or other methods deemed appropriate by the bureau, that the applicant has the capacity to satisfy the minimum operating standards. The bureau shall deny an application for an approval to operate if the application does not satisfy those standards."

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8. Section 94891 provides, in part:

(b) To be granted a renewal of an approval to operate, the institution shall demonstrate its continued capacity to meet the minimum operating standards."

9. Section 94893 provides:

"If an institution intends to make a substantive change to its approval to operate, the institution shall receive prior authorization from the bureau. Except as provided in subdivision (a) of Section 94896, if the institution makes the substantive change without prior bureau authorization, the institution's approval to operate may be suspended or revoked."

- 10. Section 94909 provides, in part:
- "(a) Except as provided in subdivision (d), prior to enrollment, an institution shall provide a prospective student, either in writing or electronically, with a school catalog containing, at a minimum, all of the following:
- (5) A description of the programs offered and a description of the instruction provided in each of the courses offered by the institution, the requirements for completion of each program, including required courses, any final tests or examinations, any required internships or externships, and the total number of credit hours, clock hours, or other increments required for completion.
- (9) The schedule of total charges for a period of attendance and an estimated schedule of total charges for the entire educational program.

¹ The California Private Postsecondary Education Act of 2009 was recently amended, effective January 1, 2017. *See* Senate Bill No. 1192. This Statement of Issues is based on the post-amendment version of the Act.

III

(15) The following statement:

"NOTICE CONCERNING TRANSFERABILITY OF CREDITS AND CREDENTIALS EARNED AT OUR INSTITUTION

The transferability of credits you earn at (name of institution) is at the complete discretion of an institution to which you may seek to transfer. Acceptance of the (degree, diploma, or certificate) you earn in (name of educational program) is also at the complete discretion of the institution to which you may seek to transfer. If the (credits or degree, diploma, or certificate) that you earn at this institution are not accepted at the institution to which you seek to transfer, you may be required to repeat some or all of your coursework at that institution. For this reason you should make certain that your attendance at this institution will meet your educational goals. This may include contacting an institution to which you may seek to transfer after attending (name of institution) to determine if your (credits or degree, diploma, or certificate) will transfer."

- (16) A statement specifying whether the institution, or any of its degree programs, are accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education. If the institution is unaccredited and offers an associate, baccalaureate, master's, or doctoral degree, or is accredited and offers an unaccredited program for an associate, baccalaureate, master's, or doctoral degree, the statement shall disclose the known limitations of the degree program, including, but not limited to, all of the following:
- (A) Whether a graduate of the degree program will be eligible to sit for the applicable licensure exam in California and other states or become certified or registered as required for the applicable profession, occupation, trade, or career field in California.
- (B) A degree program that is unaccredited or a degree from an unaccredited institution is not recognized for some employment positions, including, but not limited to, positions with the State of California.
- (C) That a student enrolled in an unaccredited institution is not eligible for federal financial aid programs.

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| Section 94911 provides, in par | 11. | Section | 94911 | provides. | in | part: |
|--|-----|---------|-------|-----------|----|-------|
|--|-----|---------|-------|-----------|----|-------|

"An enrollment agreement shall include, at a minimum, all of the following:

. . .

"(i)(1) The following statement: 'Prior to signing this enrollment agreement, you must be given a catalog or brochure and a School Performance Fact Sheet, which you are encouraged to review prior to signing this agreement. These documents contain important policies and performance data for this institution. This institution is required to have you sign and date the information included in the School Performance Fact Sheet relating to completion rates, placement rates, license examination passage rates, salaries or wages, and the most recent three-year cohort default rate, if applicable, prior to signing this agreement.'

"(2) Immediately following the statement required by paragraph (1), a line for the student to initial, including the following statement: 'I certify that I have received the catalog, School Performance Fact Sheet, and information regarding completion rates, placement rates, license examination passage rates, salary or wage information, and the most recent three-year cohort default rate, if applicable, included in the School Performance Fact sheet, and have signed, initialed, and dated the information provided in the School Performance Fact Sheet."

