Federal legislation inching its way through Congress would outlaw "diploma mills" like those at the center of a criminal case being prosecuted in Spokane.

Eight members of Congress are co-sponsoring the proposed "Diploma Integrity Protection Act," introduced earlier this year by Rep. Betty McCollum, D-Minn.

The legislation would "reduce and prevent the sale and use of fraudulent degrees in order to protect the integrity of valid higher education degrees that are used for federal purposes."

Even though the impetus for the proposed legislation was the worldwide diploma mill operation uncovered in Spokane, the region's congresswoman has declined to be a co-sponsor.

Republican Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers has "reservations about the legislation" currently supported only by House Democrats, according to her chief of staff, Connie Partoyan. "We are very supportive of the spirit and intent of the bill," Partoyan said Friday.

However, McMorris Rodgers thinks the proposal contains some "duplication" of oversight provided by existing laws and government agencies. "We are working to make the bill better," Partoyan said.

The Eastern Washington congresswoman, meanwhile, "is pleased that in Spokane they are taking this issue seriously and prosecuting, at the federal level, those who run diploma mills," Partoyan said.

Possibly as early as this week, the bill - or at least significant portions of it - is expected to be attached to higher education reauthorization funding that's before the House Education and Labor Committee. As a member of that House committee, McMorris Rodgers will get to vote on the legislation.

She has been urged to support McCollum's legislation by the Rev. Robert Spitzer, president of Gonzaga University.

Spitzer's support comes in part because Gonzaga's sister Jesuit school, Regis University in Denver, was caught in the confusion created by "Saint Regis University," one of 125 bogus online universities and high schools created by the Spokane-based operation.

*The impact on Regis University by this 'Saint Regis' pseudo-university, coming out of this diploma mill here in
Spokane, had been significant," said Dale Goodwin, public information officer for Gonzaga.

"Father Spitzer was more than happy to urge Rep. McMorris Rodgers to go ahead and co-sponsor this bill," Goodwin said. The Gonzaga president "supports any tightening of the rules on these diploma mills."

Regis University in Denver also strongly supports the proposed federal legislation, said spokeswoman Kristen Blessman.

Regis president, the Rev. Michael J. Sheeran, S.J., said the university's "name and good reputation were significantly damaged by the efforts of a diploma mill known as Saint Regis University."

"Although government authorities were sympathetic, there was minimal legal protection for (our) university," Sheeran said last week. "It's important that these same authorities be better armed in the future with laws that protect legitimate institutions of higher education, employers and future students from fraud."

McCollum, a co-sponsor, said she was "incensed" by news reports about the phony college degrees being sold around the world by the Spokane-based diploma mill operators.

"I care about quality higher education, and it was shocking to learn about the prevalence of fake degrees and the dangers they pose," she said. "My legislation ensures that we will be able to trust the credentials of our doctors, engineers, government employees and skilled immigrant workers."

McCollum said last week she hopes the language of her bill will be integrated into the Higher Education Act by committee chair Rep. George Miller, D-Calif.

U.S. Attorney Jim McDevitt, the chief federal law enforcement official in Eastern Washington, said Justice Department policy prevents him from commenting on proposed new laws "but we're always looking for new and better law enforcement tools, especially ones that clarify certain areas of the law."

He oversaw the work of a multi-agency state and federal task force that spent nine months investigating the Spokane diploma mill, first publicly detailed in a story published in November 2003 in The Spokesman-Review.

Investigators discovered that many of the people who bought the bogus credentials – from bachelor's to doctoral degrees – were foreign nationals. They used the degrees to get H-1B visas and improve their chances to immigrate to the United States.

The revelation that potential terrorists could use bogus degrees to enter the United States caused homeland security concerns that reached the highest levels of government.

In October 2005, for the first time in the U.S., a federal grand jury returned a multicontinent indictment against eight people for the operation of an Internet-based diploma mill that defrauded "consumers worldwide."

Those indicted included former Spokane Realtor Dixie Randock, her husband, Steven Randock, and her associates who operated out of offices in Hillyard, Mead and Post Falls.

The Spokane-based operation racked in an estimated $4.7 million in sales of fraudulent college degrees, court documents say.

Four defendants have pleaded guilty, but Randock and her husband await trial next year on the charges, also including money laundering.

SIDEBAR:

AT A GLANCE

While authorities refuse to release names, purchasers of the phony degrees from the Spokane-based diploma mill included at least 135 U.S. government employees who got career advancements and pay raises. That list, according to court proceedings, includes a member of the White House staff, employees of the National Security Agency and the Justice Department, New York City firefighters, and military officers.

NOTES: Bill Moriin can be reached at (509) 459-5444 or billm@spokesman.com

8/29/05

Complete copy of all email from "Mohammed Syed" account.

masyedholland@juno.com

pass: jihad
Thank you for your final approval of your proofs. They will now be sent to
the printer to
be produced as your original documents.

Please allow an additional 5-7 days for your printing and document
preparation to be
completed.

Shipping within the US usually takes 2-5 days. Overseas and APOs can require
up to 3 weeks,
but we will do our best to make sure they arrive as quickly as possible.

If you do not receive a tracking number within 7 days after you have
approved your documents,
you may request one by emailing the shipping department at
printer@university-services.net (They
can also provide estimates of time for shipments outside the US.)

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

James
----- Original Message -----
From: <masseyholland@juno.com>
To: <forward1@university-services.net>
Sent: Monday, May 23, 2005 1:21 PM
Subject: Re: Proofs

> Advisor James and support staff,
> I have reviewed proofs of the three degrees. I do not see any changes or
> need for additional info. I am ready for shipment. Thank you very much.
> Mohammed
>
> Get Juno Platinum for as low as $4.97/month!
> Unlimited Internet Access with 250MB of Email Storage.
> Visit http://www.juno.com/half to sign up today!
From: "University-Services" <forward1@university-services.net>
To: <masyedvolland@juno.com>
Subject: Proofs
Date: Sun, 22 May 2005 13:26:25 -0700
Attachment(s): 3 file(s)/document(s) | Total File Size: 721K

IMPORTANT DIRECTIONS:

The attached documents are your proofs. They are being sent in a PDF format, which can be viewed with adobe reader.

If you do not have adobe acrobat reader installed on your system, you can download it Free of charge at http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/reademenu.html

It is extremely important that you take some time and carefully proofread each of your documents.

Please disregard the sizes, formatting, font, etc when proofreading. They will be in the correct font and format when we receive them. Seals, signatures, borders and backgrounds will appear on your original documents, but they don’t in your proofs.

Please check for errors in your PERSONAL STUDENT IDENTIFICATION DATA below:

Name:

1. Student id no. (if using ss#)
2. Graduation date:
3. Degree granted:
4. Birthdate

If your documents contain errors in these fields, EMAIL YOUR ADVISOR (NOT the PRINTER) with corrections.

Your advisor is the only authority who can make corrections. Your Advisor will then email your corrected proofs to you for a final approval.

IF YOU SEND CHANGES TO THE PRINTER IT WILL CAUSE DELAYS.

If you feel that the representative courses do not accurately reflect your education levels, you are REQUIRED to your Advisor a complete and detailed list of courses you do want to appear on your transcript including each:
1. course number
2. course name and
3. anticipated grade

This complete list must be sent in a text file (only) for each degree. Any such lists must be submitted at the same separate emails)

Your request for a course change and list will be sent to the Evaluation Department for approval. If your list is correct and approved, the course (s) will appear in your transcript.

WE DO NOT MODIFY THE LAYOUT OR ANY OTHER PORTIONS OF YOUR DOCUMENTS.
Proofread ALL of the attached documents before requesting any changes or corrections.

To avoid delays and confusion, submit your corrections in one email.

There will be an additional fee for corrections and changes submitted in multiple lists or emails.

ONCE WE RECEIVE YOUR APPROVAL BY EMAIL, YOUR DOCUMENTS WILL BE PRINTED AND SENT TO SHIPPING.

You will be notified via email of the shipping date and tracking information.

Following the above directions will help us to better serve you.

Thank you for your cooperation,

Support staff

Files & Documents

Open this File
Open this File
Open this File

MS Chemistry.pdf (239KB)
BS Degree.pdf (242KB)
ME Degree.pdf (241KB)

Attachments Scanned - No Virus Detected (Learn More)
From: "University-Services" <forward1@university-services.net>
To: <masyedholland@juno.com>
Subject: JMU
Date: Thu, 19 May 2005:15:12:51 -0700

Your payment has either been declined or not received, please resubmit your payment at http://www.university services.net/jamesmonroe/fp_ja.html

Please make sure that you have continued on to the secure credit card payment form site and entered your credit card number, expiration date and other required information.

James
If you accept within so 3 days a FREE REPORT OF EQUIVALENCY TO US REGIONALLY ACCREDITED DEGREE WILL BE INCLUDED, REPORT WILL BE DONE BY A CORPORATE MEMBER AND PARTNER OF AACRAO AND NAFSA

Dear Mohammed,

Thank you for submitting your application to James Monroe University for our consideration. After reviewing your DIA Report and other submitted information, our Office of Admissions is pleased to announce that you have been approved for the degree:

Bachelor of Science in Environmental Engineering

Bachelor of Science in Chemistry

Master of Science in Environmental Engineering

Master of Science in Chemistry

James Monroe University takes pride in its graduates. Your evaluation placed you in the top percentage of applicants, and you can be very proud of the education you have attained through nontraditional means.

Multi-Nationally Accredited and recognized worldwide, James Monroe University looks forward to adding your name to its list of high-achieving alumni. We know your degree will enable you to take a giant leap forward in your career while giving you a personal sense of achievement and satisfaction. We look forward to hearing how your James Monroe University degree changes your life.

All that remains is for you to pay the graduation fee. You may pay online at:

http://www.university-services.net/jamesmonroe/fp_ja.html

We accept Visa, Mastercard, American Express, PayPal, bank wire transfers, and checks. Once your is graduation fee is paid, your degree and supporting documents will be shipped to you by courier.

If you'd prefer to pay by phone please email us your phone number and best time to call and a payment agent will contact you.

Although we do not anticipate an increase in fees, please note that the fees quoted at the website today are guaranteed for 30 days only. If you respond after this time period you will be responsible for any additional fees that may be in effect.

Please let me know if you have any questions or if I can be of further assistance. We look forward to welcoming you to the James Monroe University Alumni!

Sincerely,

James Hunter, Admissions
James Monroe University

james@university-services.net
EXCLUSIVE TWO YEAR GUARANTEE!

TWO YEAR MONEY BACK GUARANTEE that your career or continuing education will improve or advance within TWO YEARS from the date of your graduation or your graduation fee will be refunded!

*A random audit of applications is conducted for quality control. The random audit includes phone and/or written verifications of a percentage of all submitted applications. Your application may or may not have been selected for audit. All applications undergo our standard verification process for accuracy using a number of methods, including but not limited to web searches, company database searches, online membership/association listings, email, etc. By accepting the results of your evaluation you are confirming that you are person whose name appears on this application and that all the information you have provided is complete and accurate to the best of your knowledge. Providing false information may negate your evaluation and make you ineligible for any degree. If any degree is granted based on false information the degree shall be invalidated and the applicant shall have no recourse nor be any entitled to any portion of a refund.
I would need you to confirm with them that they will accept either degree.

James

----- Original Message ----- 
From: <masyedholland@juno.com>
To: <forward1@university-services.net>
Sent: Tuesday, May 17, 2005 12:41 PM
Subject: Re: James Monroe University

> 
> Mr James,
> I believe I would be qualified for either. My #1 objective is H1B, do you
> know which degree would be better for that?
> 
> Perhaps the undergraduate in Environmental Engineer and Masters in
> Chemistry? That might work best and I could support that very well with
> employer.
> 
> Get Juno Platinum for as low as $4.97/month!
> Unlimited Internet Access with 250MB of Email Storage.
> Visit http://www.juno.com/half to sign up today!
> 
>
Dear Mohammed,

I apologize, we do not issue certain engineering degrees as we do not have faculty in that area. We can grant civil or environmental engineering or one in chemistry, but not chemical engineering. Please let me know if you would like to proceed.

James
Dear Sir,

On your application you did not indicate which degree you were seeking. Please let me know which degree you are to be evaluated for and I will have a response within 24 hours.

Respectfully,

James

----- Original Message ----- 
From: <masyedholland@juno.com>
To: <forward1@university-services.net>
Sent: Friday, May 13, 2005 4:56 AM
Subject: Re: James Monroe University

> Mr. James,
> I have waited patiently for degree review, has decision been made as to my
> credentials? I believe I am more than qualified for program credentials
> with James Monroe. Your last message stated a wait of 48 hours but a week
> or more has passed.
> Thank you,
> Mohammed Syed

> Get Juno Platinum for as low as $4.97/month!
> Unlimited Internet Access with 250MB of Email Storage.
> Visit http://www.juno.com/half to sign up today!

>
Dear Sir,

On your application you did not indicate which degree you were seeking. Please let me know which degree you are to be evaluated for and I will have a response within 24 hours.

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> 
> Mohammed Syed
> 
>
> Get Juno Platinum for as low as $4.97/month!
> Unlimited Internet Access with 250MB of Email Storage.
> Visit http://www.juno.com/half to sign up today!
> 
>
From: "University-Services" <forward1@university-services.net>
To: <masyedholland@juno.com>
Subject: Re: James Monroe University
Date: Thu, 21 Apr 2005 03:51:02 -1200

Thank you for submitting documentation of your learning attained through experience and non-traditional methods.

