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Non Accredited Degrees

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### Abstract

The purchase of degrees without attending the required block of college classroom or online instructions through means of monetary means. College degrees are one of the means of showing a Soldier's ability to go over and above his fellow peers. College degrees can also be one of the deciding factors within the centralized promotion system for Senior NCO's to excel in their careers. This ethics paper was to show that some of the Soldier's within the Army are circumventing the system through means of purchasing degrees for promotion purposes which leads to an unfair advantage over Soldier's that are attempting to earn a legitimate degree and promotion..

Each student in class fifty seven was tasked to write a paper on an ethical situation that is going on within the United States Army. So I chose to write my paper on civilian education and promotions. The U.S. Military is viewed in today's society as a leader of our social moral and norms.

The U.S. Military over the years has established itself as a progressive organization who has focused on ensuring that members of its organization are well educated by placing emphasis on civilian education for promotion which in my point of view has caused Soldiers to actively seek the edge over their peers through means such as buying degrees through non ethical means. During the early years of the Military it was acceptable to enter into the Army and have a successful career with little or no education at all.

Today's Military is running off a much more educated group of individuals, who are operating more high tech equipment and computers on the battlefield. If we look at the Military Occupation Specialty chart we would notice suggested civilian education broken down by grade levels. Soldiers are attempting to reach these civilian grade levels through many ways. Some Soldiers are taking college online, some are sitting in the class rooms and some are buying degrees. I will emphasize on the Soldiers who are purchasing degrees. There are several companies or individuals who have taken advantage of this competitive nature by offering degrees to Soldiers for monetary funds. Soldiers have purchased degrees ranging from an Associate to Master degrees. Initially this gives those Soldiers an unfair advantage over their peers. You may ask why I stated that this is an unfair advantage. The centralized promotion system selects Soldier's for promotion through a point system that max out at the six plus range. In this system Soldier's are given a portion of points if they have education, even though it does not have a lot of weight it is a factor. Soldiers that purchase degrees from non-accredited colleges,

which end state is a fake degrees are now are now being seen by their evaluators as go getters for completing a level of civilian education on their evaluations reports. The leader has no way of knowing that the degree paperwork that the Soldier has was purchased verses earned. Soldier then goes one step further by having the Personnel Service Center to update their civilian education screen with their newly purchased degree. The Soldier at the records center has no way of knowing that this is an unaccredited/purchased degree. Soldiers ERB now is now updated and Soldier looks like a stellar professional that has went over and beyond with self improvement. This is a big problem within the military.

If we look at the students within the Sergeants Major academy class fifty seven you will notice the following break down of education for the 649 students assigned. Doctorate degree – one student, Master Degrees – 27 student, Bachelor Degrees – 132 student, Associate Degrees – 143 students, some college (60 or more hours) – 149 students, less than 60 hours 130 students and High School/GED – 67 students. The following is breakdowns of students within the academy that have non accredit degrees. Master degree is eight students, Bachelors degrees is 27 students and Associate degrees is six students. This makes a person to wonder if those 41 students would be at the Sergeants Major Academy or wearing the rank of Sergeant Major if it was not for the degree. How many Sergeant Majors are in the field that have brought degrees? Is this an ethical problem? I would say yes. Is this an ethical problem? There is not one Soldier within the military that has enough military experience that covers down to award them a degree just by the means of paying a fee for a degree. How do we fix this problem? I would have design SIDPERS so that the education center would be the only organization who can input college credit and degrees. The education center is the only section knows which college and schools are accredited. Here is an example: A Soldier

goes and buys a degree and goes to the PSB to update their record. The records clerk who is a Private through Specialist updates the Soldier's ERB with the degree type that was purchased. The Soldier now looks like they have earned that degree and there is no way of anyone knowing that it is non accredited until it is deeply researched. The only schools that the local PSB would be allowed to input would be local schools on the installation. Department of the Army would continue to load their schools by top loading them.

The Army core values are Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honesty, Integrity, and Personal Courage. **Loyalty** is to bear true faith and allegiance to the U. S. Constitution, the Army, your unit, and other situations. Webster defines loyalty as the act of binding yourself to a course of action. **Duty** is to fulfill your obligation. Duty as defined by Webster as the social force that binds you to your obligations and the courses of action." **Respect** is to treat people, as they should be treated or an attitude of admiration or esteem. **Selfless Service** is to put the welfare of the nation, the Army, and subordinates before you are own, or an unselfish concern. Our fallen comrades also exemplified selfless service, giving the ultimate sacrifice – their life. **Honor** is to live up to all the Army values. Honor requires that we as leaders obey public moral codes. Honor is the connection between all other values. **Integrity** is to just do what is legally and morally right, personal inner sense of wholeness or moral soundness in any situation. **Personal Courage** is to face fear, danger, or adversity (physical and moral). We know that the chance to be placed in a dangerous and hostile environment is more evident than not, but we go willingly because of personal courage. Out of these values I feel that Integrity is being overlooked by Soldiers that actively participate in the practice of buying degrees from institutions verses taking classes and have their MOS evaluated like their peers have. I feel like the U.S. Military should actively seek those individuals and give them a time frame with a cut

off date to complete required course for the education level that they now possess on their ERB.

This would make it fair across the board and once the word is out it would stop this practice that seems to be becoming a norm. Additionally the military should place all such organization or personal that sells degrees off limits to Soldiers. Is your degree legitimate?