- 12. Section 94913 provides:
- "(a) An institution that maintains an Internet Web site shall provide on that Internet Web site all of the following:
 - (1) The school catalog.
- (2) A School Performance Fact Sheet for each educational program offered by the institution.
 - (3) Student brochures offered by the institution.
 - (4) A link to the bureau's Internet Web site.
 - (5) The institution's most recent annual report submitted to the bureau.
- "(b) An institution shall include information concerning where students may access the bureau's Internet Web site anywhere the institution identifies itself as being approved by the bureau."

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| 13. | Section | 04016 | provides: |
| IJ. | SCOULDII | クサクエロ | DIOMIGOS. |

"An institution extending credit or lending money to an individual for institutional and noninstitutional charges for an educational program shall cause any note, instrument, or other evidence of indebtedness taken in connection with that extension of credit or loan to be conspicuously marked on its face in at least 12-point type with the following notice;

'NOTICE'

'You may assert against the holder of the promissory note you signed in order to finance the cost of the educational program all of the claims and defenses that you could assert against this institution, up to the amount you have already paid under the promissory note."

California Code of Regulations, title 5, section 71700 states:

"The Bureau may request that an institution document compliance with the standards set forth in the Act and this Division to obtain and maintain an approval to operate."

California Code of Regulations, title 5, section 71800 states, in part:

"In addition to the requirements of section 94911 of the Code, an institution shall provide to each student an enrollment agreement that contains at the least the following information:

- "(d) Date by which the student must exercise his or her right to cancel or withdraw, and the refund policy, including any alternative method of calculation if approved by the Bureau pursuant to section 94921 of the Code . . . "
 - California Code of Regulations, title 5, section 71810 states, in part: 16.

"(b) The catalog shall contain the information prescribed by Section 94909 of the Code and all of the following:

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(4) Language proficiency information, including: (A) the level of English language proficiency required of students and the kind of documentation of proficiency, such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), that will be accepted; and (B) whether English

- "(d) In addition to the definitions contained in section 94928 of the Code:
- (1) 'Number of Students Who Began the Program' means the number of students who began a program who were scheduled to complete the program within 100% of the published program length within the reporting calendar year, and excludes all students who cancelled during the cancellation period.
- (2) 'Number of On-time Graduates' means the number of students who completed the program within 100% of the published program length within the reporting calendar year.
 - (3) 'Gainfully Employed' means:
- (A)(i) The graduate is employed in a job classification under the United States Department of Labor's Standard Occupational Classification codes, using the Detailed Occupation (six-digit) level, for which the institution has identified in its catalog and in its employment positions list required by section 94910(f)(2) of the Code that the program prepares its graduates; and
- (ii) The graduate is employed in a single position or concurrent aggregated positions totaling at least 30 hours per week for 5 weeks (35 calendar days), or totaling at least 20 hours per week for 5 weeks (35 calendar days) with a statement signed by the graduate stating that he or she chose to seek part-time employment rather than fulltime employment after graduation; or
- (B) The graduate is employed by the same employer that employed the graduate before enrollment, and any of the following conditions are met:
- (i) the graduate is employed in an occupation with a different Detailed Occupation (six-digit) level Standard Occupational Classification code than applies to the position in which the graduate was employed before enrollment; or
- (ii) the employer or the graduate provides a statement to the effect that the employment after graduation was the result of a promotion with increased pay, due at least in part to graduation from the program; or
- (iii) the employer or the graduate provides a statement to the effect that the degree or the completed program was required as a condition of continued employment; or
- (C) The graduate is self-employed or working freelance as reasonably evidenced by, but not limited to, a business license, fictitious business name statement, advertising (other than business

cards), website, or business receipts or other evidence of income from business; or an attestation signed by the graduate of self-employment or freelance work and dated after graduation.

- "(e) Reporting periods:
- (1) An Annual Report shall include data for all educational programs as defined in section 94837 of the Code for the previous one calendar year.
- (2) A Performance Fact Sheet shall be current and available not later than December 1st, and shall report data for the previous two calendar years based upon the 'number of students who began the program,' as defined in subdivision (d)(1) of this section and were scheduled to graduate in the reported year(s).

. . .

