



NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Inspector General Letizia Tagliafiero

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NY IG TAGLIAFIERRO ANNOUNCES ARREST OF FORMER SUNY EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE FACILITIES DIRECTOR FOR SPENDING \$31K IN TAXPAYER FUNDS ON PERSONAL PURCHASES

Former ESC Director of Facilities, due to lax oversight and supervision, was able to make 171 unauthorized purchases with SUNY credit card over three-and-a-half years

New York State Inspector General Letizia Tagliafiero today announced the arrest of the former Director of Facilities at SUNY Empire State College on felony charges for allegedly spending more than \$31,000 in taxpayer funds on 171 unauthorized purchases over the course of three-and-a-half years.

Erik K. "Rick" Reimann, 51, of Saratoga Springs, was arrested and arraigned today in Saratoga Springs City Court before Hon. Francine Vero on 44 counts of Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree (D Felony), 40 counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree (E Felony) and Grand Larceny in the Third Degree (D Felony).

An investigation by the New York State Inspector General found that Reimann, the director of facilities at Empire State College since 2010, used a taxpayer-funded SUNY Empire State College credit card to fraudulently charge \$31,685 for unauthorized and personal items between January 2016 and August 2019. To conceal the illegal purchases, Reimann forged or altered receipts and statements to make it appear as if they were for legitimate projects at the college.

The 171 unauthorized purchases, ranging from \$10.44 for a pool scoop to \$2,550 for a high-end air purifier and filter, included guitar amplifier parts, pool accessories, truck and jeep parts, grilling accessories, power tools, Seiko watches, ski gloves, camping supplies, all-season tires and multiple electrical parts, tools, kitchen appliances and accessories. Examples of Reimann's unauthorized purchases are included at the end of this release.

The investigation also found that Reimann was able to continue his scheme undetected for so long due to lax oversight at the facilities department. Specifically, Reimann's direct supervisor failed to adequately monitor his actions. A new administration that took leadership of SUNY Empire State College in July 2019 quickly discovered the misconduct as part of a thorough operational review and referred the matter to the Inspector General. Reimann, his direct supervisor, and others have since been terminated from Empire State College.

"This individual abused his position and the public's trust when he devised a ploy to purchase thousands of dollars' worth of personal items with a state-issued credit card and then took steps to conceal his crime," said Inspector General Tagliafiero. "Our investigation found that he was able to continue his scheme unabated for so long due to absent supervision and lax controls. I applaud Empire State College's leadership for identifying the systemic problem, quickly making necessary personnel changes and implementing important safeguards to keep this gross abuse of taxpayer dollars from happening again."

Inspector General Tagliafierro thanked Empire State College for referring the matter to her office, the Office of Saratoga County District Attorney Karen A. Heggen for prosecuting the case, and the New York State Police for conducting the arrest.

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

Purchases by Vendor:

- \$77.94 for halo 24" daisy chains from Polar Ray LLC
- \$91.75 for a LED dimmer at The LED Light, Inc.
- \$109.99 for ski gloves from Flylow Sports LLC
- \$125.61 for a telegraph spoon shovel from Peavey Manufacturing Co.
- \$156.50 at SNAP Power
- \$199.95 for refrigerator water filters from All Filters LLC
- \$279 for a Fender 600 amp kit from Mercury Magnetics
- \$368.85 for Fender circuit boards and transformers from Fromel Electronics
- \$375.47 at USA Clean
- \$430.30 for an electronic time switch from Gordon Electric Supply
- \$511.75 for a controller for pool from Affiliated Parts LLC
- \$525.91 for a Pentair blower with gasket from Parts4heating.com
- \$680.74 in LED bulbs and fixtures from 1000bulbs.com
- \$837.39 for Jeep and truck parts from Rock Auto
- \$943.09 for lawnmower, snowblower, leafblower and other engine parts from Partstree.com
- \$1,481.93 at Trak Equipment Rental
- \$2,063.14 in kitchen appliances and other materials from Lowes
- \$2,550 for an air purifier and filter from Camfil USA, Inc.
- \$3,610.70 in tools, electronic supplies, paint and more from FM Office Products
- \$4,542.62 at Home Depot
- \$11,722.37 in Amazon purchases for electrical supplies, tools, camping supplies, grilling accessories, guitar amplifier parts, multiple Seiko watches, boat paint and parts, all-season tires and other auto accessories

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