

Akron Beacon Journal/Ohio.com

UA students sue over program accrediting change

By Katie Byard

Beacon Journal/Ohio.com

Posted Oct 5, 2018 at 4:53 PM

Updated Oct 5, 2018 at 6:07 PM

Thirteen former and current University of Akron students are suing UA over the loss of one of two accreditations of a Ph.D. program in marriage and family counseling and therapy.

The lawsuit says the plaintiffs relocated, changed careers, incurred debt and “undertook other life altering changes” to attain degrees and licenses under the program that was accredited by two separate accrediting bodies.

The university had aggressively marketed the dual accreditation to the plaintiffs and others as a “highly beneficial degree that was one of a limited number of such programs nationwide,” according to a news release issued by Peter Pattakos, an area lawyer representing the UA students.

UA’s Marriage and Family Counseling and Therapy Program, part of the School of Counseling, offered a doctorate degree that was accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education as well as the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs.

The lawsuit alleges that university employees made a calculated decision to abandon accreditation from the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs. This accreditation was lost last year.

The students are asking for at least \$25,000 in damages. The lawsuit also asks that the students be able to seek to recover their economic damages at a trial.

The students also have filed lawsuits with the Ohio Court of Claims alleging violations of the state’s Consumer Sales Practices Act, according to the news release issued by Pattakos.

UA spokeswoman Cristine Boyd said the university is reviewing the lawsuit.

Boyd said the Marriage and Family Counseling and Therapy Program retains accreditation from one of the bodies, the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education.

Katie Byard can be reached at 330-996-3781 or kbyard@thebeaconjournal.com.