

Subject: Counseling Program/Thursday Meeting

Dr. Tinajero,

It has come to my attention that there will be a meeting held on Thursday regarding the recent article in the newspaper and the concerns that some of the current student body has regarding our counseling program. I find it very unethical to have a meeting without giving ample notice to ALL students in the program and also ALL faculty, so that they can make arrangements to attend. The lack of timely notice seems to fly in the face of the teachings of the ethics course we are required to take.

It has also come to my attention that you are bringing someone in from Lubbock to speak to us. The apparent appeal with bringing that particular man in is that he, himself, graduated from UTEP and was able to get a fantastic job despite the lack of CACREP accreditation. If this is the message that UTEP wants to convey, then I am disappointed that the university is aspiring in mediocrity. Sure, it is great that he was able to accomplish what he did, but it would shock me to learn that UTEP is satisfied in giving its student body just enough. I am certain that there are much better uses for the funds accumulated by tuition and fees than to pay to accommodate a speaker conveying a pointless message. We have never been told that we could not go and acquire a PhD because we are not a CACREP-accredited university.

However, no one can deny that it increases one's marketability in the job field. I think the student body also understands that it is possible to become a LPC without CRACREP accreditation, but again, it only helps. I want it to be made clear that no one has ever said that we were in a weak or lacking program. Nonetheless, I feel the university could do more to improve its competitiveness with other universities. I'm sure there is a direct correlation between what a university has to offer its students and what the university's graduates, in turn, have to offer the community.

Myself and some of the other students in the counseling program feel like we are being left out of the loop and we demand clarification. On the one hand, the university website for this program indicates that efforts are being made towards the acquisition of CRACREP accreditation, yet, in a meeting you had with us at the beginning of the semester there was no acknowledgement of such efforts. Moreover, any efforts made to notify faculty and students that there would be a meeting were minimal, at best. At that meeting, we were made to believe that getting CRACREP accreditation would somehow affect our financial aid status. We ask: How is that? Some of us are still confused about that and would like some clarification. I must say it is a little disheartening to keep reading newspaper articles about proposed increases in tuition at UTEP and to be left looking for a return on my investment.

Being that these questions and concerns are not only my own, but also shared by other students in the counseling program, I feel that the university must hold a meeting to address these issues. It must be a well-announced meeting, however, in which all of the students and faculty who could potentially be affected by any decisions concerning the program, are invited. Make us feel like our opinion matters. Please take into consideration that a lot of us don't have classes on Thursday—a fact you seemed to neglect when you scheduled the last meeting. Let's hear all sides of the story so that, regardless of the outcome, we can rest assured that we were taken into account.

I am a third-generation UTEP student; my grandfather, great-uncle, uncle and my own mother all earned their bachelor's degrees at UTEP. My mother and I have both acquired master's degrees at UTEP and I am currently pursuing a second master's degree—you guessed it—at UTEP. My daughter will be graduating from high school this year and plans to transfer to UTEP from EPCC. My point being that, my family is committed to UTEP. My family feels an attachment to UTEP and its beautiful campus. Is the feeling not mutual?

Sincerely,
Michelle Jula