



Continental Academy

3241 Executive Way • Miramar, FL 33025
Phone: 1-800-285-3514 Fax: 954-538-0425
www.continentalacademy.com

MEMORANDUM

Date: October 8, 2010
For: (John Doe), Admissions Representative, (XYZ) University
From: Jeffrey Lopez, M.S., Vice Principal
Re: Admission of Continental Academy's student (John Doe)

We have recently learned that your institution has denied admission to one of our graduates, namely (John Doe). Our students have many options to choose from in relation to their future educational development, and we are committed to assisting them gain admission to those institutions of their preference, and for which they are qualified. To this end, we wish to highlight a few items so that you may reconsider your decision.

Continental Academy has been serving the homeschooling community since 1996. All of our 24 credit academic programs are based upon, and adhere to, established standards for secondary-level academic content in the State of Florida. Individual courses, course texts and supplemental materials are authored or selected by an array of distinguished educators. All materials comply with the applicable curriculum content objectives identified in the State of Florida Department of Education's Sunshine State Standards for secondary education. Continental Academy has a proven track-record and the majority of our students have successfully proceeded to earn degrees from postsecondary institutions. **In fact, many of our prior graduates have successfully attended a (XYZ) institution since year 2002.**

We understand that your current internal admissions policy may require that applicants graduate from secondary schools whose accrediting agencies are "recognized" by the U.S. Department of Education ("DOE"). If this is the case, your admission policy should be re-examined. Such policies negatively impact, on a disproportionate basis, home schooled students. From a practical point of view, your institution is unnecessarily missing out on large pool of qualified candidates. More importantly, however, you should be aware that the DOE **does not** accredit private or public elementary or secondary schools, and the Department does **not recognize accrediting bodies for the accreditation of private or public elementary and secondary schools**. The DOE only recognizes accrediting bodies for the accreditation of institutions of higher (postsecondary) education. The Department's position can be verified at: http://www2.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/accreditation_pg2.html#U.S.; and is set forth herein in full:

"Note: The U.S. Department of Education does not have the authority to accredit private or public elementary or secondary schools, and the Department does not recognize accrediting bodies for the accreditation of private or public elementary and secondary schools. However, the U.S. Department of Education does recognize accrediting bodies for the accreditation of institutions of higher (postsecondary) education. If an accrediting body which is recognized by the Department for higher education also accredits elementary and secondary schools, the Department's recognition applies ONLY to the agency's accreditation of postsecondary institutions."

Furthermore, you may be concerned with federal funding implications of admitting our students to your college. Please note that under the 1998 Amendments to the Higher Education Act of 1965, students who have “*completed a secondary school education in a home school setting that is treated as a home school or private school under State law*” are eligible for financial aid.^[i] The DOE’s regulations restated the above law, explaining that a student is eligible for financial aid if he or she was home-schooled and either: (1) obtained a secondary school completion credential as provided by state law; or (2) has completed a secondary school education in a home school setting under state law.^[ii] Nothing else is required. The above-named student successfully graduated from Continental Academy, which qualifies as a private school under Florida Law and has the registered number 063228. Hence, admitting our graduates to your institution will not jeopardize your eligibility to participate in Title IV, HEA student financial assistance programs.

For your convenience, we have attached the Department’s formal “Dear Colleague” letter to all universities and postsecondary educational institutions clarifying admission of home-schooled students. You may also find this letter at the DOE’s financial aid website at: <http://ifap.ed.gov/dpcletters/GEN0211.html>

Finally, the Higher Education Act, as amended (Pub. L. No. 105-244), encourages colleges and universities receiving federal funding to discontinue discrimination against homeschoolers. Continental’s homeschool graduates legitimately earn their diplomas by completing their high school education in a home school setting. It would not make much sense for the U.S. Department of Education to allow for financial aid to graduates such as ours, if the Department’s criteria did not also portend that our students met the minimum requirements to gain admission into one or more educational institutions. In other words, the U.S. Department of Education does not distinguish for purposes of financial aid between home school students and traditional high school students. Hence, there is no reason why you should arbitrarily discriminate against our students on the basis of either accreditation ^[iii] or homeschooling. Moreover, Congress’s Report on the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act specifically recommends that colleges and universities change any admissions policies which force homeschooled students to take additional tests beyond what is required of traditionally schooled students, including the GED and the SAT II exams. ^[iv]

(XYZ) has made clear that (XYZ) does not recognize high school diplomas awarded by Continental Academy and that (XYZ) is not able to accept this as evidence of high school completion. However, since 2002, (XYZ) has recognized high school diplomas awarded by Continental Academy and has accepted **649** official transcripts from Continental Academy as evidence of high school completion. I can only assume that (XYZ) is committed to the principle of **equal opportunity** in education and employment and (XYZ) does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, veteran status, ancestry, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its admissions policies. In my opinion, (John) should not be treated differently than the other Continental Academy graduates your institution has accepted for admission. Especially, due to the fact that many of the Continental Academy graduates your institution has accepted for admission did not earn a “regionally accredited” high school diploma and we do not find any statement in your current admissions policies for the public that states an applicant must provide an official transcript from a “regionally accredited” high school.

In conclusion, we hope that you will take the time to consider these facts and we respectfully request that you reevaluate your decision to deny our student admission to your institution. For your awareness, our online students are specifically preparing themselves for entrance into a postsecondary institution and we used to have (XYZ) on the top of our college recommendation list. Please be so kind to make (John) and I aware of your final decision in writing. Thank you for your time and consideration.

cc: (John Doe) , Continental Academy High School Graduate

^[i] 20 U.S.C. §1091 (d) (3).

^[ii] 34 CFR § 668.32(e)(4).

^[iii] As noted in the U.S. House of Representative and Senate Committee Reports accompanying the Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (Pub. L. No 105-244), the Committee noted as follows: “The Committee believes that college admissions should be determined based on academic ability of the student and not the accreditation status of the school in which he or she received a secondary education.” 105th Congress, 2d Session, House of Representatives, REPORT 105-481, Higher Education Amendments of 1998, April 17, 1998, p. 147.

^[iv] Id.