

Thornton Leslie T
 Form 3
 December 30, 2005

FORM 3 UNITED STATES SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20549

OMB APPROVAL
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INITIAL STATEMENT OF BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP OF SECURITIES

Filed pursuant to Section 16(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934,
 Section 17(a) of the Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935 or Section
 30(h) of the Investment Company Act of 1940

(Print or Type Responses)

| | | | | |
|--|---------|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| 1. Name and Address of Reporting Person * | | 2. Date of Event Requiring Statement | 3. Issuer Name and Ticker or Trading Symbol | |
| Â Thornton Leslie T | | (Month/Day/Year) | CAREER EDUCATION CORP [CECO] | |
| (Last) | (First) | (Middle) | 4. Relationship of Reporting Person(s) to Issuer | 5. If Amendment, Date Original Filed(Month/Day/Year) |
| | | 12/22/2005 | | |
| DICKSTEIN SHAPIRO MORIN & OSHINSKY LLP,Â 2101 L STREET, N.W. | | | (Check all applicable) | |
| (Street) | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Director | <input type="checkbox"/> 10% Owner |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Officer | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| | | | (give title below) | (specify below) |
| | | | | 6. Individual or Joint/Group Filing(Check Applicable Line) |
| | | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Form filed by One Reporting Person |
| | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Form filed by More than One Reporting Person |
| WASHINGTON,Â DCÂ 20037 | | | | |
| (City) | (State) | (Zip) | | |

Table I - Non-Derivative Securities Beneficially Owned

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| 1. Title of Security (Instr. 4) | 2. Amount of Securities Beneficially Owned (Instr. 4) | 3. Ownership Form: Direct (D) or Indirect (I) (Instr. 5) | 4. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership (Instr. 5) |
|------------------------------------|--|---|--|

Reminder: Report on a separate line for each class of securities beneficially owned directly or indirectly. SEC 1473 (7-02)

Persons who respond to the collection of information contained in this form are not required to respond unless the form displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Table II - Derivative Securities Beneficially Owned (e.g., puts, calls, warrants, options, convertible securities)

| | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|--|--|
| 1. Title of Derivative Security (Instr. 4) | 2. Date Exercisable and Expiration Date (Month/Day/Year) | 3. Title and Amount of Securities Underlying Derivative Security (Instr. 4) | 4. Conversion or Exercise Price of Derivative Security | 5. Ownership Form of Derivative Security: Direct (D) | 6. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership (Instr. 5) |
| | Date Exercisable | Expiration Date | Title | Amount or Number of | |

| | | | | Shares | | or Indirect (I) (Instr. 5) | |
|-----------------------------|-------|------------|--------------|--------|----------|----------------------------------|---|
| Stock Option (right to buy) | ⌘ (1) | 12/21/2005 | Common Stock | 24,000 | \$ 32.91 | D | ⌘ |

Reporting Owners

| Reporting Owner Name / Address | Relationships | | | |
|--|---------------|--------------|---------|-------|
| | Director | 10% Owner | Officer | Other |
| Thornton Leslie T DICKSTEIN SHAPIRO MORIN & OSHINSKY LLP 2101 L STREET, N.W. WASHINGTON, DC 20037 | ⌘ X | ⌘ | ⌘ | ⌘ |

Signatures

/s/ Leslie T.
Thornton

12/28/2005

__Signature of
Reporting Person

Date

Explanation of Responses:

- * If the form is filed by more than one reporting person, *see* Instruction 5(b)(v).
- ** Intentional misstatements or omissions of facts constitute Federal Criminal Violations. *See* 18 U.S.C. 1001 and 15 U.S.C. 78ff(a).
- (1) Immediately exercisable as to 8,000 of the underlying shares of Common Stock and exercisable as to 8,000 of the remaining underlying shares on each of December 22, 2006 and 2007.

Note: File three copies of this Form, one of which must be manually signed. If space is insufficient, *See* Instruction 6 for procedure. Potential persons who are to respond to the collection of information contained in this form are not required to respond unless the form displays a currently valid OMB number.