"(h) Completion Rates. Reporting of completion rates for an institution's Annual Report and Performance Fact Sheet shall include, for each educational program, the number of students who began the program as defined in subdivision (d)(1) of this section, the number of students available for graduation, number of on-time graduates, and completion rate(s). An optional table may be added to include completion rate data for students completing within 150% of the published program length. For an institution reporting completion data pursuant to section 94929(b) of the Code, completion data shall be separately reported for each program and the Performance Fact Sheet shall disclose, if true, that the completion data is being reported for students completing within 150% of the published program length, and that data is not being separately reported for students completing the program within 100% of the published program length. Programs that are more than one year in length which are reporting 150% Completion Rate will provide four calendar years of data.

Completion rates shall be included in the Performance Fact Sheet in a format substantially similar to the chart below (dates, numbers, and other data shown are for example only):

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STATEMENT OF ISSUES (AU LAC INSTITUTE)

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- "(i) Job Placement Rates.
- (1) Any placement data required by sections 94910(b) and 94929.5(a) of the Code shall be reported for the number of students who began the program as defined in subdivision (d)(1) of this section for each reported calendar year.
- (2) Placement is measured six months from the graduation date of each student. For programs that require passage of a licensing examination, placement shall be measured six months after the announcement of the examination results for the first examination available after a student completes an applicable educational program. Reporting of placement rates shall include for each educational program: the number of students who began the program, the number of graduates as defined in section 94842 of the Code, the graduates available for employment, graduates employed in the field and job placement rate(s).
- (3) If the institution makes any claim related to preparing students for a job or regarding job placement, the list required by section 94910(f)(2) of the Code shall identify the employment positions by using the Detailed Occupation or six-digit level of the Standard Occupational Classification codes.
- (4) Placement rate shall be calculated as follows: the number of graduates employed in the field as defined in section 94928(e)(1) of the Code in conjunction with section 74112(d)(3) divided by the number of graduates available for employment as defined in section 94928(d) of the Code.

Job Placement rates and related disclosures shall be included in the Performance Fact Sheet in a format substantially similar to the charts below, (dates, numbers, and other data shown are for example only):

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Job Placement Rates (includes data for the two calendar years prior to reporting)

Name of Educational Program (Program Length)

| Calendar Number of | | Number of | Graduates | Graduates | Placement |
|--------------------|--------------|-----------|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| Year | Students Who | Graduates | Available for | Employed in | Rate % |
| | Began the | | Employment | the Field | Employed in |
| | Program | | | | the Field |
| 20XX | 100 | 70 | . 70 | 55 | 79% |
| 20XY | 80 | 55 | 55 | 20 | 36% |

Gainful Employment Categories (includes data for the two calendar years prior to reporting)

Name of Educational Program (Program Length)

Part Time vs. Full Time Employment

| | Graduates Employed in the field 20 to 29 hours per week | Graduates Employed in the field at least 30 hours per week | Total Graduates Employed in the | |
|------|---|--|----------------------------------|--|
| | | | Field | |
| 20XX | 15 | 40 | 55 | |
| 20XY | 5 | 15 | 20 | |

| | Graduates Employed in the | Graduates Employed i | n the field in | Total Graduate | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|------------------|--|
| | field in a single position | concurrent aggregate | Employed in th | | |
| | | | | Field | |
| 20XX | 52 | 3 | | 55 | |
| 20XY | 19 | 1 | | 20 | |
| | | | | | |
| | Self-Em | ployed/Freelance Posi | itions | | |
| | | | | · | |
| | Graduates Employed who are | e self-employed or | Total Gradu | ates Employed in | |
| | working freela | ince | the Field | | |
| 20XX | 3 | | 55 | | |
| 20XY | 5 | | | 20 | |
| Yngtitutional Ela | | | | | |
| | Inst | itutional Employmen | t | | |
| | Graduates Employed in the fiel | ld who are employed | Total Gradu | ates Employed in | |
| | by the institution, an emplo | yer owned by the | tł | ne Field | |
| | institution, or an employer wh | no shares ownership | | | |
| | with the institu | | | | |
| | | | 55 | | |
| 20XX | 15 | | | 55 | |

Salary and Wage Information (includes data for the two calendar years prior to reporting)