Your documentation is currently being reviewed for verification and authenticity.

This process can take up to 48 hours, however we will do our best to complete your assessment promptly.

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or would like to submit additional supporting documents.

James
----- Original Message -----
From: <masyedholland@juno.com>
To: <forward1@university-services.net>
Sent: Wednesday, April 20, 2005 9:11 AM
Subject: Re: James Monroe University

> Hello,
> I have just faxed to the number two letters of reference. I have more and
> also have good reference that you can call too if you need further.
> I do not have transcript from military training school. Are my references
> enough?
> Thank you very much,
> Mohammed.
>
> Speed up your surfing with Juno SpeedBand.
> Now includes pop-up blocker!
> Only $14.95/month — visit http://www.juno.com/surf to sign up today!
>
From: "University-Services" <forward1@university-services.net>  
To: <masyedholland@juno.com>  
Subject: James Monroe University  
Date: Tue, 19 Apr 2005 01:32:26 -1200

Return-Path: <forward1@university-services.net>
Received: from mx15.nyc.untld.com (mx15.nyc.untld.com [10.140.21.75])
    by maildelivery17.lax.untld.com with SMTP id AABBBGJGSAE5MDG;
    for <masyedholland@juno.com> (sender <forward1@university-services.r>
    Mon, 18 Apr 2005 13:30:08 -0700 (PST)
Received: from relay.marktrends.net (relay.marktrends.net [216.1.1]
    by mx15.nyc.untld.com with SMTP id AABBBGJGSRALC9LRA;
    for <masyedholland@juno.com> (sender <forward1@university-services.r>
    Mon, 18 Apr 2005 13:30:07 -0700 (PST)
Received: from your9e3b38be92 (-67-183-130-241)hst1.wa.comcast.net
    [67.183.130.241]
    by relay.marktrends.net (8.12.8pl/8.12.7) with SMTP id j3;
    for <masyedholland@juno.com>; Mon, 18 Apr 2005 13:30:09 -0700
    (envelope-from forward1@university-services.net)
Message-ID: <012301c544e433a3bb170$6401a8c0@your9e3b38be92>
Content-ID: <e51.647.8.300.19@yf326:1444875@your9e3b38be92@juno.com>

MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: multipart/alternative;
    boundary="-----=_NextPart_000_0120_01C5447F.A49B8C80"

Thank you for submitting documentation of your learning attained through 

U.S. v. Dixie Randock et al Undercover Purchases360413
traditional methods.

Your application is currently being reviewed, however we will require any 2 as described below:

1. Transcripts from schools listed on your application
2. Signed references supporting your related work experience
3. One form of personal identification (such as driver's license, birth certifica

To avoid any delay in your assessment, please fax this documentation to (202 318 0569)

within 3 business days.

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or would like to submit documents.

EXCLUSIVE TWO YEAR GUARANTEE!
TWO YEAR 100% MONEY BACK GUARANTEE that your career or continuing education will improve or advance within TWI or your graduation fee will be refunded!
FREE ASSESSMENT OF COMPETENCY QUOTIENT & PRIOR LEARNING

Earning credits by demonstration of competency through assessment means that you will not have to repeat course subjects in which you are already proficient.

Type of Degree Program Desired: Bachelor
Major: Engineering/Chemical Engineering
First Name: Mohammed
Middle Name: Abdul
Last Name: Syed
(Maiden/Other)
How did you learn about JMU?
Mailing Address Information:
Street Address: 1711 Aviation Way
Suite/Apt:
City: Colorado Springs
State: CO
Country: USA
ZIP Code: 80916
Phone + Area Code: (719)576-5900
E-mail: masyedholland@juno.com

Personal Information:
Date of Birth: 10/12/1965
Place of Birth: Damascus, Syria
City, Country: Damascus, Syria
My greatest strength is:
Intelligence
My greatest weakness is:
Patience
I am long experienced engineer and chemist in my homeland of Syria. I was trained in medicine, engineering and chemistry when I serve in the Syrian Army for fifteen years. Since leaving...

Have you had your IQ tested. If so what is your score? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you a Member of MENSA or other high IQ society? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do family members, friends and/or coworkers often come to you for advice? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Yes, I have been an officer in the Army and have managed and given advisement to many soldier and co-worker. I am also sought much for advice by my family especially in technology and

☐ Yes  ☐ No

I have worked along side numerous coworker who have degrees but do not have more experience or knowledge than I have. At my last job with Phoenix Biochemical I was team leader over

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Do people with college degrees (or with degrees higher than you hold) often come to you for advice?

If yes, give some examples

Do professionals (such as attorneys, doctors, accountants, OR any professional above your career status) often call on you for advice?

If yes, give some examples

Are you open to other people's ideas and views?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Most people think of me as a good problem-solver.

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Do you commonly seek the advice of people who are older and more experienced than you are?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Do your conversations discuss ideas more than events or people?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Do you like to take care of details?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

I don't have a preconceived way of approaching things, I adapt my style to fit the situation.

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Any activity I'm involved in must provide me the opportunity to learn and to grow.

☐ Yes  ☐ No

It's important to me to grow and develop as a person.

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Most people would never describe me as an energetic person.

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Do you believe in organizing your tasks before getting started?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Did you participate in elementary or high school school activities or sports?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Can you concentrate on one subject for extended periods of time?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Do you feel good about yourself in spite of criticism by others?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Do people who know you agree that you are a fast learner?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Do you believe that successful people make their own luck?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Making decisions comes easily to me.

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Do you read books on a regular basis?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Do you set goals for yourself and achieve them?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Do you enjoy doing something just to prove you can?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Do you believe that you can influence your own destiny.

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Do you think of yourself as a competent person?

☐ Yes  ☐ No
Is it important to you to be the best at what you do?
- Yes ☐  No ☐

When faced with a stalemate situation in a group setting, are you usually the one who breaks the logjam and gets the ball rolling again?
- Yes ☐  No ☐

Have you previously been involved in starting things like service clubs, community organizations, fundraising projects, etc?
- Yes ☐  No ☐

Do you enjoy finding an answer to a frustrating problem?
- Yes ☐  No ☐

Do you adjust well to changing circumstances?
- Yes ☐  No ☐

After a severe setback, are you able to pick up the pieces and start over again?
- Yes ☐  No ☐

Most people who know me well would agree that I'm always seeking out opportunities for personal growth and development.
- Yes ☐  No ☐

Do you try to find the benefits in a bad situation?
- Yes ☐  No ☐

Do you persist when others tell you it can't be done?
- Yes ☐  No ☐

Are you the kind of individual that once you decide to do something, you'll do it and nothing can stop you?
- Yes ☐  No ☐

Are you likely to work long hours to accomplish a goal?
- Yes ☐  No ☐

Most people think of me as a decisive person.
- Yes ☐  No ☐

If a problem can be solved, I'll figure out how to solve it.
- Yes ☐  No ☐

Do you take rejection personally?
- Yes ☐  No ☐

Do you get bored easily?
- Yes ☐  No ☐

Do you often postpone making tough decisions?
- Yes ☐  No ☐

### Educational Chronology

- **Colleges/Universities/Professional Schools (Postsecondary Institutions)**
  - Syrian Army Headquarters, Engineering Specialist School
  - Abu Ramana Quarter
  - August 1985 - January 1987

### Section I: Post-secondary Institutes and Training Facilities

1. **Number of Complete Years of College or University.**
   - 1.5 (A)

   Received one and half years of training at original engineering school in Army, plus many many hours of more training and classes over Army career

2. **Number of Other Completed College or University Courses NOT included in (A).**
   - (B)

   Please enter details here.

3. **Number of Hours of Other Certificate Bearing Courses, Seminars or other Corporate Training, Completed and NOT included in (A) or (B).**
   - 1000 (C)
As engineering officer in the Syrian Army I received and conducted many hours of chemistry and other engineering training. I have also completed all quarterly testing and training update modules with

Section II Work Experience

4. Number of Years of Directly Related Experience in the field of study you are pursuing 20 (D)

See above. Twenty plus years of direct experience with both military and private sector as chemist and chemical engineer.

5. Number of Years of Military or Organized Voluntary Service (e.g. CUSO, UNESCO etc.) 15 (E)

Syrian Army, 1985 to 2000

6. Number of Years of Work Experience in areas NOT included in (D) or (E) (F)

Please enter details here.

7. Number of Hours of Community Service, in areas such as coaching, teaching or other volunteering in the community and NOT included in (D) or (E) or (F) (G)

Please enter details here.

Section III Other Learning Experiences, Projects, Research or Work

8. In this section you should consider any projects in which you contributed in a leadership role or participated as part of a team. For example, a voluntary building committee set up to research and acquire a property or a project at work to open a new branch or department. Briefly describe your role as well as the duration of the project.

My work in Syrian Army is classified.

Current work projects involve biochemical analysis and development of medical implementation devices. I have completely redirected the

9. In this section you should consider any published literary or artistic endeavours as well as any special awards and honours you may have received from your local or national community. Briefly describe the work as well as the length of time you committed to it.

10. In this final box below, please include any other learning experience or accomplishments that you feel are relevant to your application as well as any transfer credits or professional certificates not specifically mentioned in questions 1 to 9. Also mention any independent reading or study and any self-taught proficiencies you have acquired. Indicate the length of time you have committed to these endeavours.

You must read, AGREE and check each box before submitting.
☑️ By checking this box I certify that I acknowledge and agree that in case of any dispute the only proper jurisdiction is The Republic of Liberia and only the laws of Liberia will prevail. I further acknowledge that James Monroe University is not a U.S. entity and I acknowledge that James Monroe University has no U.S. presence.

☑️ By checking this box I certify that I am the person whose name appears on this application and that all the information I have provided is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. If approved, I agree to observe all the rules, regulations and conditions set forth by the University and that I understand that withholding information requested or providing false information may make me ineligible for an evaluation and that should such occur I will have no recourse nor any entitlement to any portion of a refund. The University has the right to reject any application and all decisions made by the University are final.

☑️ By checking this box I certify that I understand James Monroe University does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, age, sex, color, handicap, sexual orientation or national or ethnic origin in administering its educational policies, admission policies, or other programs.

☑️ By checking this box I certify that I acknowledge that Education Management Services, AEIT or other collection agency, and any printing agency contracted as providers of administrative and logistic services such as bookkeeping, collection, disbursement, printing, shipping, and other non-academic services are not a part of or owned by the university and are not responsible or authorized to grant degrees or to discuss education/academic matters, counsel students or recommend any student for any degree or to resolve any dispute between student and School.

☑️ By checking this box I certify that I authorize James Monroe University to utilize any and all public means available to verify the information contained herein. I UNDERSTAND James Monroe University MAY CONTACT MY EMPLOYER OR ANY PREVIOUS EMPLOYER OR SCHOOL.

In accordance with the Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act (E-Sign), your typed written signature constitutes a legal and binding application agreement:

Signature  Mohammed Syed  
E-mail  masyedholland@juno.com

(Type your name here)  (Type your email address here)

I Agree to All Terms

U.S. v. Dixie Randock et Al Undercover Purchases 36484
James Monroe University

The Regents of the Board of Directors and the
President & Chief Provost by virtue of their Authority have conferred upon

Mohammed Abdul Syed

The Degree and Academician Status of
Master of Engineering
in
Environmental Engineering

and granted all the privileges and rights accorded thereto.

So it known that knowledge and proficiency has been demonstrated by
completing and satisfying all requirements of the
Regents of the Board of Directors in token whereof the
President & Chief Provost has authorized this status.

In witness thereof, this Diploma is granted by the Board of Directors, and presented on the
Tenth day of June, Two Thousand and Four.

Dean of Studies

Chief Provost
James Monroe University

OFFICIAL STUDENT TRANSCRIPT

Student Identification: JMU-51905219
Name: Mohammed Abdul Syed
Address: 1711 Aviation Way
Colorado Springs, CO 80916
Date of Birth: 10-12-1965

Major: Environmental Engineering

Graduation Date: June 10th, 2004
Degree Awarded: Master of Engineering in Environmental Engineering
Final Grade Point Average: 3.0
Total Credits: 69
Total Quality Points: 425
Previous Education: JMU- BS in Chemistry June 6th, 2002 GPA 3.60

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course ID</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Quality Pts</th>
<th>Level</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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I certify that this transcript has been issued without alteration or erasure, signed and sealed under my hand;

Registrar of Official Academic Records

For and on behalf of the degree granting authority of James Monroe University, Graduate School, Inc.

Classification: AWARDED
James Monroe University

Dear Mohammed Abdul Syed

When we reach a milestone in our lives we should stop to reflect on the past, and how we arrived at our current place. I hope you realize how much personal and academic effort you have put forth to achieve what you have done.

There are no limits to what you can accomplish if you continue in your positive and persistent manner, and in being yourself in the best way you know how.

Congratulations on the recent awarding of your Master of Engineering in Environmental Engineering.

In witness thereof, this Degree was granted by the Board of Directors, and presented on the Tenth day of June, Two Thousand and Four.

Respectfully,

Dean of Studies

Chief Provost
James Monroe University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>ID#</td>
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<tr>
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<td>10-12-1965</td>
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<td>Degree Conferred</td>
<td>Master of Engineering in Environmental Engineering</td>
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<td>Exit/Graduation</td>
<td>In witness thereof, this degree was granted by the Board of Directors, and presented on the Tenth day of June, Two Thousand and Four.</td>
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Source: Academic Records filed at third-party verification service:

Official Transcript Archive Center
1812 Marsh Road, Suite 6-242
Wilmington, DE 19810
USA
1 (202)-478-0699
http://www.transcriptrecords.com

Sealed transcripts may be requested in writing at the above address. Requests for sealed transcripts must be accompanied by a written explanation of the purpose for the request, the individual's social security (or ID) number exactly as it appears on the document, full name of the person making the request, name of organization, mailing address, and $35.00 cashier check made to AEIT.

