



NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Inspector General
Catherine Leahy Scott

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CUNY MEDGAR EVERS PROFESSOR PLEADS GUILTY TO FEDERAL FRAUD FOR THEFT FROM SCHOOL, HOLDING UNAUTHORIZED COURSES AND SELLING BOGUS MEDICAL COURSE COMPLETION CERTIFICATES TO JOB SEEKERS

Biology Professor Used Medgar Evers Facilities and Name without Authorization, Faked School Certificates for His Own Fraudulent Medical Career Training Enterprise and Pocketed Course Fees Paid by Students

NEW YORK CITY – New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott and United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York Geoffrey S. Berman, today announced the guilty plea of a City University of New York (“CUNY”) Medgar Evers College biology professor who operated unauthorized health industry courses in college facilities and sold bogus course completion certificates as if students attended and completed the college’s official programs.

Mamdouh Abdel-Sayed, 69, of Kearny, New Jersey, pleaded guilty in United States Court of the Southern District of New York in Manhattan to one count of wire fraud which carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison. As part of the plea, Abdel-Sayed forfeited \$20,000 in illicit proceeds he obtained through the scheme.

Abdel-Sayed, a full-time lecturer in the college’s biology department, from 2013-2017, operated unauthorized medical and health-related courses and sold bogus Medgar Evers College course completion certificates through a fraudulent scheme in which he profited from the school’s name and helped those who bought the certificates try to obtain employment without the requisite training. He held his classes in vacant college classrooms when the facilities were less busy, made and sold bogus certificates of completion to students and undercover investigators, whether they took the classes or not, and kept holding classes and selling certificates through 2017 even after college officials instructed him in 2015 and 2016 to cease and desist.

“With shameless disregard, this defendant traded off the name and resources of his public employer to operate his own bogus private trade school and issue fake certifications as if sanctioned by the City University of New York,” said **Inspector General Leahy Scott**. “He besmirched the reputation of Medgar Evers College and his colleagues, and he enriched himself by pocketing fees from students who paid with hopes of achieving valid Medgar Evers certifications. I thank my federal law enforcement partners for their work on this case and will continue to use all resources at my disposal to protect the integrity of our public institutions and pursue any public employee who commits fraud.

An investigation by Inspector General Leahy Scott and the United States Department of Education Office of the Inspector General, found that Abdel-Sayed advertised and held unauthorized health-care classes including Phlebotomy (the practice of drawing blood from patients for the purposes of medical or clinical testing),

Electrocardiograms (“EKG”), Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (“CPR”), Sonography, and Patient Care Technician (“PCT”) in Medgar Evers College classrooms. He charged students between \$25 and \$1,000 for bogus Medgar Evers College course completion certificates he created with stationery he purchased and embossed, and he assisted those who paid for certificates to obtain employment in the health care industry by vouching for the bogus certificates’ authenticity. Often, minimal or no actual training was performed, the classes included no textbooks, and students were not graded. Abdel-Sayed would provide his bogus certificates to students even if they did not attend his course, and he kept the payments from students for himself.

Additionally, Abdel-Sayed informed students that certain of his certificates served as prerequisites for other certificates, which students could purchase for additional cost. For example, he informed students that if they had purchased his EKG, Phlebotomy and CPR programs, then the students were eligible to purchase PCT certificates or Medical Assistant certificates.

Many of Abdel-Sayed’s classes were held in direct competition with, and at a deep discount to, authorized certified courses offered by Medgar Evers College’s School of Professional and Community Development. That school, under its Adult and Continuing Education programs, offers non-credit certificate courses in multiple areas, including Phlebotomy, Electrocardiograms, Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation, and Certified Nursing Assistant. The school charges students between \$85 for a one-day CPR class to \$495 for a 27-hour course on Phlebotomy or EKG, to \$2,530 for a 200-hour certificate-bearing PCT class.

Abdel-Sayed has never been authorized to teach any classes on behalf of the College for compensation regarding EKGs, Phlebotomy, CPR, Sonography, and PCT, or to issue certificates on behalf of the College representing completion of those courses. None of the fields Abdel-Sayed issued bogus certificates for require licensing in New York State.

Abdel-Sayed became aware of the criminal investigation into his activities last summer when his office was searched and materials to make the bogus certificates were found. Subsequently, he contacted a student (who happened to be an undercover investigator) who had purchased certificates from him and asked that the certificates be returned. He also asked that student to refrain from talking to law enforcement regarding his activities and to “take the Fifth (Amendment)” if questioned, or to tell law enforcement that they took only Pathophysiology with Abdel-Sayed, a biology course he is authorized to teach which involves no certificates or job placement processes.

Inspector General Leahy Scott’s investigation into Abdel-Sayed’s activities arose from her ongoing investigation into CUNY’s oversight and management of its campuses, among other issues.

Abdel-Sayed was released after his plea on his own recognizance pending his sentencing on Sept. 7, 2018.

Inspector General Leahy Scott thanked the United States Department of Education’s Office of the Inspector General for their assistance with the investigation and United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York Geoffrey S. Berman and his office for prosecuting this matter.

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