



*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**FORMER COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY OFFICIAL SENTENCED TO 15
MONTHS IN PRISON FOR STEALING THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS
FROM THE UNIVERSITY; \$180,000 FORFEITURE ORDER ENTERED**

GUY PETRILLO, the Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York for purposes of the case described in this release, announced that JOHN BZDIL, III, who worked as the Manager of the Pediatric Neurosciences Department of the Neurological Institute at Columbia University, was sentenced today by United States District Judge SIDNEY H. STEIN to 15 months in prison for defrauding Columbia of more than \$180,000.

According to the documents filed in Court and statements made during Court proceedings:

From approximately June 2005 to approximately June 2008, BZDIL used his position to engage in a scheme to defraud by causing Columbia to make reimbursement payments for phony expenses and purchases purportedly attributable to the Pediatric Neurosciences Department.

On multiple occasions, BZDIL submitted reimbursement requests to Columbia for spinal muscular atrophy studies purportedly performed by a medical professional affiliated with Columbia. In fact, the studies were never performed. BZDIL nevertheless authorized Columbia to make payment on the reimbursement requests, and diverted the money to accounts he controlled. In this manner, BZDIL stole more than \$112,500.

In addition, BZDIL submitted reimbursement requests for various items purchased from Amazon.com for his personal use, falsely representing that they were goods and services related to his employment at Columbia. As a result, Columbia was deceived into making payments of more than \$40,000.

BZDIL also submitted reimbursement requests for expenses incurred at the Skytop Lodge, in Skytop, Pennsylvania, in connection with his wedding. These expenses totaled over

\$25,000 and were also paid by Columbia based on misrepresentation by BZDIL that they constituted legitimate expenses.

In addition to the prison term, Judge STEIN sentenced BZDIL to two years' supervised release and entered an order of forfeiture against BZDIL in the amount of \$180,000.

BZDIL, 35, of Allentown, Pennsylvania, pleaded guilty in March 2009, to a one count Information charging him with wire fraud.

Mr. PETRILLO praised the investigative work of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in this case.

This prosecution is being handled by the Major Crimes Unit of the United States Attorney's Office. Assistant United States Attorney JULIAN J. MOORE is in charge of the prosecution.

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