

Vermont Tech Pilot Program

MEMORANDUM OF FACTS, CONCERNS, AND REQUEST FOR REVIEW

FERPA, PPRA

Source: <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/file-a-complaint>

Background

I enrolled in the aviation program at Vermont Technical College in 2017 utilizing VA educational benefits. I entered the program with the expectation of completing all required academic and flight training requirements necessary for progression through the curriculum. My goal was to successfully complete the program and advance through the required stages of flight training.

During my enrollment, significant concerns arose regarding flight access, instructor availability, program administration, grading, record retention, financial charges, and withdrawal processing. These concerns ultimately affected my ability to complete the program. Many of these issues have remained unresolved despite years of efforts to obtain clarification, records, and answers regarding disputed events.

Enrollment and Flight Training Concerns

Throughout my enrollment, I experienced repeated interruptions affecting flight training progression, including instructor shortages, delayed flight access, aircraft and communication equipment concerns, scheduling difficulties, and limited access to required instruction. These issues affected my ability to obtain consistent training and remain on pace with program expectations. As a result, my flight progression was repeatedly disrupted.

I also experienced circumstances that negatively affected my ability to progress at the same pace as other students. These circumstances included interpersonal conflicts with the newcoming director, unequal treatment, and barriers to obtaining flight instruction. The cumulative effect of these circumstances significantly impacted my educational experience and training progression.

During periods of instructor shortages, a friend of the director and an instructor from outside the program became involved in training operations. Despite ongoing efforts to meet program requirements, I was kept by the director and this instructor from pursuing my flight progression. These circumstances created additional delays and obstacles to completing required training milestones.

At the time, zero students had completed the first-semester flight-training requirements. Students were being required to progress through both Private Pilot and Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) training requirements simultaneously despite substantial delays and training obstacles. These conditions created additional challenges for students attempting to remain on schedule and successfully complete program requirements.

Eventually, I was, by heroism, assigned to another instructor, a veteran pilot and educator, whose instruction enabled me to successfully solo multiple times and make meaningful progress in flight training. Following this reassignment, I was able to demonstrate flight proficiency and continue progressing through required training milestones. His instruction provided opportunities that had previously been unavailable to me and allowed me to move forward in the program.

During this period, I became aware of statements and discussions that negatively affected my reputation within the program. I became aware of information indicating that my character, performance, and standing were being discussed in a manner that harmed my educational experience. These events contributed to my concerns regarding the fairness of my treatment and the barriers that were being placed on my progression.

During a meeting with the director, I was told an untrue statement that I was underperforming more than any other student in the program. At that time, my training opportunities had been substantially limited by instructor shortages, delayed flight access, and other circumstances described above. I and other students were presented with documentation concerning our continuation in the program and were pressured to sign the documentation.

I was left with the impression that my options were limited. Other students also expressed concerns regarding circumstances within the program during this period. These events contributed to my decision to ultimately withdraw from the program.

I withdrew from the program. Despite my withdrawal, an "F" grade was later recorded in flight training. The flight training program continued after my withdrawal, yet I was never afforded the opportunity to complete a flight test prior to my departure.

I incurred financial losses exceeding \$12,000 in flight-related funds and educational expenses. Additionally, I was charged for two semesters despite attending only one unfinished semester of instruction. I was also charged more than \$800 in expenses that I was expected to pay above and beyond what was covered by the GI Bill.

To date, I have not received satisfactory explanations regarding these charges. My transcript and student records were withheld for years, including during two formal investigations. It was not until I issued a firm warning that withholding transcripts against the will of a student is a violation of federal law and a breach of student rights that my records were finally released.

Following this, I was informed in a brief letter that my records had been destroyed. I have never received a satisfactory explanation regarding the destruction of these records, nor have I been provided with documentation sufficient to address the concerns raised throughout this matter. I have not heard back from the school regarding my questions.

Veteran-Related Concerns

During my enrollment, I was informed that the program director was considering eliminating or substantially changing the veteran component of the aviation program. This information raised

concerns regarding the future of veteran participation within the program. It also raised questions regarding how veterans utilizing VA educational benefits were being treated.

I was aware of other veterans who experienced concerns regarding the program. While I cannot speak on behalf of other students, the existence of similar concerns among veterans contributed to my decision to seek review of these matters. These circumstances remain relevant to my request for further investigation.

Based upon my experiences and the circumstances described herein, I remain concerned that I may have been subjected to discrimination or unequal treatment as a veteran utilizing VA educational benefits. I respectfully request that these concerns be evaluated as part of any review. The facts described in this memorandum form the basis for those concerns.

