

# Texas Workforce Press Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **TWC Monitors Texas Career Schools and Colleges**

*Any concerns from students should be directed to TWC*

AUSTIN — The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) licenses and regulates about 500 career schools and colleges in Texas which provide vocational training to more than 150,000 students. TWC makes annual site visits to campuses and monitors the qualifications of faculty, quality of facilities, class size, student completion rates, student employment rates, and other criteria. In addition to monitoring by TWC, some curricula must be approved by other Texas governing bodies such as the Texas Board of Nursing or the Texas Board of Architectural Examiners.

TWC encourages anyone considering a career school to carefully consider all options including programs at both public and private colleges. Potential students should consider the type of program that will best help them find employment in the occupations they seek, the quality and reputation of the school, its student graduation and employment rates, as well as the cost. Students should visit and tour the school. Students should be aware that they have 72 hours after they enroll to withdraw their applications with no penalty.

A recent report issued by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) included the results of investigations on student recruitment practices by 15 career schools and colleges nationwide. The GAO investigation found that all made deceptive or otherwise questionable statements to GAO undercover applicants. In addition, four of the 15 schools encouraged fraudulent practices.

Prior to the GAO-issued report, TWC had notified Westwood College Online, owned by Alta Colleges, Inc. that it must stop offering its online courses to Texas residents, because the school did not have a Certificate of Approval to operate in Texas. Based on failing to fully comply with the handling of complaints from Westwood Online students and several other compliance issues including those reported in the GAO findings, TWC has initiated the process to revoke or deny renewal of the Certificates of Approval of four other Alta Colleges-owned schools in Texas— three Westwood College campuses in Texas and a Redstone College campus in Colorado with a license to operate in Texas.

The schools have current licenses at this time which will remain in effect until the appeals process is complete. In the event the agency is forced to revoke or deny any Certificates of Approval, TWC has the authority to arrange alternative educational programs or provide refunds to students.

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As a result of the GAO report, TWC also intends to initiate lesser action against the Dallas campus of Everest College and one of the Dallas campuses of ATI Career Training Center. In letters to those schools in August, TWC stated that the agency has reasonable cause to believe the schools are guilty of violations to the Texas Education Code. Everest College and ATI have current Certificates of Approval at this time.

A career school traditionally trains students for a field in a business, trade, or technical or industrial occupation, or for avocational or personal improvement. TWC staff statewide monitors career school certification compliance, and can impose sanctions and/or an administrative penalty of up to \$1,000 per day per violation for noncompliance.

Pursuing such cases is the function of TWC's Regulatory Integrity Division, which is responsible for enforcing all regulatory statutes within the jurisdiction of the agency, encompassing career schools, child labor, Unemployment Insurance and workforce board sanctions.

Prospective career school students can access a list of schools with current Certificates of Approvals on the TWC Directory of Licensed Institutions on the Career Schools and Colleges website page at <http://propschools.texasworkforce.org> or by calling (512) 936-3100. Schools with valid exemptions from the requirement for licensure are not listed on the directory. Students with complaints are encouraged to use their schools' grievance processes or may file complaints with TWC. Complaint forms are located at <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/svcs/propschools/propforms.html>.

For more information, prospective students can call the TWC Career Schools Division at (512) 936-3100 or e-mail [career.schools@twc.state.tx.us](mailto:career.schools@twc.state.tx.us).

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*The Texas Workforce Commission is a state agency dedicated to helping Texas employers, workers and communities prosper economically. For details on TWC and the services it offers in coordination with its network of local workforce development boards, call (512) 463-8556 or visit [www.texasworkforce.org](http://www.texasworkforce.org).*