

Four employees of Crown College under fire

By Shaileja Mammen

Crown College, after the loss of its accreditation and closure, now faces investigations by the U.S. Department of Education into whether its employees have committed fraud.

Four employees are believed to have fraudulently collected about \$60,000 via a provision that allows for loan cancellation in the event of a college's closure. The U.S. Department of Education is currently investigating whether a fake enrollment record was created to collect the money in the form of loans and grants.

According to court filings, the employees created records to show that they were attending classes when the school was in operation but was on the verge of closure. Investigators searched the school and seized documents, rolodexes, and computer images. The employees involved are believed to hold key leadership positions at the school. The owner of the for-profit college, John Wabel, said that the allegations are false.

The investigations are being carried out by the U.S. Department of Education Office of the Inspector General in Long Beach, CA. Associate Executive Director of the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges of Technology Michael McComis said one of the reasons Crown College lost its accreditation was that "its students weren't getting jobs at a sufficient rate."

Crown College, after losing its accreditation, closed this summer. Other allegations against the college include providing misleading information about the transfer of credits to other colleges. Several cases have been filed, and the college has paid damages and attorneys' fees to some of the students.

Wabel purchased Crown College 17 years ago and turned it into a school for correctional officers. Later, the college relocated to Tacoma and began offering associate degrees. The school's closure is temporary, according to Wabel. He intends to reopen it as soon he can secure additional funding.