Gayne W. Johnson
Chairman of the Official Archive Registry
James Monroe University
ACCREDITATION STATUS: Ministry Of Education Recognition/ State Registered No.A-103/M-10/2002

OFFICIAL STUDENT TRANSCRIPT

Student Identification: JMU-51905219
Name: Mohammed Abdul Syed
Date of Birth: 10-12-1965
Address: 1711 Aviation Way
            Colorado Springs, CO 80916

Major: Chemistry
Graduation Date: May 22, 2005
Degree Awarded: Master of Science in Chemistry
Final Grade Point Average: 3.4
Total Credits: 30
Total Quality Points: 102

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I certify that this transcript has been issued without alteration or erasure, signed and sealed under my hand;

[Signature]
Registrar of Official Academic Records

For and on behalf of the degree granting authority of James Monroe University, Graduate School, Inc.

Classification: AWARDED

NOT VALID UNTIL EMBOSSED WITH OFFICIAL RECORDS DEPARTMENT STAMP
James Monroe University

Dear Mohammed Abdul Syed

When we reach a milestone in our lives we should stop to reflect on the past, and how we arrived at our current place. I hope you realize how much personal and academic effort you have put forth to achieve what you have done.

There are no limits to what you can accomplish if you continue in your positive and persistent manner, and in being yourself in the best way you know how.

Congratulations on the recent awarding of your Master of Science in Chemistry.

In witness thereof, this Degree was granted by the Board of Directors, and presented on the Twenty-Second day of May, Two Thousand and Five.

Respectfully,

[Signature]
Dean of Studies

[Signature]
Chief Provost
James Monroe University

Name: Mohammed Abdul Syed
ID#: JMU-51905219
Date of Birth: 10-12-1965
Degree Conferred: Master of Science in Chemistry
Exit/Graduation: In witness thereof, this degree was granted by the Board of Directors, and presented on the Twenty-Second day of May, Two Thousand and Five.
GPA: 3.4

Source: Academic Records filed at third-party verification service:

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Chairman of the Official Archive Registry
James Monroe University

The Regents of the Board of Directors and the President & Chief Provost by virtue of their Authority have conferred upon

Mohammed Abdul Syed

The Degree and Academician Status of

Master of Science

in

Chemistry

and granted all the privileges and rights accorded thereto:

Be it known that knowledge and proficiency has been demonstrated by completing and satisfying all requirements of the

Regents of the Board of Directors in token whereof the President & Chief Provost has authorized this status.

In witness thereof, this Diploma is granted by the Board of Directors, and presented on the Twenty-Second day of May, Two Thousand and Five.

[Signatures]

Dean of Studies

Chief Provost
James Monroe University
ACCREDITATION STATUS: Ministry Of Education Recognition/State Registered No.A-103/M-10/2002

OFFICIAL STUDENT TRANSCRIPT

Student Identification: JMU-51505219
Name: Mohammed Abdul Syed
Date of Birth: 10-12-1965
Address: 1711 Aviation Way
Colorado Springs, CO 80918

Major: Chemistry

Graduation Date: June 5th, 2002
Degree Awarded: Bachelor of Science in Chemistry
Final Grade Point Average: 3.60
Total Credits: 120
Total Quality Points: 432

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I certify that this transcript has been issued without alteration or erasure signed and sealed under my hand;

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For and on behalf of the degree granting authority of James Monroe University, Graduate School, Inc.

Classification: AWARDED
James Monroe University

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There are no limits to what you can accomplish if you continue in your positive and persistent manner, and in being yourself in the best way you know how.

Congratulations on the recent awarding of your Bachelor of Science in Chemistry.

In witness thereof, this Degree was granted by the Board of Directors, and presented on the Fifth day of June, Two Thousand and Two.

Respectfully,

[Signature]

Dean of Studies

[Signature]

Chief Provost
James Monroe University

Name: Mohammed Abdul Syed
ID#: JMU-51905219
Date of Birth: 10-12-1965
Degree Conferred: Bachelor of Science in Chemistry
Exit/Graduation: In witness thereof, this degree was granted by the Board of Directors, and presented on the Fifth day of June, Two Thousand and Two.
GPA: 3.60

Source: Academic Records filed at third-party verification service:

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[Signature]
Chairman of the Official Archive Registry
James Monroe University

The Regents of the Board of Directors and the
President & Chief Provost by virtue of their Authority have conferred upon

Mohammed Abdul Syed

The Degree and Academician Status of
Bachelor of Science
in
Chemistry

and granted all the privileges and rights accorded thereto.

Be It Known that knowledge and proficiency has been demonstrated by
completing and satisfying all requirements of the
Regents of the Board of Directors in token whereof the
President & Chief Provost has authorized this status.

In witness thereof, this Diploma is granted by the Board of Directors and presented on the
Fifth day of June, Two Thousand and Two.

[Signature]
Dean of Studies

[Signature]
Chief Provost
all of the salaries that are paid are drawn on the AEIT account at the Bank of Fairfield. She stated that Steve and Dixie’s truck payment is drawn out of the A+ account, and that the personal bills for Steve and Dixie, and Dixie’s mother are drawn out of the AEIT account.

Markishtum was asked about the money orders that were sent to the business on behalf of Muhammad Sayed to obtain education records. She stated that she did not receive the money orders at the Post Falls office. When she was told by SA Neirinckx that the money orders were sent to the “Marsh Road” address, Markishtum stated that mail from that address is forwarded to the “Mead” office and would have been received by Steve, Sr.

Markishtum was asked what happens to Dissertations and Thesis that are sent to the “schools”. Markishtum stated that when she receives a copy of a Dissertation or Thesis, she places them in a file cabinet. She stated that they are not read or reviewed. She stated that if one is received electronically, she will occasionally send it to the assigned advisor for the client. She stated that Dixie never instructed her on what to do with such documents. Markishtum added that occasionally, a client would email such documents directly to their assigned advisor and that she has no knowledge what happens to them after that.

Markishtum was asked about the faxes that she receives at the Post Falls office. She stated that the “208” fax number goes directly to her computer and that she receives them there. She estimated that Dixie maintains approximately fifteen “J2” fax lines that are received by computer. She stated that the letters from Sayed were routed to Lorhan.

SA Neirinckx asked Markishtum when she knew that the diploma business was illegal. Markishtum stated that she knew the business was illegal when Bill Morlin of the Spokesman-Review “started knocking on the door”. She stated that she continually asked Dixie if the operation was legal, and was told by Dixie that it was. Markishtum stated that she stayed with Dixie’s operation because she needed a job.

Markishtum stated that approximately 1,000 businesses, schools, and/or employers have called to verify the “schools” legitimacy while she has worked for the diploma business. Markishtum estimated that approximately 500-600 employers alone have called for employee education verification in order to hire a prospective employee. She stated that when she was questioned about the client, she would “look up their name and ID number”, and indicate to the employer that, “Our records show that they have a certain degree”. Markishtum stated that in April, Dixie told her that she was not to give any information out to anyone without a signature. She stated that Dixie again instructed her at that time that she was to tell any callers that the physical location of the school was in West Africa, and that she was located in Wilmington, DE.

Markishtum stated that if there were any problems or questions, that she would communicate with Dixie my way of email to info@universityservices.net.

Markishtum stated that to her knowledge, no one has ever “evaluated” a person’s experience or education for a degree.
110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. ___

To amend and extend the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California (for himself, Mr. HINOJOSA, and [see attached list of cosponsors]) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on ______________________

A BILL

To amend and extend the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes.

1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

3 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

4 (a) Short Title.—This Act may be cited as the

5 "College Opportunity and Affordability Act of 2007".

6 (b) Table of Contents.—

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
Sec. 2. Reference; Effective date.

TITLE I—TITLE I AMENDMENTS
“(B) demonstrated a willingness and commitment to improving the higher education enrollment rates of the local educational agency or State, respectively.

“(b) GRANT RECIPIENT CRITERIA.—The recipient of the grant awarded under subsection (a) shall be a non-profit organization with demonstrated expertise—

“(1) in increasing school-wide higher education enrollment rates in low-income communities nationwide by providing curriculum, training, and technical assistance to secondary school staff and student peer influencers; and

“(2) in a college transition data management system.

“PART H—DIPLOMA MILL PREVENTION

“SEC. 851. PURPOSE; DEFINITIONS.

“(a) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this part is to protect institutions of higher education, businesses and other employers, professional licensing boards, patients and clients of degree holders, taxpayers, and other individuals from any person claiming to possess a legitimate academic degree that in fact was issued by a fraudulent or nonexistent school, by a non-educational entity posing as a school, or by any entity in violation of Federal or State law.
"(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this part:

"(1) DEGREE-GRAZING INSTITUTION.—The term 'degree-granting institution' means any entity that offers or confers an academic, professional, or occupational degree, diploma, or certificate, if such degree, diploma, or certificate may be used to represent to the general public that the individual possessing such degree, diploma, or certificate has completed a program of education or training beyond secondary education.

"(2) DIPLOMA MILL.—The term 'diploma mill' means any entity that—

"(A) lacks valid accreditation by an agency recognized by a Federal agency or a State government as a valid accrediting agency of institutions of higher education; and

"(B) offers degrees, diplomas, or certifications, for a fee, that may be used to represent to the general public that the individual possessing such a degree, diploma, or certification has completed a program of education or training beyond secondary education, but little or no education or course work is required to obtain such a degree, diploma, or certification.
"(3) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—

The term 'institution of higher education' has the
meaning given such term in section 102.

"SEC. 852. RECOGNIZED ACCREDITING AGENCIES AND IN-
STITUTIONS.

"(a) LISTS MAINTAINED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION.—Not later than 30 days after the date of
the enactment of this part, the Secretary of Education
shall make available (in a regularly updated, electronic
format) to the Secretary of Homeland Security and the
heads of other appropriate Federal agencies, a list of—

"(1) accrediting agencies and associations, rec-
ognized by the Secretary of Education under section
496, or, at the discretion of the Secretary, other or-
organizations involved in accreditation;

"(2) eligible institutions, as defined under sec-
tion 435(a); and

"(3) to the extent practicable, foreign degree-
granting institutions that—

"(A) have degree-granting authority, as
granted by the appropriate agency or ministry
of jurisdiction in the home country of such in-
stitution;

"(B) issue degrees that are accepted for
professional licensure, public employment, and
admission into graduate programs of degree-
granting institutions in the home country (as
determined by the Secretary of State);

“(C) are determined by the Secretary of
Education to be academically equivalent to an
eligible institution, as defined in section 435(a);
and

“(D) are located in a home country that is
capable of performing an effective academic
evaluation of the degree-granting institutions to
which it issues degree-granting authority, as de-
termined by the Secretary of State, in consulta-
tion with the Secretary of Education,

for the purposes of allowing the Secretary of Homeland
Security and the heads of such Federal agencies to deter-
mine, for immigration and Federal employment and hiring
purposes, the legitimacy of degree-granting institutions
and degrees issued by such institutions.

“(b) REVISIONS TO LISTS.—The Secretary of Edu-
cation shall modify and maintain the lists described in
subsection (a) as necessary to ensure that the lists and
the information contained in the lists are accurate and up-
to-date, based on the most recent information available to
the Secretary.
"(e) Notice of Recognition.—To be eligible to receive funds under title IV, each eligible institution described in subsection (a)(2) shall, not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this part, prominently display on the institution’s Internet website a notice indicating that the institution is recognized by the Secretary of Education as a legitimate institution for immigration and Federal employment and hiring purposes. If the Secretary of Education determines that an institution no longer qualifies as a legitimate degree-granting institution described in subsection (a)(2), and removes the institution from the list maintained under such subsection, the institution shall, not later than 15 days after the removal of the institution from such list, delete the notice required by this subsection from the institution’s Internet website.

"SEC. 853. ACCREDITING AGENCIES.

"No accrediting agency or association may be considered to be a reliable authority as to the quality of education or training offered by a degree-granting institution for any purpose related to immigration, Federal employment and hiring practices, or for any other Federal purposes, unless the agency or association is on the list of accrediting agencies and associations recognized by the Secretary of Education and provided to the Secretary of Homeland Security under section 852. The Secretary may
consult with other organizations, such as the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, for such purposes.

"SEC. 854. TASK FORCE.

"(a) Task Force Established.—The Secretary of Education shall establish within the Department of Education the Diploma Mill Task Force (referred to in this part as the 'Task Force').

"(b) Membership.—

"(1) Number and Appointment.—The Task Force shall, if practicable, be composed of 19 members, as follows:

"(A) The Assistant Secretary of Education for Postsecondary Education.

"(B) A representative of the Department of Education with experience related to the determination of the legitimacy and quality of degrees from foreign institutions of higher education, selected by the Secretary of Education.

"(C) A representative of the Department of Justice, selected by the Attorney General.

"(D) A representative of the Federal Trade Commission, selected by the Chairman of such agency.
“(E) A representative of the Secret Service, selected by the Director of the Secret Service.

“(F) A representative of the Department of State, selected by the Secretary of State.


