

Presenter Bios

Marcia Trott

Marcia Trott has worked in education at the state level for almost 14 years in various capacities. In 1998, she joined the staff of the Bureau for Private Postsecondary and Vocation Education where she was responsible for approving and providing oversight of degree granting private postsecondary institutions. In 2007, after the sunset of that agency, she joined the California State Approving Agency for Veterans Education overseeing institutions and programs eligible for G.I. Bill participation. In 1999 she began working for the California Postsecondary Education Commission as the administrator of the Improving Teacher Quality (ITQ) State Grants Program. She is currently employed by the California Department of Education (CDE) in the Title II Leadership Office and continues to work with the ITQ program as well as the State Superintendent's Educator Excellence Task Force.

John Bear

John Bjorn Bear is an American authority on distance education and a writer of creative reference works. Bear holds bachelor and master degrees from University of California, Berkeley (1959 and 1960, respectively) and a doctorate from Michigan State University (1966). Author of 35 books with major publishers on higher education, computers, travel, U.S. history, cooking, publishing, and consumerism. He has been engaged by the FBI in its investigations of diploma mills for some twenty years. In the past, Bear was involved with several unaccredited start-up distance learning institutions, including Columbia Pacific University, Fairfax University, and Greenwich University. He describes the nature of these affiliations in *Bears' Guide to Earning Degrees by Distance*.

Bear website states: "I have also had involvements with three unaccredited institutions. More than 25 years ago, I consulted in the start-up of Columbia Pacific University, founded by two men with impeccable credentials: a Harvard M.D. psychiatrist, and the former president of three regionally-accredited universities. Columbia Pacific was a state-approved university, with more than 30 full-time employees, whose graduates qualified to take the state psychology and other licensing exams. My involvement ended more than 25 years ago. In 1986, I was very briefly involved in the planning for Fairfax University, but resigned less than two months after it was registered in Louisiana, before any students had enrolled. And in 1990-91, while living in Hilo, Hawaii, I was the full-time president of Greenwich University, which incorporated the non-profit International Institute for Advanced Studies (founded in 1972 in Missouri)."

His consulting clients have included the F.B.I. (degrees and credentials), the Grateful Dead (marketing and financial planning), General Motors (safety programs), Xerox Corporation (product development), and Encyclopaedia Britannica (product development). He also consulted with more than 2,000 individuals and a dozen universities, on matters related to earning or marketing degrees.

Laura Metune

Laura Metune, of Sacramento, was appointed chief of the Bureau for Private and Postsecondary Education by Governor Brown on April 3, 2012. Metune has served as a consultant to the California State Assembly Higher Education Committee since 2008. She was legislative director for Senator Carole Migden from 2006 to 2008. Metune also served as a consultant for the Senate Committee on Business and Professions, the subcommittee on International Trade Policy from 2003 to 2006, and the California Legislative Women's Caucus from 2001 to 2003.

Cailin Peterson

Cailin Peterson is the communications manager for Better Business Bureau serving northeast California, a nonprofit organization that sets standards for ethical business behavior, helps consumers identify reliable businesses through BBB Business Reviews, sets standards for truthful advertising, evaluates and provides reviews of charities, and offers dispute resolution services. More than 87 million consumers rely on BBB for business reviews, consumer tips and scam alerts. As communications manager, Cailin is responsible for investigations of all businesses in BBB's 24-county service area.