

IMMIGRATION NEWS

(Volume 65)

Today's News Story for International Students



Today's Newspaper Story Concerning International Students

15th January 2008

1) Shafston College loses its Nursing accreditation affecting hundreds of international students. Is this just another example of school owners more interested in money than the students welfare and education quality?

This year IMMIGRATION NEWS will try and extract the interesting newspaper articles in Sydney that will be of direct relevance to international students. We know many students don't have the time to read the paper everyday so this way it will be easier for you to keep in touch with what's been talked about in the media.

If any student has an interesting article to report from other cities around Australia please send us an e-mail.

Pass all nurse trainees, teachers told

Sarah Elks | *January 15, 2008* The Australian, Page.4

LECTURERS at a Brisbane nursing college were instructed to pass all of their students regardless of their performance.

The investigation by the Queensland Nursing Council into Shafston College last year found that the college's Head of School of Nursing, Gay Carran, gave a directive to teachers that "no student should fail".

One witness, who was a senior nursing lecturer at Shafston from January 2004 to June 2006, told David Price, who undertook the investigation for the council, that students who had failed an occupational health and safety exam were allowed to re-sit the test two more times.

She said in one re-sit exam, she and a colleague were told by Ms Carran to "mark students' work on the spot, immediately return unsatisfactory papers to students, and coach them until they obtained correct answers".

Ms Carran, who was also interviewed by Professor Price, denied she had given the

directives but was reported as saying: "You always have to err on the side of ... let's be fair to the student. Ms Kemp (a Shafston nursing teacher) used to be black and white. If a student didn't pass, they were failed. We spoke to Ms Kemp about this as 'you can't do this because students are paying good money for the course'."

Five other former teaching staff at the college who were interviewed as part of the investigation supported the existence of the "no-fail" directive from the college management.

Professor Price's investigation also found the college allowed some incompetent students with poor English to graduate with a nursing diploma last year, qualifying them to become enrolled nurses.

The college came under scrutiny after a graduate told a former Shafston lecturer she felt "unsafe" as an enrolled nurse at Brisbane's Prince Charles Hospital. Details of the investigation were submitted to the Queensland Supreme Court as part of the case brought by Shafston Nursing against the Queensland Nursing Council.

The council has not renewed the college's accreditation, which expired on December 31. The council has also placed restrictions on the activities of graduates from Shafston College.

Shafston has since cancelled its nursing course, which was scheduled to begin in three weeks, and has suspended teaching for continuing students, some weeks away from graduating.

About 500 students - of whom about half are from overseas - are being directed to a similar course offered by a South Australian private educator or to nursing programs at TAFE.

Professor Price's investigation was conducted in July last year and involved interviews with five former teaching staff, current senior staff and an inspection of the Shafston Nursing campus at Brisbane's Spring Hill.

Students were charged up to \$16,000 for the 55-week course.

In its defence, Shafston claimed in documents submitted to the court that the witness statements were flawed because the former staff did not necessarily understand exam re-sit requirements. The college also rejected the idea it had allowed incompetent students or those with poor English skills to pass. The QNC has imposed strict restrictions on Shafston students who graduated in the last trimester of last year.

Shafston and two of its graduates have separately taken the QNC to the Supreme Court in an attempt to have the restrictions lifted.

End Story

Link: www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,23053218-5013404,00.html

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