



Decline in for-profit college industry is no mystery

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“The for-profit college industry is struggling under the weight of declining enrollment, stiff competition from traditional universities and an image battered by past misdeeds,” Maria Danilova and Richard Lardner noted in Sunday’s Daily News.

“Student enrollment at most four-year for-profit colleges fell in 2017 to just over 901,000, down nearly 69,000 from the year before, according to data compiled by the National Student Clearinghouse Research Council.”

There are valid reasons why for-profit colleges find themselves in dire straits these days.

Graduates of these institutions increasingly struggle to secure employment after completing their degrees or certificates. And if they want to subsequently enroll in a more traditional college or university, they often find that many of the classes they took at the for-profit won’t transfer.

Finally, many of those who were sucked in by promises of a better life have found themselves in financial ruin as they are inevitably forced to default on their student loans.

As Grandad used to say, “If something seems too good to be true, it usually is.”

So what has been the response of the current Administration to the precipitous drop in the number of students electing to continue their education at these schools?

Apparently Education Secretary Betsy DeVos is working tirelessly to artificially prop them up by decreasing protections from their predatory and often misleading recruitment practices – practices that disproportionately hurt women, veterans, older individuals and people of color; i.e., the primary targets at many for-profits.

In other words, she is doing everything she can to obstruct and interfere with the intrinsically self-correcting law of supply and demand.

It’s no mystery why the for-profit college industry is in decline. While some do an admirable job of helping to meet societal needs, there has never been much of a demand for credentials many perceive as being essentially worthless.

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