“(H) A representative of the Office of Personnel Management, selected by the Director of such Office.

“(I) A representative of a national accreditation association.

“(J) A representative of a national organization representing collegiate registrars and admissions officers.

“(K) Two representatives of State degree approval agencies, selected by agreement of at least 3 of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Senate Majority Leader, the House Minority Leader, and the Senate Minority Leader.

“(L) Two representatives from regionally accredited institutions of higher education, selected by agreement of at least 3 of the Speaker
of the House of Representatives, the Senate
Majority Leader, the House Minority Leader,
and the Senate Minority Leader.

"(M) One representative from a nationally
accredited institution of higher education, se-
lected by agreement of at least 3 of the Speaker
of the House of Representatives, the Senate
Majority Leader, the House Minority Leader,
and the Senate Minority Leader.

"(N) Four individuals from the general
population with experience in higher education,
the detection of fraudulent degrees and degree-
granting institutions, or law enforcement re-
lated to credential fraud, selected as follows:

"(i) One individual selected by the
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

"(ii) One individual selected by the
Minority Leader of the House of Rep-
resentatives.

"(iii) One individual selected by the
Majority Leader of the Senate.

"(iv) One individual selected by the
Minority Leader of the Senate.

"(2) CRITERIA FOR MEMBERSHIP.—All mem-
bers of the Task Force shall be persons who are es-
especially qualified to serve on the Task Force by virtue of their education, training, or experience, particularly in the fields of higher education, accreditation of institutions of higher education, foreign higher education standards, State regulation of institutions of higher education, immigration, Federal employment requirements and hiring practices, or fraud prevention, detection, or enforcement.

"(3) TERMS.—Each member shall be appointed for the life of the Task Force.

"(4) VACANCIES.—A vacancy in the Task Force shall be filled in the manner in which the original appointment was made.

"(5) CHAIR.—At the first meeting of the Task Force, the members of the Task Force shall elect a member of the Task Force to serve as Chair.

"(c) DUTIES.—

"(1) GUIDELINES.—The Task Force shall develop guidelines, to be used for the development of Federal legislation, to identify degree-granting institutions as legitimate or fraudulent degree-granting institutions for Federal purposes. In developing such guidelines, the Task Force shall consider—
"(A) characteristics of degree-granting institutions that help determine the legitimacy of the institution, such as whether an entity—

"(i) offers or confers degrees, diplomas, or certificates—

"(I) for little or no meaningful academic work;

"(II) without requiring an appropriate level of academic achievement for the attainment of such degrees, diplomas, or certificates; or

"(III) without imposing academic or other requirements for admittance into the institutions or programs offering such degrees, diplomas, or certificates;

"(ii) has fiscal and administrative structures and capacity appropriate to the specified scale of educational operations;

"(iii) has resources to support claims as a degree-granting institution, including curricula, qualified faculty, facilities, equipment, and supplies, student support services, objectives of the degrees or credentials offered, admissions practices, aca-
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demic calendars and catalogs, and a grad-
ing system; and
“(iv) has degree-granting authority
issued by the States in which degrees, or
instruction leading to degrees, are offered,
and is recognized by such States as an ap-
proved institution of higher education;
“(B) the feasibility of defining the term
‘fraudulent degree-granting institution’ (com-
monly referred to as ‘diploma mills’), and if fea-
sible, shall define such term for use in Federal
laws and regulations;
“(C) issues related to—
“(i) the detection of new and existing
fraudulent degree-granting institutions;
“(ii) recognition and prevention of the
practices used by such fraudulent degree-
granting institutions to avoid detection;
“(iii) the enforcement of laws and reg-
ulations prohibiting such fraudulent de-
gree-granting institutions and practices
and the use of fraudulent degrees; and
“(iv) the prosecution of such fraudu-
 lent degree-granting institutions and prac-
tices and the use of fraudulent degrees;
"(D) difficulties in identifying fraudulent degree-granting institutions located in foreign countries, or that claim recognition or degree-granting authority from foreign countries;

"(E) means to alert and educate the public about fraudulent degree-granting institutions and the use of fraudulent degrees;

"(F) laws, regulations, and other means used by States to address fraudulent degree-granting institutions and the use of fraudulent degrees;

"(G) the potential need for coordination and cooperation among various Federal agencies to investigate and prosecute suspected fraudulent degree-granting institutions, and the detailed recommendations of the Task Force regarding such coordination and cooperation;

"(H) the study and the report to the Task Force required under this section; and

"(I) the purposes for which various agencies of the United States need to identify fraudulent degree-granting institutions, and identify, prohibit, and prevent the use of degrees issued by such fraudulent institutions, and the ability
of such agencies to implement any guidelines considered by the Task Force.

"(2) DEVELOPMENT OF FEDERAL PLAN.—The Task Force shall develop a strategic diploma integrity protection plan (referred to in this section as the ‘Plan’) to address the sale and use of fraudulent degrees for Federal purposes. The Plan shall include the following:

"(A) Recommendations to Congress regarding the implementation by Federal agencies of the guidelines developed under paragraph (1).

"(B) Recommendations to the Federal Trade Commission regarding the application of the guidelines developed under paragraph (1) to any rulemaking under section 856 and to the enforcement of the rules promulgated under such section.

"(3) SUBMISSION OF REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this part, the Task Force shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report, including—

"(A) the guidelines developed under paragraph (1);
“(B) the Plan developed under paragraph (2); and

“(C) a legislative proposal for consideration by Congress.

"SEC. 855. SENSE OF THE CONGRESS REGARDING USE BY STATES OF THE FEDERAL PLAN AS GUIDELINES.

“It is the sense of the Congress that—

“(1) each State should implement a strategic diploma integrity plan similar to any such plan enacted by Congress in accordance with section 854, to the extent practicable and as soon as practicable after the date of the enactment of such a plan under such section; and

“(2) States may adopt more stringent standards than those standards contained in the Federal strategic diploma integrity plan and used by agencies of the United States to identify fraudulent degree-granting institutions operating within such State, except that State law does not preempt Federal law as applied to the employment and hiring practices of Federal employees working in such State.
“SEC. 856. UNFAIR AND DECEPTIVE ACTS AND PRACTICES REGARDING DIPLOMAS AND PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATIONS.

"Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this part, the Secretary shall request in writing that the Federal Trade Commission shall develop a plan to address diploma mills based on section 18 of Federal Trade Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 57a).

“PART I—STUDENT SAFETY AND CAMPUS EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

“SEC. 861. STUDENT SAFETY AND CAMPUS EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT.

“(a) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—From the amount appropriated to carry out this part under section 800, the Secretary is authorized to award grants, on a competitive basis, to institutions of higher education or consortia of institutions of higher education to enable institutions of higher education or consortia to pay the Federal share of the cost of carrying out the authorized activities described in subsection (c).

“(2) CONSULTATION WITH THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AND THE SECRETARY OF HOMELAND SECURITY.—Where appropriate, the Secretary shall award grants under this section in consultation with
Diplomas: Impossible The diploma mill case has been in the news recently, and the issue of diploma mills and fake degrees has become more prominent. These mills operate illegally, offering false degrees to unsuspecting students.

Legislative News

House passes bill to ban diploma mills

A bill has been passed by the House of Representatives to ban diploma mills, which are known for offering fraudulent degrees. The bill aims to protect students from falling victim to these schemes.

Sources:

1. Legislative News

To follow the progress of this bill, please check the official legislative website of your state.
West's RCWA 28A.405.260

West's Revised Code of Washington Annotated Currentness

Title 28A. Common School Provisions (Refs & Annos)
Chapter 28A.405. Certificated Employees (Refs & Annos)
\*Conditions and Contracts of Employment
\*28A.405.260. Use of false academic credentials--Penalties

A person who issues or uses a false academic credential is subject to RCW 28B.85.220 and 9A.60.070.

CREDIT(S)

[2006 c 234 § 5, eff. June 7, 2006.]

West's RCWA 28A.405.260, WA ST 28A.405.260
Current with 2008 Legislation effective through June 11, 2008

West's RCWA 28B.50.463

West's Revised Code of Washington Annotated Currentness

Title 28B. Higher Education (Refs & Annos)
Chapter 28B.50. Community and Technical Colleges (Refs & Annos)
\*28B.50.463. Use of false academic credentials--Penalties

A person who issues or uses a false academic credential is subject to RCW 28B.85.220 and 9A.60.070.

CREDIT(S)

[2006 c 234 § 6, eff. June 7, 2006.]

West's RCWA 28B.50.463, WA ST 28B.50.463
Current with 2008 Legislation effective through June 11, 2008

West's RCWA 28B.85.220

West's Revised Code of Washington Annotated Currentness

Title 28B. Higher Education (Refs & Annos)
Chapter 28B.85. Degree-Granting Institutions (Refs & Annos)
\*28B.85.220. False academic credentials--Unlawful acts--Violation of consumer protection act--Venue

Government Exhib H
(1) It is unlawful for a person to:

(a) Grant or award a false academic credential or offer to grant or award a false academic credential in violation of this section;

(b) Represent that a credit earned or granted by the person, in violation of this section, can be applied toward a credential offered by another person; or

(c) Solicit another person to seek a credential or to earn a credit that is offered in violation of this section.

(2) The definitions in RCW 9A.60.070 apply to this section.

(3) A violation of this section constitutes an unfair or deceptive act or practice in the conduct of trade or commerce under chapter 19.86 RCW.

(4) In addition to any other venue authorized by law, venue for the prosecution of an offense under this section is in the county in which an element of the offense occurs.

CREDIT(S)

[2006 c 234 § 1, eff. June 7, 2006.]

West's RCWA 28B.85.220, WA ST 28B.85.220
Current with 2008 Legislation effective through June 11, 2008

West's RCWA 9A.60.070
West's Revised Code of Washington Annotated Currentness

Title 9A, Washington Criminal Code (Refs & Annos)
Chapter 9A.60, Fraud (Refs & Annos)

9A.60.070. False academic credentials--Unlawful issuance or use--Definitions--Penalties

(1) A person is guilty of issuing a false academic credential if the person knowingly:

(a) Grants or awards a false academic credential or offers to grant or award a false academic credential in violation of this section;
(b) Represents that a credit earned or granted by the person in violation of this section can be applied toward a credential offered by another person;

(c) Grants or offers to grant a credit for which a representation as described in (b) of this subsection is made; or

(d) Solicits another person to seek a credential or to earn a credit the person knows is offered in violation of this section.

(2) A person is guilty of knowingly using a false academic credential if the person knowingly uses a false academic credential or falsely claims to have a credential issued by an institution of higher education that is accredited by an accrediting association recognized as such by rule of the higher education coordinating board:

(a) In a written or oral advertisement or other promotion of a business; or

(b) With the intent to:

(i) Obtain employment;

(ii) Obtain a license or certificate to practice a trade, profession, or occupation;

(iii) Obtain a promotion, compensation or other benefit, or an increase in compensation or other benefit, in employment or in the practice of a trade, profession, or occupation;

(iv) Obtain admission to an educational program in this state; or

(v) Gain a position in government with authority over another person, regardless of whether the person receives compensation for the position.

(3) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this section and RCW 28B.85.220.

(a) "False academic credential" means a document that provides evidence or demonstrates completion of an academic or professional course of instruction beyond the secondary level that results in the attainment of an academic certificate, degree, or rank, and that is not issued by a person or entity that: (i) Is an entity accredited by an agency recognized as such by rule of the higher education coordinating board or has the international equivalents of such accreditation; or (ii) is an entity authorized as a degree-granting institution by the higher education coordinating board; or (iii) is an entity exempt from the requirements of authorization as a degree-granting institution by the higher education coordinating board; or (iv) is an entity that has been granted a waiver by the higher education coordinating board from the requirements of authorization by the board. Such documents include, but are not limited to, academic certificates, degrees, coursework, degree credits, transcripts, or certification of completion of a degree.
(b) "Grant" means award, bestow, confer, convey, sell, or give.

(c) "Offer," in addition to its usual meanings, means advertise, publicize, or solicit.

(d) "Operate" includes but is not limited to the following:

(i) Offering courses in person, by correspondence, or by electronic media at or to any Washington location for degree credit;

(ii) Granting or offering to grant degrees in Washington;

(iii) Maintaining or advertising a Washington location, mailing address, computer server, or telephone number, for any purpose, other than for contact with the institution's former students for any legitimate purpose related to the students having attended the institution.

(4) Issuing a false academic credential is a class C felony.

(5) Knowingly using a false academic credential is a gross misdemeanor.

CREDIT(S)

[2006 c 234 § 2, eff. June 7, 2006.]

West's RCWA 9A.60.070, WA ST 9A.60.070
Current with 2008 Legislation effective through June 11, 2008
November 25, 2005

SECTION: No.1719; Pg.19

LENGTH: 1817 words

HEADLINE: A Stress-free PhD? A Snip At $250

BYLINE: Stephen Phillips

BODY:

Stephen Phillips investigates the elusive world of bogus internet degrees and finds customers in high places.

To judge by the picture on its homepage, Robertstown University was grand, palatial even. That's probably because it was - the picture, at least. In fact, prospective students were looking at a photograph of Blenheim Palace, the Oxfordshire mansion in which Churchill was born. The real Robertstown, along with its affiliates Saint Regis University and James Monroe University, was run from the backwoods of Washington State.

According to prosecutors, the university formed part of an elaborate online scam masterminded by a former estate agent called Dixie.