Name of Educational Program (Program Length)

| Annual Salary and Wages Reported for Graduates Employed in the Field | | | | | | | |
|--|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| Calendar | Graduates | Graduates | \$15,000- | \$20,001- | \$25,001- | \$30,001- | No Salary |
| Year | Available | Employed | \$20,000 | \$25,000 | \$30,000 | \$35,000 | Information |
| | for | in the | | | | | Reported |
| | Employment | Field | | | | | |
| 20XX | 100 | 70 | 5 | 40 | 6 | . 3 | 16 |
| 20XY | 80 | 55 | 5 | 7 | 3 | 5 | 35 |

A list of sources used to substantiate salary disclosures is available from the school. (Insert how student can obtain this information.)

Initial only after you have had sufficient time to read and understand the information.

"(l) Definitions. Definitions for all terms contained on the Performance Fact Sheet shall be included as part of the Performance Fact Sheet, in the same format as required in subdivision (a).

The following are the definitions for the Performance Fact Sheet:

'Number of Students Who Began the Program' means the number of students who began a program who were scheduled to complete the program within 100% of the published program length within the reporting calendar year and excludes all students who cancelled during the cancellation period.

'Students Available for Graduation' is the number of students who began the program minus the number of students who have died, been incarcerated, or been called to active military duty.

'Number of On-time Graduates' is the number of students who completed the program within 100% of the published program length within the reporting calendar year.

'On-time Completion Rate' is the number of on-time graduates divided by the number of students available for graduation.

'150% Graduates' is the number of students who completed the program within 150% of the program length (includes on-time graduates).

'150% Completion Rate' is the number of students who completed the program in the reported calendar year within 150% of the published program length, including on-time graduates, divided by the number of students available for graduation.

'Graduates Available for Employment' means the number of graduates minus the number of graduates unavailable for employment.

'Graduates Unavailable for Employment' means the graduates who, after graduation, die, become incarcerated, are called to active military duty, are international students that leave the United States or do not have a visa allowing employment in the United States, or are continuing their education in an accredited or bureau-approved postsecondary institution.

'Graduates Employed in the Field' means graduates who beginning within six months after a student completes the applicable educational program are gainfully employed, whose employment has been reported, and for whom the institution has documented verification of employment. For occupations for which the state requires passing an examination, the six month period begins after the announcement of the examination results for the first examination available after a student completes an applicable educational program.

'Placement Rate Employed in the Field' is calculated by dividing the number of graduates gainfully employed in the field by the number of graduates available for employment.

'Number of Graduates Taking Exam' is the number of graduates who took the first available exam in the reported calendar year.

'First Available Exam Date' is the date for the first available exam after a student completed a program.

'Passage Rate' is calculated by dividing the number of graduates who passed the exam by the number of graduates who took the reported licensing exam.

'Number Who Passed First Available Exam' is the number of graduates who took and passed the first available licensing exam after completing the program.

'Salary' is as reported by graduate or graduate's employer.

'No Salary Information Reported' is the number of graduates for whom, after making reasonable attempts, the school was not able to obtain salary information.

- 18. California Code of Regulations, title 5, section 74115 states:
- "(a) This section applies to every set of financial statements required to be prepared or filed by the Act or by this chapter.
- "(b) A set of financial statements shall contain, at a minimum, a balance sheet, an income statement, and a cash flow statement, and the preparation of financial statements, shall comply with all of the following:
- (1) Audited and reviewed financial statements shall be conducted and prepared in accordance with the generally accepted accounting principles established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants by an independent certified public accountant who is not an employee, officer, or corporate director or member of the governing board of the institution.
- (2) Financial statements prepared on an annual basis as required by section 74110(b) shall be prepared in accordance with the generally accepted accounting principles established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. Nonprofit institutions shall provide annual financial statements as required under generally accepted accounting principles for nonprofit organizations.
- (3) The financial statements shall establish that the institution meets the requirements for financial resources required by Section 71745.
- (4) If an audit performed to determine compliance with any federal or state student financial aid program reveals any failure to comply with the requirements of the program and the noncompliance creates any liability or potential liability for the institution, the financial statements shall reflect the liability or potential liability.
- (5) Any audits shall demonstrate that the accountant obtained an understanding of the institution's internal financial control structure, assessed any risks, and has reported any material deficiencies in the internal controls.

