...High-Profile People Whose Degrees Were Revoked

*These notable figures saw their degrees stripped for plagiarism or other crimes.*

By Menachem Wecker, Staff Writer, US News and World Report | May 2, 2012, at 7:00 a.m.

Although college and graduate school alumni may assume their diplomas are set in stone, there's no such thing as "no backsies" when it comes to college conferrals, as Joel McHale's character on the television show *Community* knows. McHale plays Jeff Winger, a lawyer who enrolls in community college after his degree is revoked. School administrators—both on television and in real life—seem to think of the degrees they dole out like driver's licenses, which can be suspended or revoked for bad behavior.

Here are 10 high-profile cases of universities in the United States and abroad stripping alumni of their academic degrees.

- **Gaming Olympics studies:** In April 2012, Pál Schmitt resigned as president of Hungary a week after his doctorate was withdrawn by Semmelweis University in Budapest. According to a BBC report, Semmelweis accused Schmitt, a two-time Olympic fencing gold medalist, of *plagiarizing entire passages of his doctoral thesis*. There was at least partial copying on nearly 200 pages of Schmitt's 215-page thesis, according to a Semmelweis committee.

- **Defenseless minister:** Although Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg, the former German defense minister, seemed to be heir-apparent to Chancellor Angela Merkel, he resigned on March 1, 2011 after admitting to *plagiarizing parts of his legal doctorate*. Universität Bayreuth revoked his degree, citing "serious errors" in his paper.

- **Guttenberg isn't the only German politician to be punished by his alma mater:** Two members of the European Parliament also lost their degrees due to plagiarism: University of Heidelberg revoked Silvana Koch-Mehrin's doctorate, and Jorgo Chatzimarkakis lost his doctorate from University of Bonn.

- **Mechanical failure:** The former head of acquisitions for the Armaments Corporation of South Africa, Shamim "Chippy" Shaik, was stripped of his Ph.D. from then-University of Natal—now University of KwaZulu-Natal—in 2008 following reports he’d *plagiarized "more than two-thirds" of his mechanical engineering doctorate.*

*(Note: This copy contains selected portions of the complete article.) The article in its entirety, “10 High-Profile People Whose Degrees Were Revoked” can be viewed at: https://www.usnews.com/education/best-global-universities/articles/2012/05/02/10-high-profile-people-whose-degrees-were-revoked*

Tags: academics, colleges, education, ethics, graduate schools, plagiarism, students

DON’T LET THIS HAPPEN TO YOU!
Army War College revokes Sen. John Walsh’s degree over plagiarism

By Sean Sullivan October 10, 2014. This article appeared in The Washington Post online.

The U.S. Army War College has revoked the master's degree Sen. John Walsh (D-Mont.) earned there after reviewing evidence he plagiarized a research paper.

Army War College spokeswoman Carol Kerr said that after reviewing Walsh's paper, an academic board found him guilty of plagiarism and rescinded his degree. The college notified Walsh on Friday.

In a statement, Walsh said he disagreed with the decision but was prepared to live with it.

"I apologize to all Montanans for the plagiarism in my 2007 paper, and I am prepared to live with its consequences," said Walsh. "I may not be a scholar but I am proud to have been a soldier who has served Montana and this great nation for 33 years in uniform."

The New York Times reported in July that Walsh lifted major parts of his 2007 paper from other sources. Walsh, who was appointed to the Senate in February, ended his campaign for a full term shortly after the story was published.

"As Montanans choose their next U.S. Senator over the next few weeks, I will continue proudly serving this state through the end of this term. I look forward to fighting for veterans and their families," Walsh added.