Dixie Ellen Randock, her husband, Steven Karl Randock Sr, and six alleged accomplices were indicted last month after a US Secret Service sting. Experts say the group was one of the biggest fish in the booming $1 billion (Pounds 584 million) a year phoney degree and diploma-granting racket.

The bogus academies were shut down in August. But over six years they allegedly provided at least 10,000 fake high-school certificates, bachelors degrees, masters and PhDs to punters, raking in more than $1 million. It is also alleged, though his lawyer denies it, that Steven Randock dug up a further $200,000 stashed in the Randocks' back garden after their home was searched.

The fraud and money-laundering charges against the operators of Robertstown, Saint Regis and James Monroe are thought to form the basis of the first case brought by the US Government against web-based "diploma mills". The case, which is not likely to come to court until next year, is expected to offer a rare glimpse of the elusive fly-by-night operations that are increasingly becoming a nuisance to legitimate institutions and employers.

Several prominent figures have recently been outed as having bought qualifications. They include Chelsea football star-turned-Liberian presidential candidate George Weah, whose curriculum vitae lists a BA from fictitious Parkwood University.

Barry McSweeney, former Chief Science Adviser to the Irish Government, was also recently at the centre of a diploma mill row. He was denoted in early November after revelations that his doctorate came from US-based Pacific Western University, which was identified as a diploma mill in a September 2004 congressional report (International news, November 18). McSweeney says that PWU was a different organisation when he dealt with it. Last year, it emerged that a senior official in the Homeland Security Department had bought her entire higher education, including a PhD, over the web.

Experts say it is not just a case of a few rogues profiting from people's desire for letters after their name. For instance, the proliferation of "offshore" medical schools raises the spectre of customers of fraudulent
online colleges being able to bluff their way into positions carrying life-or-death responsibility.

The indictment against the defendants in Washington State lists an academic shopping mall of e-institutions, set up to peddle "fraudulent academic products", starting with a fictitious school offering "high-school diplomas", from which "graduates" are referred to the operation's stable of universities.

Fees ranged from $399 to $2,454, but the accused would allegedly offer customers a discount if they recommended additional clients. One patron received a cut-price $250 PhD for "referring a bunch of people", the document states.

According to the indictment, business was drummed up through spam e-mail and an advert in USA Today. Candidates were allegedly "evaluated" by a supposed PhD holder, who had failed to complete her formal schooling. The only pretense of academic assessment was a 125-question online test, which was sampled by a Secret Service agent posing as a customer who identified himself as a "high-school dropout". The agent is said to have deliberately answered three quarters of the questions incorrectly, but he received a school-leaving certificate and associate degree after paying a "graduation fee". He was then directed to purchase a BA and told that he came "in the top percentage of applicants". Another agent, presenting himself as "a retired Syrian military officer", approached the operators for qualifications to help him apply for a US visa. They are said to have sold him degrees in environmental engineering and chemistry.

The operation allegedly claimed accreditation from the Ministry of Education of the African state of Liberia, where the campuses were supposedly located. It allegedly set up a sham website, liberiandiplomas.com

"to pose as the official government website of the Liberian Embassy". In fact, the operation was mainly run from homes and businesses in the suburbs of Spokane, Washington, and Post Falls, Idaho, the indictment says.

In 2003, the operation allegedly made efforts to establish a nominal presence in Liberia. E-mail transcripts of Dixie Randock's instructions to a US operative there suggest a hard-nosed businesswoman with little time for sentiment: "I'd like to have a physical location for all three (universities) but with slightly different addresses. We need three phone numbers for them and someone to answer to (sic) damn phones and say we are fully accredited. I'd like to hire about 10-20 Liberian professors at $50-$100 per month each - they must be real and available by phone or e-mail. The first time they do not say the right thing, their money gets cut off permanently."

According to the indictment, the outfit also attempted to solve its lack of US accreditation by creating its own body, the Academic Credential Assessment Corporation.

To maintain the charade, employers who called to verify customers' qualifications were allegedly referred to staff who would vouch for the qualification. "It would be like me giving myself as a reference," says James McDevitt, the attorney prosecuting the case for the US Department of Justice. "You'd call me up and ask about that bloke McDevitt and I'd say, 'Oh, he's a hell of a guy.'"

But the operators didn't cut corners when it came to the paperwork. "They went to great lengths to make documents look official. (Certificates were) embossed and had a fancy gold seal," comparing favourably with the real thing, McDevitt alleges.

Lawyers representing the Randocks predict that the US Government won't be able to make the charges stick. Philip Wetzel, who represents Dixie Randock, says she will plead not guilty. "The customers knew exactly what they were buying," he says. Wetzel describes Randock's field as "online experiential education", offering academic credit for life experience.

George Gollin, a physics professor at the University of Illinois, encountered the Robertstown operation two years ago. A website that Gollin ran collecting data on online degree scams drew legal threats from the bogus Liberian Embassy e-mail address. "They said they were going to sue me for defamation," he says. University authorities were worried and Gollin had to close the website. But university officials soon "figured out" the situation, says Gollin, and they have been supportive of his subsequent attempts to track diploma-mill developments.
It is an unlikely extracurricular activity for a physicist, but he is driven by a sense of indignation. He describes "fake medical schools" as "incomprehensibly grotesque".

Both Gollin and Alan Contreras of Oregon's Office of Degree Authorisation have faced vicious smears from diploma-mill operatives for their work in identifying the purveyors of fake qualifications. But their efforts have helped uncover an incestuous world in which operators award one another fake degrees and spread information about legal loopholes that can be exploited. Course descriptions are often culled from the websites of bona fide institutions.

Another popular ploy is sound-alike names (Saint Regis was sued for trademark infringement last year by Regis University, a legitimate long-standing Colorado institution) or plain rip-offs - in June, Pennsylvania authorities sued the operator of the University of Berkley Online, which advertised degrees with "no studies, no examsI no attendance (and) no waiting".

Many bogus operations share a predilection for all things British. They invent British university identities that play on upper-class stereotypes and sound prestigious to an international market, Gollin says - as the Blenheim Palace pictures used by Robertstown show. On a more practical level, a bogus degree from a non-existent British institution is harder for US employers to investigate and prosecute, he adds.

There is also a vogue for pious-sounding names. Fake campuses linked with Saint Regis include St. Lourdes University, Gollin notes, while Steven Randoxal allegedly went by the name "Fr. Stephen Fendock" in e-mail correspondence.

Operators link to areas or countries in which there are loose controls over their activities, including Wyoming, Alabama, certain Caribbean islands, Liberia and Senegal, Contreras says. "The biggest problem is when you have a degree supplier that is able to get official approval from a government whose officials have flexible virtue," he says. "Then you have what looks like a legitimate (institution)."

The demand for fake degrees is fuelled by professions for which an advanced degree immediately elevates you on the pay scale. Last year, an audit of Georgia teachers found 11 who had Saint Regis degrees. Contreras says he has had to weed out shortlisted candidates for the head of the Environmental Protection Agency for Oregon and a police chief position with diploma-mill credentials.

Alan Ezell, who was chief of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's "dipscam" office from 1980 to 1991, remembers the pre-internet era of so-called mail-order universities. Back then, it was individuals churning out phony certificates on home printing presses. "With the advent of the internet, it's blossomed into a worldwide operation," he says.

Contreras adds: "The web enables you to reach a large number of potential purchasers (at) no cost. It's difficult to identify who is sending the material and easy to make a website look genuine."

But if the internet has transformed diploma mills, it could also prove their undoing. Despite strenuous efforts to cover their tracks, it is impossible not to leave an incriminating audit trail online, Gollin says.

"Anybody who thinks they can send e-mails then just erase them (is mistaken)," McDevitt says. "The internet has created a whole new stream of evidence."

Still, you can never underestimate the adaptability of unscrupulous vendors, says Contreras. "You're never going to get rid of all the suppliers. They'll go to some island where they can bribe someone. What we have to deal with are the users."

LOAD-DATE: November 30, 2005

View: List | Full

Manufacturing a GW education
Washington state couple arrested for fake GW diplomas

by Justine Karp
Hatchet Reporter

Issue date: 1/22/08 Section: News
Several individuals in Washington state are on trial for allegedly producing fake diplomas and transcripts from GW and several other universities.
Dixie and Steven Randock are being charged with fraud after investigators busted their Spokane, Wash., "diploma mill" in 2005. Court filings last week added GW to a list of four schools whose diplomas and transcripts were being forged. Other schools involved were Maryland, the University of Tennessee and Texas A&M.

"The University was surprised to learn last week of accusations involving counterfeit diplomas bearing the institution's name," said Tracy Schario, a University spokesperson.

The exhibit presented to the court is a photocopy of a fraudulent GW diploma with the major "Information Systems Security," in addition to a fake GW transcript. Information systems and security is not a degree offered by the University.

George Gollin, a diploma mill expert, said about 6,000 people have bought diplomas from this operation.

"We are awaiting further information in order to determine whether additional action is necessary," Schario said.

The University registrar's office often receives calls from employers trying to verify graduation data. Out of the 625 inquiries in December, 11 percent were for people who had not actually received a degree.

Elizabeth Amundson, the University registrar, said there are several steps taken to prevent people from creating fake diplomas.

"There are a number of steps the office of the registrar takes to authenticate credentials awarded by the various schools of the University," Amundson said. "Official transcripts are printed on unique safety paper which cannot be photocopied and bear the signature of the University registrar in tri-colored ink."

The Randocks were indicted along with six other individuals who were hired to help do jobs such as evaluating applicants seeking degrees, producing official stamps for the diplomas and setting up meetings in D.C.

Along with being charged for selling fraudulent academic degrees, defendants are also being charged for child pornography and for bribing foreign government officials from the Republic of Liberia.

If the defendants are convicted of the wire and mail fraud conspiracy, they could each be sentenced to up to five years in prison along with a $250,000 fine, according to a Justice Department news release.
"I think it would be perfectly appropriate for GW to take the sort of legal action that they might upon finding that this is being done," Gollin said.

He added, "It's the kind of thing that I would expect (GW's) legal staff to go after."

Some students are similarly angered.

Sophomore Emily Berger said, "I'm frustrated that people are finding ways to circumvent the system and devalue my degree."
Feds set up Web site as ruse, agent testifies

Diploma mill evidence-suppression hearing resumes

Bill Morlin
Staff writer
November 15, 2007

A federal task force that cracked a diploma mill based in Spokane set up a bogus Web site as part of the investigation, according to new court testimony.

That testimony came from Secret Service Agent John Neirinckx at a U.S. District Court hearing in Spokane, where defense attorneys are asking Judge Lonnie Suko to suppress evidence taken from a basement hallway in a Post Falls office building in March 2005.

The evidence-suppression hearing began in mid-October and was suspended until Tuesday because of witness-scheduling issues. It is expected to continue through today.

The judge will then decide if task force agents overstepped their legal authority when they took cardboard boxes containing 20,000 pages of business records with a search warrant issued by another federal judge.

Defense attorneys representing Dixie and Steve Randock, of Colbert, and two of their employees contend task force agents committed "government misconduct" when they failed to leave a copy of the search warrant used to obtain the boxes with the Rандocks, who had leased Suite 8B in the Post Falls Professional Building. The boxes were in a hallway outside the suite, behind a door that couldn't be locked.

Federal investigators say the boxes were left unattended in a publicly accessible portion of a basement hallway that was under the control of building owner Ray Guerra, who was given a copy of the search warrant.

When the Randocks discovered the boxes were missing, they reported a "theft" to the Post Falls Police Department, claiming a $200,000 loss that was forwarded to their insurance company. The insured on the policy was listed as "Children's Future Trust," along with the names of Steve and Dixie Randock. The claim wasn't paid when the insurance company, Safeco, became suspicious, according to testimony.

When a Post Falls police detective went to question the Randocks on May 31, 2005, about their reported theft, he was joined by plainclothes Spokane police Detective Bryan Tafoya, who was assigned to the task force. Surveillance photos of that meeting were introduced at the evidence-suppression hearing.

The undercover operations being carried out as part of "Operation Gold Seal," Neirinckx testified, included purchases of bogus college degrees and transcripts by another U.S. Secret Service agent.

The degree purchases and online transactions involved the use of an undercover Web site, known as "Randolph Addison Davis Technical University," set up by federal agents who called their site "rad-tu," Neirinckx testified. They settled on that more-believable name for their bogus online university after
initially wanting to call it "Rope-a-Dope University," the agent said.

The investigation centered on the manufacturing and sale of fraudulent college degrees to consumers worldwide over the Internet, using various entities, including Saint Regis University, James Monroe University, Robertstown University, Trinity Christian School and others.

The operators of the diploma mills also branched out, selling "accreditation" and "transcript verification" to other bogus online diploma mills, according to documents filed in the case.

More than 6,000 bogus degrees were sold, raking in an estimated $5 million, according to court documents.

The investigation ultimately led investigators to the basement Suite 8B in the Post Falls Professional Building, the lead investigator testified. Records on file with the Idaho secretary of state showed the businesses in that office were using the names "Kaching Kaching Inc." and "When Pigs Fly Inc.," Neirinckx testified.

After taking 11 boxes on March 29, 2005, the agent testified he left the search warrant with the building owner and taped a handwritten note to the hallway that said: "Whoever left their boxes of stuff in this hallway can look for it at the county landfill."

Neirinckx said he authored the note as a ruse because he didn't want to tip off the suite's occupants to the federal investigation and undercover operations.

Information obtained from the boxes taken in March 2005 led investigators to serve a series of other search warrants in August of that year.