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"(c) Work papers for the financial statements shall be retained for five years from the date of the statements and shall be made available to the Bureau upon request.

"(d) "Current" with respect to financial statements means completed no sooner than 120 days prior to the time it is submitted to the Bureau, and covering no less than the most recent complete fiscal year. If more than 8 months will have elapsed between the close of the most recent complete fiscal year and the time it is submitted, the fiscal statements shall also cover no less than five months of that current fiscal year.

19. California Code of Regulations, title 5, section 76215 states, in part:

. . .

"(b) In addition to the statement described under subdivision (a) of this section, a qualifying institution shall include the following statement on its current schedule of student charges:

"The State of California created the Student Tuition Recovery Fund (STRF) to relieve or mitigate economic losses suffered by students in educational programs who are California residents, or are enrolled in a residency programs attending certain schools regulated by the Bureau for Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education.

You may be eligible for STRF if you are a California resident or are enrolled in a residency program, prepaid tuition, paid the STRF assessment, and suffered an economic loss as a result of any of the following:

- 1. The school closed before the course of instruction was completed.
- 2. The school's failure to pay refunds or charges on behalf of a student to a third party for license fees or any other purpose, or to provide equipment or materials for which a charge was collected within 180 days before the closure of the school.
- 3. The school's failure to pay or reimburse loan proceeds under a federally guaranteed student loan program as required by law or to pay or reimburse proceeds received by the school prior to closure in excess of tuition and other costs.
- 4. There was a material failure to comply with the Act or this Division within 30 days before the school closed or, if the material failure began earlier than 30 days prior to closure, the period determined by the Bureau.

without a social security number or a taxpayer identification number. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 5, §

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76215, subd. (b).).

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subdivision (b)(2).

³ California Code of Regulations, title 5, section 74112, subdivision (d)(2) was formerly

| d. Respondent did not provide a School Performance Fact Sh | ct Sheet that includes the |
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| required definition for "Graduates Employed in the Field," as specified in E | in Education Code section |
| 94928, subdivision (e) and Code of Regulation, title 5, section 74112, subdi- | ubdivision (d)(3). (Cal. |
| Code Regs., tit. 5, § 74112, subd. (d)(3).). ⁴ | |

- e. Respondent did not provide a School Performance Fact Sheet that reported data for the previous two calendar years prior to reporting. Specifically, the Performance Fact Sheet is missing data for the 2013 calendar year. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 5, § 74112, subd. (e)(2).).⁵
- f. Respondent did not provide a School Performance Fact Sheet that includes the number of students who began program, the number of students available for graduation, the number of graduates, and the program length for each program in the Completion Rate table.

 (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 5, § 74112, subd. (h).).
- g. Respondent did not provide a School Performance Fact Sheet that includes the information regarding number of Students Who Began Program, students available for graduation, graduates, and completion rates. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 5, § 74112, subd. (I).).
- h. Respondent did not provide a School Performance Fact Sheet that includes a separate Placement Rate table that includes the number of students who began the program, the number of graduates, graduates available for employment, and graduates employed in the field. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 5, § 74112, subds. (i)(2).).8
- i. Respondent did not provide a School Performance Fact Sheet that includes data for the number of graduates employed in the field, or the number of graduates available for employment. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 5, § 74112, subd. (i)(4).).

⁵ California Code of Regulations, title 5, section 74112, subdivision (e)(2) was formerly subdivision (c)(2).

⁶ California Code of Regulations, title 5, section 74112, subdivision (h) was formerly ivision (d).

⁷ California Code of Regulations, title 5, section 74112, subdivision (l) was formerly subdivision (d).

⁸ California Code of Regulations, title 5, section 74112, subdivision (i)(2) was formerly subdivisions (e)(1) and (2).

⁹ California Code of Regulations, title 5, section 74112, subdivision (i)(4) was formerly subdivision (e)(3).

⁴ California Code of Regulations, title 5, section 74112, subdivision (d)(3) was formerly subdivision (b)(3).