



STATE OF WASHINGTON

Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board

128 - 10th Avenue, S.W. • P.O. Box 43105 • Olympia, WA 98504-3105

Phone: 360-753-5662 • Fax: 360-586-5862 • Web: [www.wtb.wa.gov](http://www.wtb.wa.gov) • E-mail: [wtecb@wtb.wa.gov](mailto:wtecb@wtb.wa.gov)

August 1, 2005

CRI Career Training  
Alen Janisch, President  
929 North 130 Street #2  
Seattle WA 98133

RE: Complaint by [REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Janisch:

In accordance with Chapter 28C.10.120 RCW, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (the Workforce Board) reviewed a complaint filed against CRI Career Training (CRI) by the student identified above. As you will see, this complaint is very similar to a number of complaints previously filed against CRI.

This determination is structured as follows: There are four major areas of complaint identified as numbers 1 through 4; several of the major areas have subparts identified as 1a, 1b, 1c, etc. The school's responses to the each of the subparts of the four complaints immediately follow the subpart and are identified as "School's Response to 1a, School's Response to 1b, etc. Following all four of the student's complaints and CRI's responses are the Workforce Board's Findings, Conclusions, Determination, and Order.

### Student's Complaints

**1. Advertising/Claims Made by School:** 1a. The school misleads prospective students regarding its graduation rate, placement rate, and the length of time it takes an average student to complete the Court Reporter program. Students are told the average is 30 months and that it can be completed in as little as 12 months. The school emphasizes this point by explaining that although certain public technical schools charge less tuition, it takes longer for students to complete those programs (3 to 4 years) and that when you factor in the amount of income you lose by being in school longer, the public school programs are actually more expensive than CRI.

School Response to 1a: The school stated that it has never provided false information regarding its graduation times or placement rates. Students enroll for a 30-month program and are told it could take longer than that to finish.

1b. CRI gave false information about the skills necessary to become a court reporter and the costs to be incurred both as part of their school and upon graduation.



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School Response to 1b: The school stated that it did not give false information about the skills necessary to become a court reporter or the cost to be incurred.

1c. The school continually misled students regarding the accreditation standards the school followed and, additionally, misled accreditation agency representatives regarding the type of education being taught at the school.

School Response to 1c: The school stated that it did not mislead students regarding accreditation standards of the school. The school further stated that CRI always taught to the NCRA minimum standards while it was NCRA accredited.

1d. CRI advertised courses and instruction that were not actually offered, or taught these courses at a level where a student could not potentially learn them at a professional level needed for graduation or securing employment. CRI advertises that its program prepares students for careers as scopists, captioners, medical transcriptionists, or CART writers. In reality, students were only taught how to write on a stenograph machine and take testimony.

School Response to 1d: The school stated that it never advertised courses or instruction that were not actually offered. The school further stated that all courses are taught at a level that leads to successful employment in the court reporting field.

**2. Instructor Qualifications:** 2a. CRI consistently employed students as teachers or self-taught classes to a degree not supported by NCRA standards. The majority of learning was done by students dictating to other students from books or from machine dictation via the Stenowave system. Tapes were typically of very poor quality, incorrectly timed, produced by people with thick accents that were very difficult to understand, and by people with poor vocabularies.

School Response to 2a: The school stated that any students employed by CRI as lab assistants worked under the direct supervision of an instructor.

2b. CRI courses were run by unqualified staff or by staff members who rotated through class at a rate that is unacceptable among any educational standards. During beginning theory classes, students were often left to self-teach. A member of the administrative staff would show up for the first few minutes of class to take attendance, then the class would be left alone for hours with no instruction or supervision.

School Response to 2b: The school stated that all classes are taught by qualified instructors. Any lab assistants who may have worked in the class would have been under the direct supervision of an instructor.

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**3. Standards of Progress:** Despite a lack of real learning or educational progress, CRI continually moved students ahead to the next level of instruction without teaching the skills necessary to graduate.

School Response to 3: CRI responded that it never moved students ahead to the next level of instruction unless they had completed all the necessary requirements of the course.

**4. Method of Instruction:** 4a. The school completely changed the theoretical foundation of its educational approach to court reporting in 1999, but offered no retraining to students taught under the old method, and provided no method for these students to succeed.

School Response to 4a: The school stated that when it changed to a new theory, students were offered a transitional program they could use if they wished to change to the new theory.

4b. Critical components of an education for court reporting - medical and legal terminology - were taught inadequately and unprofessionally.

School Response to 4b: The school stated that ~~Ms. [redacted]~~ did not take medical or legal terminology.

4c. Instruction on Computer Aided Transcription software was completely inadequate despite being a key and vital daily tool used in any court reporter position.

School Response to 4c: The school responded that not only did ~~Ms. [redacted]~~ receive instruction in computer aided transcription software in class, she received hours of private instruction from Ms. Hobbs on her software.

4d. CRI misrepresented the basic typing class instruction and training provided by their school. The typing tutors the school states are available are, in reality, textbooks called "typing tutor."

School Response to 4d: The school stated that the typing class assumes familiarity with the keyboard and that typing tutors are available. The emphasis of the class is on drill work and skill development on drills designed to increase skill accuracy. The school further stated that ~~Ms. [redacted]~~ passed the required tests necessary to meet her typing requirement.