In October 2005, the Randocks and six others were indicted on federal charges of conspiracy to commit wire and mail fraud. Four defendants have pleaded guilty and agreed to testify against the Randocks, Heidi Kae Lorhan and Robert Markishtum. Their trial is scheduled for next June.
Education
Congress taking aim at diploma mills

Hundreds of nonexistent schools are selling degrees on the Internet

Monday, August 13, 2007

By Tim Grant, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

When Pittsburgh City Councilwoman Twanda Carlisle came under scrutiny last year for authorizing $27,000 for a controversial study written by her mother's boyfriend, she defended the study and its author saying, "He's a Ph.D. He's qualified."

Lee Otto Johnson, who submitted the 85-page report on city health issues that consisted of reports written by other agencies and an essay on race and religion, does list a doctorate on his resume from Columbia State University. But it's a school that never existed except as a company that sold phony degrees to people willing to buy them.

Columbia State University, which had no campus, no faculty and no class work, has been shut down by federal authorities who declared the wildly profitable Internet company a "diploma mill." Its owner pleaded guilty in 2004 to fraud charges.

"The only thing the buyer is doing is sending in a check or money order. They know what they are buying," said Allen Ezell, former head of the FBI diploma-mill-busting task force. "The diploma mill knows what they are selling. The third party is in the dark."

With the advent of the Internet and escalating demand for academic credentials in a competitive job market, the popularity of diploma mills has soared and many states, including Pennsylvania, have been slow to pass legislation to outlaw them.

Hundreds of nonexistent schools are selling degrees on the Internet and dozens more sell exact replicas of degrees granted by real colleges and universities.

U.S. Rep. Betty McCollum, D-Minn., has introduced a bill in the U.S. House that would "reduce and prevent the sale and use of fraudulent degrees in order to protect the integrity of valid higher education degrees that are used for federal purposes."

The bill, which is still in committee, was written in response to an investigation that found thousands of bogus degrees were sold to federal employees on congressional staffs and with NASA, U.S. Customs and the Pentagon.

If it becomes law, the likelihood of imprisonment could increase for federal employees who resort to desperate means to impress their colleagues or gain an unfair advantage in the workplace.

So far, only a small number of states have passed laws addressing the problem.

Oregon was the first, about eight years ago, to make it a crime to use fake or unrecognized
degrees, and since then a handful of other states have followed, including Illinois, New Jersey, North Dakota and Texas.

Pennsylvania cases are pursued through the consumer protection laws, not laws specific to diploma mills.

Anyone can buy unearned credentials for any and every profession, as well as fake transcripts and recommendations.

"I bought a Harvard medical degree for $40 and it was a perfect replica," said John Bear, an author who tracks diploma mills and served as an expert witness for the FBI on the subject.

The companies selling these degrees have thrived because many employers don't bother to check employees' educational credentials, and many of the diploma mills use legitimate sounding names like Columbia State or University of Berkley, which could be confused with the actual University of California, Berkeley.

Using broad consumer protection laws, the Pennsylvania attorney general early this year cracked down on the University of Berkley, a notorious diploma mill operating out of an industrial park in Erie. Its owner, Dennis Globoisky, was fined $75,000 and ordered to shut down the diploma mill Web site.

"In these types of cases where consumers are being misled and the product being offered isn't what consumers are being led to believe, the consumer protection laws are the primary tool we would have," said Nils Frederiksen, spokesman for the state attorney general.

In another case that made headlines, the Pennsylvania attorney general sued the owners of a diploma mill called Trinity Southern University in 2004 after state employees paid $398 to obtain a master's of business administration for a cat named Colby Nolan.

Later that year, the Texas attorney general obtained a temporary restraining order under the Texas Deceptive Trade Practices Act against Trinity Southern and its owners, Craig and Alton Poe. The court ordered the school's assets frozen, and in March 2005 the Poes were assessed fines and ordered not to market or promote fraudulent, substandard degree programs or to represent their university as being accredited or affiliated with legitimate universities.

Phoney credentials are a serious and potentially dangerous matter, especially when used to gain credibility in the health care field.

Former Pittsburgh Public Schools psychologist Donald Stettner also claimed he received a doctorate from Columbia State University. His counterfeit credentials were not discovered until after he was accused of molesting children in 2003. He was suspended without pay, and his employment status with the district is still pending.

More recently, a Pennsylvania Gaming Board agent was arrested in May last year after officials learned his college degree came from an online diploma mill.

Michael Ray Rosenberry was charged with two counts of false swearing and three counts of unsworn falsification. He told investigators during his background check that he earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice administration from Stanton University. The truth was
he never attended a class, bought a book, met any instructors or prepared one paper for his degree. A judge in March acquitted him of the four misdemeanor charges, including one count of false swearing and three counts of unsworn falsification.

"We've seen diplomas from diploma mills used in positions ranging from education, the business world, law enforcement, the medical field. It runs the gamut. You name the profession," Mr. Ezell said.

People who use a diploma mill or falsify their academic credentials in other ways may gain a temporary advantage in the job market, but it often amounts to putting a time bomb on their resumes.

Often it detonates right after something good happens to them.

Marti Buscaglia, former publisher of the Duluth (Minn.) News-Tribune was about to become publisher of the bigger Orange County (Calif.) Register last month when it was discovered that she misrepresented her educational qualifications on her resume. She claimed she graduated from Lima University in Peru when she had not.

The Michigan attorney general's office in July shut down a diploma mill Web site that sold imitation high school and university credentials.

"Diploma mills cheapen the hard work and effort that students put into successfully completing their education," Michigan Attorney General Steve Carter said in a written statement on July 5.

While the diploma mill industry has boomed in recent years, there are many legitimate learning opportunities in the online education community. The number of accredited online programs have grown, and many have been granted the same federal student aid status as brick-and-mortar schools.

The University of Phoenix, Strayer College and Kaplan University are a few of the online colleges and universities that are accredited by recognized accrediting organizations.

The Distance Education and Training Council in Washington, D.C., is a federally recognized accrediting agency for online colleges and universities. Michael Lambert, executive director of the council, said diploma mills will even fabricate their own accrediting agencies to create a smoke screen. Two diploma mills tried to steal his council's name in the past.

"Diploma mills have the slickest, most inviting and most convincing Web sites in cyberspace today," Mr. Lambert said. "They are marvels of design and viewer interactivity. They use all the high-sounding phrases one associates with a university education, but they are hollow idols 'tarted up' to look like real colleges."

Mr. Lambert suggests that employers and consumers verify that distance learning schools are accredited by a federally recognized accrediting agency because no diploma mill has ever been accredited by any of them.

The easiest way to check for accreditation is the Web site of the Council For Higher Education Accreditation at www.chea.org, DETC's Web site, www.detc.org, also has a
comprehensive list of accredited online degree institutions.

"The Internet has spawned a new, and very sophisticated, generation of diploma factories," Mr. Lambert said. "They are very clever. We'll never be able to legislate them out of existence, but we can educate the public about their existence."

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Federal Officials Raid Homes in 3 States in Crackdown on Diploma Mill

By THOMAS BARTLETT

HEADLINES

Transportation bill contains nearly $600-million in earmarked projects for colleges

Bush administration officials question proposed commission on science education

Poorly prepared students fare better at private colleges, study finds

Religious belief is found to be less lacking among social scientists

Federal officials raid homes in 3 states in crackdown on diploma mill

Columbia U. nears end of battle with biotechnology companies over patents

New York U. receives
$105-million pledge from a professor

**Moody's report**
demystifies the credit-rating process for colleges

**Sociology association**
honors 8 scholars

The Secret Service and several other federal agencies raided homes and offices connected to a notorious diploma mill last week, seizing computers, files, and cash in what may be the biggest crackdown ever against a fake university.

The raids were carried out in Arizona, Idaho, and Washington State against people affiliated with Saint Regis University, which until recently claimed to be accredited by the country of Liberia. In fact, Saint Regis sold degrees through its Web site for several hundred dollars. (Saint Regis has no connection with Regis University, in Colorado, or Regis College, in Massachusetts, both of which are accredited private colleges.)

The entity now appears to be operating under the name James Monroe University, which claims accreditation from the World Association for Online Education, an international consortium of educators that is not affiliated with James Monroe and does not provide accreditation.

One of the homes that was raided belongs to Dixie and Steve Randock, of Spokane, Wash., who are believed to be behind Saint Regis and James Monroe. The U.S. attorney's office in Spokane has also begun proceedings to seize the Randocks' home because "they're running a diploma mill and they used money from that to pay for the house and surrounding land," said Tom Rice, an assistant U.S. attorney. A message left for the Randocks was not returned.

Also searched was a house belonging to Richard Novak, who in the past has been identified as the "executive vice chancellor" of Saint Regis. Reached at his home on Friday, Mr. Novak indicated that he was upset at receiving telephone calls from reporters. "It's not me the Secret Service is after," he said before hanging up.
The raids were most likely prompted by the amateur investigative work of George Gollin, a physics professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, who has made shutting down Saint Regis something of a personal mission (The Chronicle, June 25, 2004). Mr. Gollin has written scores of e-mail messages and made numerous phone calls to federal officials about Saint Regis. He said he believed that the current investigation began when he brought it to the attention of federal officials that Saint Regis might be involved in helping its customers obtain U.S. visas.

"I really don't think you want people who sell academic degrees also providing attestations that allow people to enter the country," Mr. Gollin said.

A spokesman for the Secret Service declined to comment because of the continuing investigation.

As for Mr. Gollin, who has been fighting Saint Regis for more than two years, the raids were proof that his work has not gone unrewarded. "I feel really good about all this," he said.

Background articles from The Chronicle:


- Senators Call for a Crackdown on Online Diploma Mills (5/21/2004)

- Member of Accrediting Group Has Ph.D. From 'Notorious Diploma Mill' (4/2/2004)

- Federal and State Officials Discuss Cracking Down on Online Diploma Mills (2/13/2004)

- States Try to Crack Down on Diploma Mills (1/21/2003)

- Illinois Professor Shuts Down His Web Site on 'Diploma Mills' (10/24/2003)
The Associated Press State & Local Wire

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August 17, 2005, Wednesday, BC cycle

SECTION: State and Regional

LENGTH: 585 words

HEADLINE: Alleged diploma mill could have aided potential terrorists

DATELINE: SPOKANE, Wash.

BODY:
Federal officials are investigating an alleged Spokane-area diploma mill that might be providing fraudulent degrees that terrorists could use to enter the United States, according to court documents.

Half the "degrees" sold by Saint Regis University and online universities were sold overseas, a majority to "students" from Saudi Arabia, the documents filed Monday in U.S. District Court said.

The documents don't say how many degrees were sold overseas, but they contend the operation based in Spokane and northern Idaho "made millions" in the past few years.

Federal agents have targeted Steve and Dixie Randocks of Spokane in an eight-month investigation that is outlined in the documents.

The Randocks' home in Colbert, just north of Spokane, and their business office were among five locations in the Spokane area searched last week by a multi-agency federal and state task force, led by the U.S. Secret Service

Court documents allege that a Liberian diplomat based in Washington, D.C., was soliciting cash bribes from the Randocks and their associates based in Spokane, Post Falls, Idaho, and Arizona.

The Liberian Embassy official demanded the bribes in exchange for lining up "accreditation" for Saint Regis University and other online schools and for arranging payments of $50 to $100 a month to Liberian educators who would pose as "faculty members" for the online universities, the documents said.

There have been no arrests, and no criminal charges have been filed.

The federal task force is looking for evidence of conspiracy, wire and mail fraud, money laundering, bankruptcy fraud, income tax evasion and engaging in "prohibited foreign trade practices."

The Spokesman-Review newspaper of Spokane reported Tuesday that sources told the newspaper that foreigners who purchased bogus online degrees could be eligible for "H1-B" visas, using their educational backgrounds as reasons for legitimate entry into the United States.

During the investigation, an undercover Secret Service agent using the name "Mohammed Syed" applied for a college degree from James Monroe University.
The applicant, court documents said, filled out an online application, claiming he had obtained “multiple hours of training in chemistry and engineering” as a member of the Syrian Army.

Syed said he was in the United States on a visitor’s visa, “but wanted to quickly obtain college degrees so he could find employment and obtain a H1-B visa to remain in the United States,” the documents said.

Within a month, the operators of the bogus online university responded by e-mail, telling Syed he could purchase college degrees in chemistry and environmental engineering for $1,277.

Richard Novak, of Peoria, Ariz., is identified in court documents as an associate of Dixie and Stephen Randocks.

Novak told an undercover agent that the Randocks’ three main online universities, Saint Regis, Robertstown and James Monroe, "have made millions of dollars over recent years."

Agents also searched Novak’s home in Arizona and a business office in Post Falls, used for shipping diplomas.

They also searched a stamp works in Spokane operated by Blake Carlson. Documents seized in the search show the Hillyard-area businessman has conspired with the Randocks, listing himself as the "dean of studies" of Robertstown University, and "provost and chief academic officer" for Saint Regis University.

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LOAD-DATE: August 18, 2005
SECTION: ROP ZONE; News; Pg. A1

LENGTH: 790 words

HEADLINE: Diploma-mill charges: many degrees of deceit; Indictment describes elaborate operation - Bogus documents may aid those seeking visas

BYLINE: Maureen O'Hagan, Seattle Times staff reporter

BODY:

With little more than a network of Web sites, telephones and bank accounts, a group of eight people ran a million-dollar diploma business that churned out thousands of bogus degrees, according to a federal indictment.