Withdrawal and Administrative Concerns

I formally departed the program in January 2018, with withdrawal processing later reflected in institutional records. Prior to my departure, I attended a private meeting concerning my continuation within the program. The circumstances surrounding this meeting remain a significant concern.

During this meeting, I was presented with documentation regarding attendance and program participation. I felt pressured to sign documentation despite ongoing concerns regarding my training circumstances and ability to access instruction. The documentation was presented during a period in which my training opportunities had already been significantly impacted.

Following my withdrawal, I repeatedly communicated my intentions regarding withdrawal, transfer, and record access. I attempted to obtain clarification regarding my academic standing, financial obligations, and flight-training records. These efforts continued for years following my departure from the institution.

Records Access Concerns

For years following my departure, I made repeated attempts to obtain educational records, transcripts, financial information, and documentation regarding my enrollment. These requests were made through various channels and over an extended period of time. I consistently sought records necessary to understand disputed events and decisions.

I experienced prolonged difficulty obtaining records due to billing-related restrictions. At one point, I was informed that I would be required to pay a substantial amount, reportedly exceeding \$600, in order to obtain records and address account-related issues. Despite repeated requests, I was unable to obtain complete records explaining the charges assessed to my account.

Complete transcript access was not obtained until recently, after repeated requests and warnings that formal complaints would be filed regarding record-access concerns. Upon finally receiving my transcript, I became aware of disputed grades that had not previously been known to me. The delayed access to records significantly hindered my ability to understand and address these issues.

Missing Records Concerns

Despite repeated requests, I was unable to obtain numerous records necessary to understand disputed events and evaluate my educational experience. These records include flight training records, flight logs, instructor assignments, instructor evaluations, signed documentation, administrative records, detailed financial records, aircraft maintenance or malfunction documentation, and records relating to flight progression and scheduling. The absence of these records has made it difficult to fully assess the circumstances surrounding my enrollment and withdrawal.

I made repeated efforts over many years to obtain these records and answers regarding disputed events. I ultimately initiated formal complaints and sought review of the circumstances surrounding my enrollment, withdrawal, academic record, financial charges, and treatment within the program. These efforts did not result in the production of many of the records requested.

The institution later indicated that numerous records no longer existed due to record-retention practices. I remain concerned regarding the destruction, loss, or unavailability of records because disputes, record requests, complaints, investigations, and VA-related concerns were ongoing during portions of the relevant period. Despite notice of these concerns, many of the records necessary to evaluate disputed events are no longer available.

Current Status

Multiple substantive questions remain unanswered. Despite recent communications requesting clarification regarding grades, flight training progression, instructor involvement, financial activity, billing, record retention, missing documentation, and withdrawal processing, I have not received satisfactory responses addressing these concerns. Significant factual and administrative issues therefore remain unresolved.

I was ultimately informed that the institution had provided all records it was required to provide. However, significant questions remain unresolved due to the absence of records that would otherwise clarify disputed events and decisions. The lack of documentation has substantially hindered efforts to fully evaluate what occurred.

As a result, I have elected to seek formal review by appropriate oversight agencies and other relevant authorities. I believe a comprehensive review is necessary to determine whether institutional policies, record-retention obligations, veterans' educational requirements, and other applicable responsibilities were properly followed. I respectfully request that the facts and concerns described herein be thoroughly evaluated.

Requested Review

I respectfully request review of academic grading and disputed grades, withdrawal processing and documentation, financial activity, billing, account charges, and flight-fee expenditures. I also request review of VA-related enrollment reporting and benefit administration, record-retention practices, missing documentation, flight-training access, progression, scheduling,

instructional circumstances, instructor assignments, and program administration. These matters are central to understanding the circumstances described in this memorandum.

I further request review of the preservation, destruction, and availability of educational records, potential veteran-related discrimination or unequal treatment, and compliance with applicable institutional, state, federal, and veterans' education requirements. These issues remain unresolved despite years of efforts to obtain clarification and documentation. They warrant independent review and evaluation.

I respectfully request a thorough review of these matters and any records available to determine whether appropriate procedures were followed, whether records were properly maintained and disclosed, whether veterans' educational benefits were administered appropriately, and whether corrective action is warranted. I further request that any findings be supported by available documentation and preserved records. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Instructor: M CFI #3986950CFI

This is to confirm that you have requested records that we have not located and were not retained consistent with VSC Policy 209. We do not know the date of destruction and are not aware of "any summaries, metadata, logs, or secondary records." We have provided you with all of the available information.

Please let this confirm that the University does not have any other information and/or clarification beyond what we have already provided.

Sincerely

