



NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Inspector General
Catherine Leahy Scott

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SUNY AT BUFFALO ARCHITECT CHARGED WITH TIME ABUSE

BUFFALO – New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott and Erie County District Attorney John J. Flynn today announced the arrest of a State University of New York at Buffalo (SUNY at Buffalo) Project Manager with the Facilities Planning and Design Department on charges he defrauded the state through the theft of over \$15,000 in wages by reporting he was at his university job when he was not, including times when he was working an outside job with private employers.

James D. Spratz, 53, of Lancaster, a licensed architect, was arrested and charged with Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, five counts, and Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, all felonies.

An investigation by Inspector General Leahy Scott found that between June 17, 2016 and September 30, 2017 Spratz falsely reported to SUNY at Buffalo, his regular full-time employer, that he was working at his university job when he was not. During some of those periods, he was instead working for and being paid by private outside firms that do architectural design and construction management work. As a result of his alleged intentional misrepresentations, Spratz fraudulently obtained wage payments from the State totaling \$15,622.30.

“This defendant is charged with perpetrating a shameless fraud meant to criminally enrich himself by taking public-sector wages for work he did not do and by double billing his professional time at the expense of students and taxpayers,” said **Inspector General Leahy Scott**. “I will use the full powers of my office to pursue any public employee who violates the public trust.”

“This project manager is accused of lying to his employer and fraudulently collecting a paycheck while being paid by other companies,” said **District Attorney Flynn**. “I, along with the Inspector General, will continue to aggressively prosecute those who steal from SUNY students and New York State taxpayers.”

Spratz was arraigned on the charges in Amherst Town Court and released pending his reappearance in court on October 10.

Inspector General Leahy Scott thanked SUNY at Buffalo for their assistance with this investigation, the New York State Police for their assistance with the arrest and Erie County District Attorney John J. Flynn and his office for prosecuting this matter.

The defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in a court of law.

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