The group, which ran St. Regis University and several related businesses, was based in the Spokane area, although it purported to run accredited colleges in Liberia. About half of the diplomas issued by the group went to foreigners, leading authorities to worry that some may use their phony degrees to qualify for U.S. work visas.

The indictment does not allege anyone used a bogus diploma to get into the country. However, a Secret Service agent posing as a retired Syrian military officer seeking a work visa was able to buy degrees in engineering and chemistry, according to the indictment.

"We're concerned about it and it continues to be under investigation," said Thomas Rice, chief criminal prosecutor in the U.S. Attorney's Office in Spokane.

The elaborate deception included online photos of what were supposed to be campuses in Liberia, including a photo of Blenheim Castle in England, where Winston Churchill was born, the indictment states. The group also allegedly tried to hire Liberian professors not to teach classes but to answer phone calls.

Named in the indictment, handed down Wednesday, are Dixie Ellen Randock, Steven Karl Randock Sr., Richard John Novak, Blake Alan Carlson, Amy Leann Hensley, Heidi Kae Lorhan, Roberta Marquis and Kenneth Pearson, all charged with mail fraud. In addition, the Randocks are charged with money laundering. The U.S. Attorney is also seeking to seize a number of assets, including $480,000 in bank accounts and a 2001 Jaguar.

A phone message left last night for the Randocks was not immediately returned, and it was not known if they had hired lawyers.

Big business

The diploma-mill phenomenon is vast and thriving, according to national experts, and relies on the Internet and e-mail to attract customers. It recently made local news when it was discovered that King County sheriff candidate and department veteran Jim Fuda took advantage of a Sheriff's Office perk and...
obtained an online diploma to get a 2 percent pay raise. Fuda said he simply submitted his diploma and got the raise, so he assumed there was nothing wrong.

The indictments, handed down out of the Eastern District of Washington, portray a well-thought-out operation. The group operated diploma mills under a variety of names, including James Monroe University and Trinity Christian School as well as St. Regis, according to the indictment. The schools offered degrees from high school to doctorate for $400 to nearly $2,500. The indictment said the diplomas, complete with official-looking seals, came with phony transcripts and grade-point averages, and that course descriptions were cut and pasted from other Internet sites.

But the group offered much more than paper, according to the indictment.

They set up "verification" businesses, with telephones manned by group members in case an employer called to ask questions. And they even created a business to "accredit" the diploma mills as a way to make them seem legitimate, the indictment alleges.

The indictment quotes an e-mail from Dixie Randock to another defendant demanding "someone ... answer the damn phones and say we are fully accredited" in Liberia. Randock allegedly wanted to hire Liberian professors for $50 to $100 a month to answer phone or e-mail questions. "The first time they do not say the right thing, their money gets cut off permanently," the e-mail states.

Evaluating visas

One of the related businesses purported to evaluate credentials for an H1B visa, which has authorities concerned that a foreigner may use a bogus diploma to get into the United States, according to Rice of the U.S. Attorney's Office.

To get an H1B visa, a foreigner must be sponsored by an employer and have at least a bachelor's degree in a specialty occupation, such as chemical engineer, said Steve Miller, a Seattle immigration lawyer. The number of H1B visas is limited and employers pay thousands of dollars for them, including a fee intended to help weed out fraud.

St. Regis is not affiliated with any similarly named schools, including Regis University of Colorado.

An arraignment is set for Oct. 27. Mail fraud carries a possible sentence of up to five years in prison. Money laundering has a possible sentence of 20 years.

The St. Regis Web site has been taken down, although one blurb remains: "Special Notice to St. Regis University Students & Alumni: The admissions office of St. Regis University is no longer accepting applications."

Maureen O'Hagan: 206-464-2562 or mohagan@seattletimes.com

Times researcher Gene Balk contributed to this report.

LOAD-DATE: October 8, 2005
Eight indicted in diploma mill scam

Operation allegedly sold thousands of fraudulent degrees

For the first time in the United States, federal investigators in Spokane have obtained indictments against eight people accused of operating Internet-based diploma mills, making millions by selling bogus college degrees and defrauding consumers worldwide.

The 40-page indictment accuses the eight of conspiring to commit wire and mail fraud during the past six years as they operated out of businesses in Mead and Hillyard and a Post Falls office complex.

Accused masterminds Dixie Ellen Randock and her husband, Steven Karl Randock, both of Colbert, also were indicted for conspiracy to launder more than $1 million they collected from selling bogus degrees.

The indictment alleges that during the past six years the Spokane-based operation sold "thousands of degrees," using various diploma mills including Saint Regis University, Robertstown University, James Monroe University and Trinity Christian School.

The indictment also seeks criminal forfeiture of the Randocks’ late-model Jaguar, their home and acreage at 3127 E. River Glen Drive, and $536,517 that federal agents seized in a series of searches in August.

The Randocks also will be liable for repayment of the money they received as the result of selling the bogus degrees, many of them to foreign nationals who used the credentials to fraudulently obtain easier entry to the United States.

Also named in the indictment was Dixie Randock’s daughter, Heidi Kae Lorhan, a high-school dropout who worked as an "evaluator" for applicants seeking bogus high school and college degrees.

Others indicted were Blake Alan Carlson, a Hillyard stamp shop owner and co-founder of World Chapel Ministries; Amy Leann Hensley; Roberta Lynn Markishtum and

Kenneth Wade Pearson, all Spokane residents who worked for the Randocks’ operations.

Also indicted in the mail and wire fraud conspiracy was Richard John Novak of Peoria, Ariz. Novak is accused of helping set up a meeting in Washington, D.C., where a top-ranking Liberian diplomat was secretly videotaped soliciting bribes from the Randocks. They are accused of using the Board of Education in Liberia to accredit their various diploma mills and sell credentials to similar online operations.

"It’s a significant case," said U.S. Attorney James A. McDevitt. The allegations "are not just selling diplomas, but creating a new system of higher education, which is something new to the world."

The indictment alleges that many of the buyers were foreign nationals who obtained deferred status and could gain entry into the country with less-than-authentic credentials.

Related court documents say half the degrees were sold to overseas purchasers, a majority of whom were "students" from Saudi Arabia. That revelation caused concern for investigators who said foreign nationals, including potential terrorists, could more easily gain entry to the United States with the fraudulent degrees.

The grand jury indictment came at the end of a nine-month task force investigation, led by the U.S. Secret Service, and also involving the Internet Service, the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Postal Inspection Service, the Washington State Attorney General’s Office and the Spokane Police Department.

The defendants are accused of using Internet Web sites to manufacture, print and sell fraudulent academic products, including high school diplomas and college and graduate-level degrees and related documents.

The federal investigation was launched after a November 2003 story in The Spokesman-Review detailed the Spokane-based diploma mills.

"These degrees were sold to consumers throughout the world so those people could get hired or promoted in their jobs or obtain H1B (educational visas)," said Tom Rice and George Jacobs, assistant U.S. attorneys who supervised the investigation.

Left unanswered is whether the Justice Department intends to prosecute consumers, including teachers and federal employees, who knew they were buying bogus degrees and used them for better-paying jobs. About half a dozen unemployed auto workers in Indiana used $42,000 in federal educational retraining money to buy worthless advanced degrees from the Spokane-based diploma mills.

"The operators of these universities created a sophisticated web of supporting infrastructure, using the Internet which gave the operation an aura of legitimacy," said Kevin M. Miller, agent in charge of the Spokane office of the Secret Service.

The defendants "built networks of fake government agencies, accrediting organizations, and credential evaluators."

"The investigation continues to determine if these documents have been used by individuals to enroll for advanced degrees in U.S. and foreign universities or to seek employment and promotion in both public and private sector companies to include those involved in critical infrastructure," Miller said.

To make the degrees look official, Carlson manufactured fraudulent rubber stamps and seals, and Pearson acted as the Webmaster for several of the diploma mill Web sites, the indictment alleges.

Markishtum is accused of printing some of the fraudulent documents and falsely confirmed via telephone to employers and potential employers that the degrees purchased were valid, the indictment further alleges.

As part of the scheme to defraud, the Randocks caused a fabricated Web site to be created, which posed as the official and legitimate Web site of the Liberian Embassy in Washington, D.C., the indictment said.

If convicted of the wire and mail fraud conspiracy, the defendants face a maximum of five years in prison. The money laundering charge carries a maximum of 20 years in prison, and a $500,000 fine.
Court brief cites major universities

Bill Morlin
Staff writer
January 8, 2008

Operators of a Spokane-based diploma mill were counterfeiting and selling degrees and transcripts from some of the largest universities in the United States, in addition to cranking out degrees from fictitious online universities, new court filings say.

Dixie and Steve Randock, the Colbert couple who used a Hillyard print shop and a rented basement office in Post Falls, are accused of selling counterfeit degrees from the University of Maryland, the University of Tennessee, Texas A&M and George Washington University.

The Randocks face a June trial on federal charges of conspiracy, wire fraud and money laundering. Investigators believe the operation hauled in $5 million.

The revelation that the Randocks also sold counterfeit degrees and transcripts from bona fide universities is expected to stir interest among employers, university and college registrars and others in academic circles presssing for additional levels of validation for college degrees and transcripts.

Thomas C. Black, the registrar at Stanford University, said Monday the Spokane case points out the need for electronic validation of degrees and transcripts by employers and others.

"I join a number of my colleagues around the country in feeling at times enraged or deeply disturbed about credential fraud and the havoc caused by diploma mills," Black said in an e-mail.

"Some of us have gone beyond cease and desist orders to devise a new way to deliver and validate credentials electronically through digital signature technology," Black said, referring to the same technology that protects Internet e-commerce sites.

Legislation outlawing the sale and use of fraudulent degrees and transcripts is pending in Congress.

"In addition to passing laws that give law enforcement the power to bring to justice anybody selling and distributing false credentials, or buying and using same, we should embrace this new technology to further protect our legal documents," Black said.

The sale of counterfeit degrees from legitimate universities is detailed in 250 pages of documents and exhibits just filed by Assistant U.S. Attorney George Jacobs, who is opposing a defense request to travel to Liberia. Defense attorneys for the Randocks and two other defendants want U.S. taxpayers to pick up the cost of sending them to Liberia to get sworn statements from seven of that country's high-ranking officials. The defense team claims the Randocks' online universities were "accredited by the National Board of Education" in Liberia.

It's essential to the defendants' rights to a fair trial, the defense argues, to travel to Liberia to question a Liberian Supreme Court justice and that country's former ambassador to the United States, Abdullah Dunbar, who was secretly videotaped accepting a cash bribe from a diploma-mill co-conspirator in a...

The federal prosecutor said it's irrelevant what accreditation the defendants believed they had because they "routinely manufactured degrees, transcripts and other academic products that bore the signatures of fictitious university officials." Dixie Randock used at least 11 aliases as part of the scheme, court documents say.

"The defendants also manufactured degrees in the names of legitimate universities operating in the United States," Jacobs wrote in his 22-page brief.

They counterfeited a bachelor's of science in criminal justice degree and an accompanying academic transcript in the name of the University of Maryland, and a bachelor's of business administration degree and transcript from the University of Tennessee, Jacobs said.

A counterfeit degree from Texas A&M University bore the signatures of two fictitious university officials, "Patrick O'Brien" and "James Cooper," two of the aliases used by Dixie Randock, Jacobs said.

At the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, Amy Blakely, assistant director of media relations, sounded stunned when reached for reaction.

"We've just heard of this and, if the allegations are true, we are disappointed that someone would use the university's name for such purposes," she said.

At the University of Maryland in College Park, spokesman Neil Tickner said senior university officials "don't want to comment, probably because it seems so obvious that it's a terrible thing."

George Gollin, a University of Illinois physics professor and expert on diploma mills, said the defendants in the Spokane case long had claimed they ran "legitimate universities."

"That was balderdash, of course," Gollin said Monday. "Now we learn that they are alleged to have printed and sold diplomas using the names of real universities in addition to their own fantasy schools."

Gollin, who serves on the board of directors of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, said it was a "brazen choice of names" for the Randocks to pick the University of Tennessee, whose president used to be Lamar Alexander – a former U.S. secretary of education.

"As the senior senator from Tennessee, he now serves on the Senate committee that will consider anti-diploma mill legislation in a few months," Gollin said.
Judge considers whether to send lawyers to Africa

Bill Morlin
Staff writer
February 6, 2008

A federal judge in Spokane heard arguments Tuesday over whether to send a team of defense attorneys, prosecutors and investigators to Africa at taxpayers' expense as part of the forthcoming criminal trial of the accused operators of a diploma mill.

Defense attorneys for Dixie and Steve Randock want to take sworn statements from top-ranking Liberian officials, including a former ambassador who was videotaped taking cash bribes from a diploma-mill co-conspirator in a Washington, D.C., hotel room.

The defense team argues the Liberia trip is essential for a fair trial – to show that the Randocks believed their various online universities were accredited by the National Board of Education in Liberia.

"We need these (Liberian) witnesses to prove they weren't bribed," defense attorney Phillip "Dutch" Wetzel told the court.

But federal prosecutor George Jacobs said the Liberian "accreditation" was nothing more than a lie on top of other lies perpetrated by the defendants, who routinely manufactured degrees and transcripts bearing signatures of fictitious university officials, along with counterfeit diplomas from legitimate U.S. universities.

The testimony from the Liberian officials would be "irrelevant, speculative and inadmissible," Jacobs said.

