

**Testimony of Dr. O. Alton Barron**  
**of**  
**Manhattan, NY**  
**before**  
**Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee**  
**in support of**  
**Raised Senate Bill 970 AN ACT CONCERNING PROGRAM MODIFICATION**  
**AT INDEPENDENT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.**

Thursday, March 9th, 2017  
Room 1E

As the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Post University, it is incumbent upon me to write this letter on behalf of our amazing body of past, present, and future graduates. It is our students who continue to benefit from the dedicated faculty, the ever-expanding breadth and depth of class offerings, and the trustees, who have proven beyond any doubt our profound belief in Post University as an institution of higher learning and as a facilitator of student flourishing during and after graduation.

I am not an investor in Post University. I receive nothing other than a small stipend to attend our quarterly board meetings. And yet, as an independent, non-vested board member for 12 years and the chairman for 5 years, I and my fellow trustees have worked tirelessly to bring Post to a whole new level of excellence. I have nothing to gain in writing this letter other than to ease the burdens that have been unduly placed on Post University by legislation which have had the consequence of slowing our academic growth.

It is important to note the following:

1. After a recent exhaustive review process, Post University was re-accredited for 10 more years by NEASC. Further review by OHE is at best unnecessary and at worst duplicitous. As you know, NEASC is the primary quality assurance entity used by both the federal government and states as an indicator that member institutions are functioning at an appropriate level of quality. NEASC accredits Post just as it does UCONN, the state universities, the community colleges, and nearly all private universities in the state. Other New England states accept NEASC accreditation as the fundamental criterion related to regulation, and most often, schools so accredited by NEASC are typically exempt from additional state oversight. In addition, the recent adoption of SARA (State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement) as a common standard across states for approval of online programs, is recognition of Connecticut's acceptance of Post University's high standards.

2. There is a surfeit of data that documents the high level of academic integrity maintained by our students at Post, with an impressive average GPA of 3.0 that has yet to reach a plateau.

3. By almost every criteria, Post University is far less akin to a for-profit or career college and far more akin to a typical not-for-profit university. To this point, and much to my approval as a non-vested trustee, Post has, and continues to, invest all proceeds back into the campus, housing, faculty, programs and our student experiences.

This brings me to the crux of this letter: The OHE program approval process in the state of Connecticut. Last year, state legislation was passed that streamlined the new program approval process for all colleges and universities in Connecticut. Post University was excluded from this legislation solely based on our tax status and with unequivocally clear and negative consequences. We are constantly evaluating and altering our program offerings, most often based on our student-faculty feedback and needs. However, this legislation delays our ability to meet their needs for at least months and even years. Strikingly, we are one of only two institutions in Connecticut excluded from the OHE streamlining legislation. And this is in the face of our full unequivocal and laudatory accreditation by NEASC.

In the last **12 years**, we have tirelessly worked to raise the visibility and viability of Post University from a challenged institution to one with extraordinary promise to an ever-growing body of incredible students, the majority of whom are the first in their families to attend college. Our long and increasing history demonstrates our commitment to our students, our community and the State of Connecticut. We have become a steadily growing employer and taxpayer in the city of Waterbury and the state of Connecticut. Having attended commencement annually at Post and shaken the hands of nearly all of our graduates, I can assure you that if you attended one such inspiring exercise, you would understand that the OHE legislation is not only punitive to our students, it is wholly unjustified.

Sincerely yours,

O. Alton Barron MD  
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