4e. After requesting additional assistance from Sandra Metz to learn how to become a CART writer, and being told CRI had nothing in the way of material or instructional aids to assist with that, Ms. Metz stated that all you had to do to become a CART writer was build a good dictionary and write accurately and cleanly.

School Response to 4e: The school stated that Ms. McKinney was given an alternate schedule in order to concentrate her efforts in the areas she needed to work on and that she was regularly tutored on her software by faculty members.

### Agency's Findings

The above complaints are not new; most have been brought to the Workforce Board's attention repeatedly by former CRI students. As have previous complainants, Ms. McKinney complained that:

- CRI's teaching methods are not effective,
- students basically teach themselves,
- the school employs unqualified instructors,
- the school's standards of progress are not consistently followed,
- the Stenowave system is faulty, and
- prospective students are misled with regard to the length of time it takes to complete the program.

The school's responses to the complaints are, likewise, not new. As it has in the past, the school maintains that its methods of instruction, faculty qualifications, and equipment are effective, that its program adequately prepares students for entry level employment in the Court Reporting Field.

When the Workforce Board investigated CRI in 2001, the Board's major concern was the amount of time it took students to progress through the program. CRI was advertising a 2.5 year program; however, the Workforce Board found that the few students who actually completed the program took an average of four years to get through the day program and more than five years to get through the evening program. At that time, the Workforce Board determined that CRI was misleading students with regard to the actual length of the program and required CRI to disclose to prospective students, the likelihood that it would take them much longer than 2.5 years to get through the Court Reporter program.

Although the school's catalog and enrollment agreement now contain statements informing students that it could take them longer than 2.5 years to complete the program, the Workforce Board consistently receives information from CRI students that the statement is downplayed by admissions representatives. Students report that the school continues to sell a 2.5 year program, further enticing prospective students with the anecdote that "a student even completed the program in one year." As of May 2005, there were four CRI students at the 225 wpm speed level, the last level before graduation; three day students who have been at CRI for an average of four years and one evening student who has been a student for nearly seven years. (Approximately 185 students are in attendance at CRI at any given time.)

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In 2003, the Workforce Board found that the school was using students as instructors and had at least one instructor teaching a course for which she was not qualified. To settle those complaints, the school agreed to comply with a negotiated agreement specifying minimum qualifications for individuals who teach various court reporting courses. While investigating these current complaints, the Workforce Board learned that the school continues to employ students as teachers.

Finally, to determine the accuracy of the school's claim that its method of instruction, standards of progress, course content and equipment are effective and that "students do succeed, graduate from CRI, and are successful as court reporters," the Workforce Board examined student data reported annually to the Workforce Board by CRI. That data revealed that CRI's completion rate was 6 percent for the period July 1, 2000 through June 30, 2003; only 10 of the 179 students who left the program during that period actually completed the program. Of those 10 completers, three (3) were working in the field six to nine months after graduation.

#### **Conclusion**

Notwithstanding the issues detailed in this determination, the real issue is that a tiny percentage of CRI students actually ever graduate and obtain jobs as court reporters. Hundreds of students have paid thousands of dollars each for a program they will never complete.

The Workforce Board has given CRI numerous chances to improve the quality of its Court Reporting program. It is troubling that CRI students continue to file complaints about issues the Workforce Board believed it dealt with a number of years ago. This recent rash of complaints, coupled with the school's abysmal completion and placement rates, make it clear the school's court reporting program is simply not adequate to achieve the objective for which it is offered.

Based on the findings outlined above, the Workforce Board concludes that the school engaged in a significant number of unfair business practices by failing to comply with the terms of a student contract (which incorporates the school's catalog by reference) [RCW28C.10.110(1)], representing falsely the qualifications of its faculty [RCW28C.10.110(6)], providing prospective students with information which has the tendency to mislead or deceive prospective students regarding current practices of the school [RCW28C.10.110(8)] and making statements in connection with the offering of education that the school knew or reasonably should have known to be false, substantially inaccurate, or misleading [RCW28C.10.110(10)].

#### **Determination**

It is the Workforce Board's determination that the complainant suffered a financial loss as a result of the school's unfair business practices. The amount of the loss is the total tuition and fees paid by ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~. Based on the information available to the Workforce Board at the

~~██████████~~ Complaint

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time of this determination, the amount due the complainant is \$19,900 (\$100 registration fee, and \$19,800 tuition.)

### Order

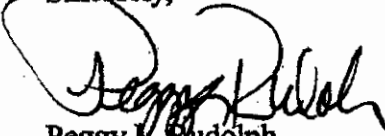
The school is ordered to provide a refund to Ms. McKinney as outlined above. The refund is to be paid within thirty days of the school's receipt of this Order. The school is further ordered to cease and desist from engaging in the unfair business practices listed in the Conclusion section of this Order.

### Appeal

You may appeal this decision by filing notice of appeal with the Workforce Board, postmarked within twenty (20) calendar days of receipt of this letter. If no appeal is filed within the 20 calendar days, you have waived your right to appeal and no further remedy is available under RCW 28C.10.

The appeal will be filed under the Administrative Procedure Act, chapter 34.05 RCW. Timely filing stays the Workforce Board's order during the appeal process. If the Workforce Board adjudication is affirmed in part or in its entirety in an administrative hearing, the school shall pay the costs of the hearing (RCW 28C.10.120(4)).

Sincerely,



Peggy L. Rudolph  
Program Specialist  
(360) 586-8682

cc: ~~██████████~~