



University and College Union

Sally Hunt General secretary

Carlow Street
London NW1 7LH

Telephone 020 7756 2500

Fax 020 7756 2501

Email shunt@ucu.org.uk

5 March 2013

The Rt Hon Vince Cable, MP
Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
1 Victoria Street
LONDON
SW1H 0ET

Dear Vince

I am writing to you to raise a concern about BPP University College's application for University Title.

As you will no doubt be aware, BPP University College is a subsidiary company of Apollo Inc. Apollo's main subsidiary is the University of Phoenix, which last week revealed that its accrediting body, the Higher Learning Commission, has recommended that it be put on probation. This is second only to losing its accreditation completely.

The Higher Learning Commission reported that in its view, "the University of Phoenix has insufficient autonomy relative to its parent corporation and sole shareholder, Apollo Group, Inc., to assure that its board of directors can manage the institution, assure the University's integrity, exercise the board's fiduciary responsibilities, and make decisions necessary to achieve the institution's mission and successful operation."

The recommendation to put Phoenix on probation will be reviewed in June and Apollo intends to appeal the recommendation. This process is expected to be complete in June 2013.

If the appeal is lost, Apollo has reported that "the reputation of University of Phoenix and/or Western International University, as the case may be, could be adversely affected, which in turn may negatively impact their ability to recruit and enroll students and to recruit and retain faculty and staff. To the extent that the sanctions have this effect, our business could be materially and adversely affected."

If the University loses its accreditation, Apollo has said "our business would be substantially impaired and we would not be able to continue our business as it is presently conducted".

BPP University College and its immediate parent BPP Holdings are also subsidiary companies of Apollo and are financially dependent on their US parent. I believe that

it would be high risk to proceed with any grant of University Title, a protected term, to BPP University College at this time. At risk are both the interests of BPP students and the international credibility of the UK university title.

As the responsibility for the decision over awarding University Title lies with yourself, we are asking that you take account of the serious risks to the student and public interest posed by this case.

I would request that no grant of University Title be made to BPP University College until there has been an investigation by HEFCE and the QAA (including a risk assessment of that relationship) into its relationship with its parent companies and until the University of Phoenix's accreditation status is finally resolved.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sally Hunt', with a horizontal line underneath.

Sally Hunt
General Secretary

Copy:

Rt Hon David Willetts, MP
Sir Alan Langlands, Chief Executive, HEFCE
Anthony McLaren, Chief Executive, Quality Assurance Agency
Nicola Dandridge, Chief Executive, Universities UK