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FORMER PRESIDENT OF PROPRIETARY SCHOOL
SENTENCED TO 18 MONTHS IN PRISON

PHILADELPHIA - James Mannion, 62, of Palm Harbor, Florida, was sentenced to 18 months in prison yesterday for his role in a conspiracy to falsify documents with intent to obstruct the U.S. Department of Education, announced United States Attorney Laurie Magid. Mannion was indicted in October 2008 with two other defendants. In December 2008, he pleaded guilty to conspiring to defraud the U.S. Department of Education and to obstruct a federal audit. From 2001 to 2005, Mannion was President of the Harrison Career Institute (HCI), a for-profit proprietary school with locations in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware. HCI, while enrolling students in courses, depended heavily on federal student financial aid through the Title IV programs, such as Pell grants and Direct Loans. Mannion, along with the two co-defendants who were also HCI employees, fabricated documents and forged student signatures (including Leave of Absence requests /Verification and tax documents) in order to make the files appear compliant with federal regulations.

In addition to the 18-month prison term, United States District Judge Stewart Dalzell ordered Mannion to pay restitution to the U.S. Department of Education in the amount of \$115,128.

“School officials who handle Title IV funds clearly risk a jail sentence if they falsify documents or fabricate information in connection with these financial aid programs,” said Magid.

This case was investigated by the United States Department of Education’s Office of Inspector General. The United States Department of Education’s office of Federal Student Aid also provided assistance. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Denise S. Wolf.

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