

Samuel and Lucille Jimenez.



To: Councilman Frank Ramirez.

My wife and I were both born here in Hanford, raised our two children here and both were educated by the Hanford school system. Today, they are both gainfully employed and productive citizens, both graduated with their Bachelors of Science degrees and Masters degrees from accredited Universities. My wife and I voted for you because of all the allegations of corruption and special favors for friends by past Councilmen and Councilwomen.

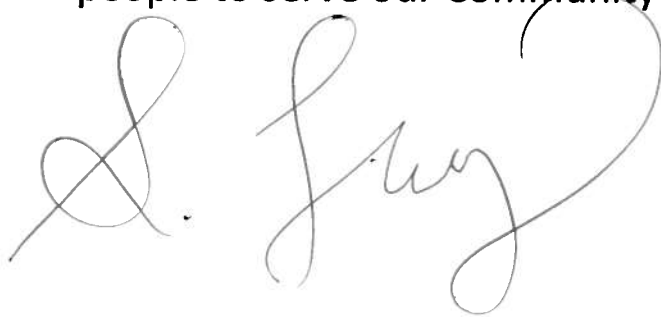
A year later, here we go again. The Hanford Sentinel Ran an article titled "Hanford Councilman under fire". Please tell us this is not true.

I read your biography, campaign literature and other material you mailed during your campaign for Hanford City Council.

Mr. Ramirez, none of its true. I spoke to some folks who know your father and he confirmed that your resume is false and bolstered.

1. When did you serve on the Armona school board?
2. Did you graduate from high school?
3. You were born in 1981. Graduated from college with both a bachelors degree and Masters degree in 1999. Do the math.
4. Is it true that you own businesses without the proper documentation?
5. Have you paid taxes, employee taxes, insurance.

Mr. Ramirez, one last question. If any of the allegations are true, will you resign? We need honest, hardworking people to serve our Community without deception.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Gray", written in a cursive style.

# **Court Orders Columbia Pacific University to Cease Operating Illegally in California**

**Stephen Barrett, M.D**

In December 1999, the Marin County Superior Court ordered Columbia Pacific University (CPU), of Novato, California, to cease operations within the State [1,2]. On February 21, 2001, the judge denied further appeals and entered a final judgment ordering CPU to:

- Pay a civil penalty of \$10,000 to the Bureau for Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education for violating Sections 17200 et seq. and Sections 17500 et seq. of the California Business and Professions Code
- Permanently stop operating or offering any educational programs in California.
- Notify all students enrolled from June 25, 1997 to December 1, 2000 of the injunction and of their right to a refund.
- Provide refunds to all students within 30 days of their request.
- Provide a status report to the Court by June 30, 2001.

Failure to comply with the above order in California would constitute contempt of court, which is punishable by a fine and/or imprisonment [3]. CPU moved to Montana but closed about a year later.

## **Background History**

CPU, founded in 1978, was a private, nonaccredited correspondence school that offered programs leading to bachelors, masters, and doctorate-level "degrees" in various subjects.

Private postsecondary schools are regulated by the California Bureau of Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education, which approves schools to operate and ensures that training is relevant and practical. In 1996, after conducting a qualitative review and assessment of CPU's degree-granting programs, the bureau's predecessor agency (Council for Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education) denied CPU's application for licensure. On June 10, 1997, this denial was upheld by an independent administrative law judge who concluded that CPU had: (a) awarded excessive credit for prior experiential learning to many students; (b) failed to employ duly qualified faculty; and (c) failed to meet various requirements for issuing Ph.D. degrees. When CPU continued to operate without legal approval, the California Attorney General sought an injunction (see "Sequence of Events," below).

The bureau estimated that hundreds of people would be eligible for a refund. In addition, students with CPU degrees granted on or after June 25, 1997, that were used for licensing examination eligibility were advised to contact their licensing authority with questions about the validity of their license. Most licensing boards require that exam-takers have degrees from state approved schools.

The bureau further stated that students who received degrees or credentials from CPU before June 25, 1997 should not be affected because the school had legal authorization to operate until that date. This merely means that the school was allowed to issue degrees. It does not mean that the school was accredited or that employers should regard the degrees as

representing education equivalent to that of accredited schools. During the 1980s, an official of the California Postsecondary Education Commission confirmed to me that CPU had been authorized to operate but was **not** accredited [4].

### **Sequence of Events Leading to the Injunction**

- The initial Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education Reform Act of 1989 went into effect in 1991. Columbia Pacific University was given "grandfather" status as an approved, degree-granting institution.
- CPU subsequently submitted its first application for approval to the Council for Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education, the predecessor agency of the Bureau for Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education.
- After a comprehensive review and assessment, the council denied CPU's application on numerous grounds on December 15, 1996. CPU appealed that denial. While the appeal was pending, CPU was legally permitted to continue operating.
- Following an evidentiary administrative hearing, an independent administrative law judge upheld the council's denial. A final decision and order of denial was issued by the council on or about June 25, 1997.
- CPU petitioned the Alameda County Superior Court for a writ of mandamus vacating the council's order and decision denying CPU approval to operate. CPU also sought a temporary stay of the council's decision pending the outcome of the writ petition.
- The court denied CPU's request for a stay of the council's decision. Therefore, as of June 25, 1997, CPU has not possessed an approval to operate as a postsecondary institution in the state of California. CPU did not further pursue its writ action at that time, but continued to operate.
- In late 1997 the council initiated a civil action in Marin County Superior Court to enjoin CPU's illegal operations.
- On January 1, 1998, the bureau succeeded to all the rights and powers of the council. The bureau continued to pursue the action against CPU initiated by the council.
- On February 10, 1998, the bureau's motion for a preliminary injunction against CPU was denied by the Marin Superior Court on procedural grounds. The bureau appealed that denial.
- On October 1, 1998, the First Appellate District reversed the trial court's denial of the bureau's motion for a preliminary injunction. CPU then petitioned the California Supreme Court for review of the appellate court decision.
- On December 16, 1998, the California Supreme Court denied CPU's petition for review. Therefore, the case was remanded to the trial court for reconsideration of the bureau's motion.
- On January 26, 1999, the bureau's motion for a preliminary injunction was reconsidered and granted. The case was set for trial in May 1999. CPU appealed that decision. As a result of the Marin County Superior Court's decision at the trial, that appeal became moot.
- Following the California Supreme Court's denial of CPU's petition for review in the Marin County action, CPU renewed its writ action in Alameda Superior Court.
- On the date of the trial in the injunction action, CPU served notice that it had

filed bankruptcy the previous day. The Marin County Superior Court stayed the action.

- The bureau sought, and on July 23, 1999, obtained, relief in bankruptcy court from the automatic stay of the injunction action.
- The injunction action proceeded to trial on December 1 and 2, 1999, at the conclusion of which the judge issued her decision.
- CPU appealed, but on February 21, 2001, the judge denied the appeal and issued a final order.