

Degree Mills and Accreditation Mills

One critical issue in higher education today which TRACS wishes to bring to the attention of our institutions, is the emergence of *Degree Mills* and *Accreditation Mills*.

Degree mills are bogus educational institutions that claim to offer certificates and/or degrees, though they have no basis in sound educational practices. These operations are intended to take money from students under the pretense of receiving a recognized degree, when, in fact, many of these operations open and close quickly or move from state to state to avoid legal actions from those who have taken advantage of their promised services.

Accreditation Mills provide accreditation to institutions without the quality assurance of recognition by either the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

In our efforts to protect both our institutions and potential students, TRACS would like to refer to the following CHEA website for a more complete source of information regarding both of these types or organizations:

http://www.chea.org/4DCGI/cms/review.html?Action=CMS_Document&DocID=45&MenuKey=main

This Website contains five major sections. The first section provides links to information about institutions and programs that are accredited by recognized U.S. accrediting organizations. The second section includes links to material on how accreditation operates and how to look for organizations that may be accreditation mills. The third section focuses on degree mills: links to potentially pertinent information and information on how degree mills may be identified. The fourth section provides links to state-by-state information on institutions and programs authorized to operate in the respective states. Some of these states also provide information about entities they believe to be degree mills. The fifth section contains links to international directories of higher education institutions.