Arguments on the defense request to travel to the African country came after Judge Lonny Suko issued a 27-page ruling, denying an earlier defense motion to toss out evidence seized in March 2005 by a federal task force in the basement of a Post Falls office building.

That evidence included billing records and names of individuals who purchased college degrees and accompanying transcripts from 125 universities operated by the defendants.

The evidence, contained in cardboard boxes, was in an unsecured basement hallway, accessible to other building tenants and adjoining an office rented by the Randocks.

Investigators got a search warrant to seize the evidence but left those documents with the building owner, not the Randocks.

Using a ruse to keep their investigation secret, agents left a scribbled note on the hallway wall, saying the boxes of documents had been taken to a landfill by an "angry tenant."

Suko ruled that the government had a "legitimate justification for its deception" to keep an ongoing investigation secret.

"This is not a case where the government engineered and directed the criminal enterprise from start to finish or where the police employed physical or psychological coercion against the defendants," the judge said.

His ruling was a setback for defense attorneys, who argued the evidence seizure involved "police misconduct" and
shouldn't be used at trial. Suko didn't immediately rule on the Liberian trip.

The judge scheduled another hearing for Friday and is expected to rule then or within days.

Wetzel attempted to bolster his argument for the trip with testimony from defense investigator Brian R. Breen, a retired Spokane police detective.

He spent 16 days in Liberia late last year, tracking down and interviewing some of the witnesses.

Breen hired a driver and a bodyguard during his trip to the war-torn African nation, but he testified that he’s been to other places “where I was more concerned about my safety.”

He said he saw U.N. peace-keeping troops and bomb-scarred roads. Breen also said that he didn't see much evidence of Western influence and was frequently approached by beggars, “but my impression was they really liked Americans.”

Wetzel also used a telephone conference to elicit testimony from Miguel Caridad, an assistant federal defender in Miami, who has made three trips to Liberia in preparing a defense for Charles Emmanuel, who is accused in the United States of torturing people in Liberia between 1999 and 2003.

“"I thought it was very safe," Caridad said of his trips to Liberia.

Caridad was interviewing victim-witnesses, not Liberian officials who may have broken U.S. laws by accepting bribes, Jacobs countered, calling U.S. Secret Service Agent John Neirinckx to testify.

Neirinckx, the lead investigator in the diploma mill case, testified that his consultation with other U.S. officials has led him to conclude there would be “safety concerns” for U.S. Justice Department personnel if they went to Liberia.

The defendants, scheduled to stand trial in June, have said that in the event of a ruling in their favor, they would waive their right to travel to Liberia to give their depositions.
Diploma mill ringleader pleads guilty

Bill Morlin  
Staff writer  
March 27, 2008

Dixie Ellen Randock, a high-school dropout who masterminded a Spokane-based Internet scheme to sell bogus high school and university degrees around the world, pleaded guilty Wednesday to conspiracy to commit wire and mail fraud.

The 58-year-old Colbert woman, who sold real estate before launching her massive diploma mill operation in the late 1990s, faces three years in prison when she is sentenced July 2 in U.S. District Court.

She started her string of online universities "because she saw it as a good way to make money," according to the plea agreement she signed.

Her husband, Steven K. Randock Sr., 67, and daughter, Heidi Kae Lorhan, 39, also pleaded guilty Wednesday to conspiracy to commit wire and mail fraud. Under terms of separate plea agreements, Steven Randock faces three years in prison and Lorhan faces 12 to 18 months.

As part of plea bargains, the U.S. attorney's office agreed to seek dismissal of money-laundering charges against the Randocks, which carried longer potential prison terms. They agreed to forfeit more than $355,000 in cash seized in 2005 by a special task force, as well as their late-model Jaguar.

The fourth remaining defendant, Roberta Lynn Markishtum, was negotiating a similar plea agreement with the U.S. attorney's office and may enter a guilty plea today, Judge Lonny Suko was told at Wednesday's hearing.

The case is believed to be the first successful prosecution by the U.S. Department of Justice of diploma-mill operators, using wire and mail fraud statutes.

"In terms of complexity and numbers of documents, I'd say it ranks up there, if not the biggest, then one of the biggest (cases) that's come across my desk," said Jim McDevitt, who has been the U.S. attorney for Eastern Washington for the past seven years.

New court documents disclose that the conspirators used an airline magazine advertisement to sell at least one "doctor of medicine" degree from their fictional Saint Regis University to a buyer in North Carolina who paid the Randocks $1,531.

A man from Wisconsin bought a nuclear science degree from Robertstown University, another one of the 125 bogus online schools created by the Randocks, the documents say.

There are at least 8,000 purchasers whose names haven't been released by the federal government. McDevitt said Wednesday he's committed to the eventual release of the names of buyers who used their degrees in many instances to get jobs and promotions or, in the case of foreign nationals, to enhance their chances of immigrating to the United States.
At least 300 of the buyers worked for the federal government, including in positions in the Justice Department, the State Department, various military branches and even the White House, it has been disclosed in previous court hearings.

The only publicly announced criminal prosecution of a purchaser involves a former deputy U.S. marshal supervisor who worked in Spokane and bought a degree from Saint Regis. He pleaded guilty to lying on a promotion application and awaits sentencing.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney George J.C. Jacobs, who headed the multiagency task force dubbed “Operation Gold Seal” that has investigated the diploma mill operation for more than three years. Because of pending court hearings, Jacobs said he couldn’t comment.

The federal task force was created in early 2005, following a November 2003 news story in The Spokesman-Review about the diploma-mill operation being run by the Randocks out of an office building in Mead and a house in Hillyard.

After that notoriety, the Randocks moved their operation to a rented basement office in a Post Falls office building, registering their businesses with the state of Idaho as “When Pigs Fly Inc.” and “Kaching, Kaching Inc.”

Federal interest in the operation ramped up when investigators discovered purchasers included people living in the Middle East they feared could be terrorists who could legally gain entry into the United States with their bogus college degrees.

Four other defendants — Blake Alan Carlson, Richard John Novak, Kenneth Wade Pearson and Amy Leann Hensley — previously pleaded guilty to participating in the conspiracy and agreed to be prosecution witnesses against the Randocks. Pearson, who worked as webmaster for the Randocks, also pleaded guilty to receipt of 10,000 child pornography images. They all await sentencing.

In her plea agreement, Dixie Randock confessed to making up names of prep schools and universities, creating online Web sites for them and selling fraudulent degrees and transcripts.

She also admitted to manufacturing counterfeit degrees, class transcripts and other academic products, using the names of legitimate U.S. universities, including the University of Tennessee, Texas A&M, the University of Maryland and George Washington University.

Defense attorney Phillip “Dutch” Wetzel said he will ask that Dixie Randock be allowed to serve her sentence under “home confinement,” but Jacobs, the assistant U.S. attorney, said he will ask for straight prison time, followed by three years of probation.

Steven Randock’s attorney, Peter Schweda, said he expects to ask for little or no prison time because the 67-year-old defendant suffers from heart problems.

Attorneys for both Randocks asked the court to waive pre-sentence reports, which provide the court with a detailed background on the defendants. The prosecutor opposed that request. Sukow said he would order the background reports to help craft his forthcoming sentencing decisions.

The Spokane-based diploma-mill operation raked in an estimated $6.3 million in six years of operation, using the Internet to sell more than 8,200 phony college degrees and accompanying transcripts around the world, court documents say.

The online schools claimed they were accredited by the National Board of Education in Liberia. As part of the case, the Secret Service learned Abdullah Dunbar, the deputy chief of the Liberian Embassy, was demanding cash bribes from the Randocks.

The Liberian Embassy official, secretly videotaped in the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C., during the...
investigation, demanded bribes in exchange for lining up "accreditation" for Saint Regis University and other diploma mills and for handing out payments of $50 to $100 a month to Liberian educators posing as "faculty members" for the online universities.

The task force was headed by agents with the Secret Service, with assistance from the Federal Protective Service, the IRS, a Spokane police fraud detective and investigators from the Washington state attorney general's office and the U.S. attorney's office.

Dixie Randock, who used 11 aliases in the scheme, including "Patrick O'Brien, dean of studies at Saint Regis University," declined comment after leaving the courtroom.

She got engraved diploma seals and fraudulent signature stamps for her cast of professors and deans from Carlson, a co-conspirator who operated a stamp shop in Hillyard. He also became "provost and chief academic officer" for Saint Regis University and "dean of studies" for Robertstown University, signing his name as "Professor Blackwell."

*Bill Morlin can be reached at (509) 459-5444 or e-mail: billm@spokesman.com.*
Subject: besides my normal daily stuff I am working on these things

From: "University Admin" <forwardinfo@university-services.net>

Date: Sat, 21 Aug 2004 18:45:26 -0700

To: <stephen@university-services.net>

Steve, I am working on all these things:

1. I think I need to approach and accredit all of [redacted]'s mills - He actually has [redacted] and [redacted] thru that silly [redacted] that I made for him years ago - for nothing! I get nothing for it - he actually accredits these schools!

My agencies are actually NFASA members such as AEIA, OR I can make the become SRU affiliates - and/or even NBE. I mean we actually have REAL accreditation to offer either through by affiliation OR my accreditation agencies - If I spend $3000 for ACE even better- EVERYONE wants ACE)

2. Amazon - I need to become an affiliate (this is easy - I can do it in 10 minutes)

3. Create MBA and other courses/programs using free online library (and force the students to buy Amazon books) and take online exams - make e-books and online programs. I think I can sell these for $1200- $5000 each depending on geographical market.

4. Offer free degree to anyone creating these courses/programs for us AND let them be the professor too and get a %

5. Use my own exiting MBA programs and expand it by adding In books to read and some exams and/or projects to papers to complete and submit to a professor who does it all for a %

After high school AA is done expand it to all degrees

7. Make it so everyone must pay for digital documents and only them they can other printer versions and ancillary documents such as apostilles and evaluations - using ClickBank to simply accounting and all commissions.

8. OR make these digital versions as well with follow up hardcopies on request and additional payment only basis

9. Check out Lacrosse and Madison and all WAUC schools as targets for our real accreditations

10. Sign us up for the AACRAO meeting in San Fran Oct 1 - do it quickly

11. Use all of our reciprocal agreements that Azad got us now - start promoting degrees through those schools issuing dual degrees by adding on their and our fees.

12. Must find out their fee right now

13. Start a Drive for the donation for buildings and land to be donated to SRU India Charitable Trust and/or World Chapel for the establishment of B&M schools in Liberia and India - other countries as well.

14. We will tithe 10% to all churches donating buildings and land and name the school campus after them.

15. Consider the 3 - 10 day cruise for MBA/PHA seminar & graduation & alumni reunion

'Where is my call center?'
17. Where is my VO?

9. Where is my Nevada real estate school?

19. Artificial Limb drive

20. Book and home school drive

21. Get with all black Episcopel/Methodist African churches and any missionary groups in India and any country to help us put this together

22. Need Liberian and India attorneys to help us. Alumni members or volunteer church Members preferred.

23. Currently working on finishing 100% digital high schools, UGC and AIU,

24. Having a Consulate would be great.

25. Have Berta handle all printing for % + % for us for those who want hardcopy in addition to digital docs.

26 Have Berta also handle printing for % + % for us for other universities and all affiliated schools.

27. Have handle all webhosting for % + % for us for those our independent affiliate schools.

28. Have handle all webhosting for % + % for us or other universities and all affiliated schools.

Dixie
Action against Saint Regis University

Dear Mr. McDevitt,

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education is the central authority for matters concerning institutions of higher education in Sweden. In this context the Agency also evaluates foreign higher education qualifications.

During the last couple of months colleagues in the US have been passing on newspaper articles about the legal measures taken against the entity called Saint Regis University in Washington and other states. It has been very inspiring reading and good news from a field that seldom offers anything but gloom. In fact, this Agency alone has during the past years seen a substantial increase in the number of cases involving entities of the type represented by Saint Regis. Approximately 2/3 of these cases concern entities that are either US or claim to be US-based. Credentials from diploma mills are being used in the Swedish labor market and in academy. It goes without saying, that misrepresentation of this kind devalues higher education in general and the good standing of US higher education abroad.

Against this background, this Agency welcomes the actions taken against Saint Regis University by the US Federal Government. You have our sincere respect and gratitude.

Best regards

Erik Johansson
Dept. for Evaluation of Foreign Higher Education
The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education

Stockholm, 23 Nov. 2005
Dear Mr McDevitt,

It probably comes as a surprise to receive a letter from a place as far away as the Netherlands. The reason for this letter is to offer our congratulations and support with the successes you have achieved so far in the recent, extremely thorough investigation of the St. Regis University scam. The Dutch Information Centre on Diploma Mills (CIDM), a cooperative effort of the Netherlands Organisation for International Cooperation in Higher Education (Nuffic) and the Information Management Group (IB-G), has been following the developments and outcomes of this investigation very closely, and we are extremely impressed with the amount of information that has been uncovered, thanks to the efforts of you and your colleagues. You may be aware of the fact that an informal but very active group of professionals in the field of higher education all around the globe has been continuously kept up to date on the investigation, primarily thanks to Mr George Gollin. The CIDM is an active member of this network.

During the past 10 years, both Nuffic and IB-G have seen an increase in the number of diplomas submitted to our offices that have been purchased from diploma mills. This is obviously not a problem that is restricted to the United States, and it's very encouraging to see that effective action is being taken to fight this type of fraud. On behalf of the CIDM, we wish you much success with the rest of your investigation.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

(Jessica Stammard / Herman de Leeuw)