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## **GAO INTERNAL MEMO ADMITS NUMEROUS ERRORS AGAINST FOR-PROFIT COLLEGES**

**CHICAGO** – On May 18, [The Daily Caller](#), revealed details of a [memo](#) from a member of the GAO’s FSI team who repeatedly stated that **“short time frames and other systemic issues”** within the FSI led to creation of an error-riddled report that is a completely inaccurate portrayal of the for-profit college industry.

The memo stated that the original report from August 4, 2010, *“was not 100 percent accurate,”* given the *“short time frames of the job and volume of undercover work performed.”* The staffer went on to say that the Forensics Audits and Special Investigations Unit-FSI (n/k/a Forensic Audits and Investigative Services Team-FAIS), received external pressure by congressional staffers, among others, to insert additional details at the end of the report, which *“created several of our most obvious inaccuracies.”*

Most disturbing is the oft-cited term “15 out of 15 schools,” which was used as the justification of the DoE’s gainful employment regulation. According to the GAO memo, *“because a summary of X of 15 schools was requested, we then went back and stretched whatever we could find to come up with a number for the testimony.”* The staffer admits this was done quickly and, *“where most of our corrections come from.”*

On November 30, 2010, the GAO issued a revised report. According to a press release from the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, the revisions *“included major changes to 16 of the 28 key investigative ‘scenarios’* in the report.” The Coalition for Educational Success then commissioned Norton | Norris, Inc. to conduct its own research of the GAO’s findings. [Norton | Norris, Inc.](#) (Nn) is a marketing and training company based in Illinois that has conducted thousands of [mystery shops](#) at traditional colleges, graduate schools, online institutions, and career colleges throughout the U.S. Nn’s report, *GAO Bias Evident in Report to HELP Committee*, can be read in its entirety [here](#).

To determine its findings, **Nn’s mystery shop team spent a total of 164 hours reviewing the original 25 [audio recordings](#) that were made publicly available** (five of the recordings were missing). Nn states it is the only entity that has listened to the available recordings in their entirety. As acknowledged in the memo by the GAO staffer, *“I take responsibility for **not listening to all 60 hours of audio** and checking those files with what was summarized in write ups.”*

The firm found that that only 14 of the GAO’s original 65 findings could be supported based upon the available recordings. **The other alleged 41 findings were not valid and served no meaningful purpose** to be included in the GAO report.

“As we stated in our own report, the GAO failed to properly conduct, analyze and report on its undercover testing. The release of the internal GAO memo clearly indicates that FSI was unprepared, untrained and pressured by outside sources to release an incredibly flawed account, without regard to how it would affect hundreds of thousands of students, employees and shareholders,” said Dr. Jean Norris, Managing Partner, Norton | Norris, Inc.

She went on to say, “Once again, our research has proven that serious systemic issues reside within the GAO, who now must publicly rescind the full report.”

To request an interview with Dr. Jean Norris, Managing Partner, contact Chris Hester at (708) 268-9222 or [chris@nortonnorris.com](mailto:chris@nortonnorris.com).

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#### **About Norton | Norris, Inc. (Nn)**

[Norton | Norris, Inc.](#) (Nn) is a full-service marketing, training and communications firm dedicated to the education vertical. Founded in 1998, Nn provides consulting and innovative approaches to all facets of enrollment including: direct mail (Print on Demand), creative services, radio/television production and placement, high school presentations, mystery shopping, eLearning, public relations, and training, featuring **EnrollMatch™** – the ethical enrollment process.