
Department of Justice
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Eastern District of Pennsylvania

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Former Temple Business School Dean Sentenced to Over One Year in Prison for Rankings Fraud Scheme

PHILADELPHIA – United States Attorney Jennifer Arbittier Williams announced that Moshe Porat, 75, of Bala Cynwyd, PA, the former Dean of Temple University's Richard J. Fox School of Business and Management ("Fox") from 1996 until 2018, was sentenced to one year and two months in prison, three years of supervised release, and was ordered to pay a \$250,000 fine by United States District Court Judge Gerald J. Pappert after being convicted at of fraud in connection with a scheme to artificially inflate the school's program rankings against other schools nationwide.

In November 2021, the defendant was convicted after trial on charges that he conspired and schemed to deceive the school's applicants, students, and donors into believing that the school's business degree programs legitimately earned top rankings, so that they would pay tuition and make donations to Temple. In April of the same year, Porat was charged by Indictment with one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and one count of wire fraud, stemming from a multi-year conspiracy in which the defendant participated with a Fox professor named Isaac Gottlieb and a Fox employee named Marjorie O'Neill to submit false information about the school's online MBA ("OMBA") and part-time MBA ("PMBA") programs to U.S. News & World Report in order to inflate Fox's rankings in the annual U.S. News surveys of top OMBA and PMBA programs.

Among other things, the conspirators agreed to provide false information to U.S. News about the number of Fox's OMBA and PMBA students who had taken the Graduate Management Admission Test ("GMAT"); the average work experience of Fox's PMBA students; and the percentage of Fox students who were enrolled part-time, all because it was believed that better numbers for these metrics would result in better rankings for the programs. And indeed, the scheme was successful. Relying on the false information it had received from Fox, U.S. News ranked Fox's OMBA program Number One in the country four years in a row (2015 – 2018). U.S. News also moved Fox's PMBA program up its rankings from No. 53 in 2014 to No. 20 in 2015, to No. 16 in 2016, and to No. 7 in 2017. Finally, the defendant boasted about these rankings in marketing materials directed at potential Fox students and donors. Enrollment in Fox's OMBA and PMBA programs grew dramatically in a few short years, which led to millions of dollars a year in increased tuition revenues.

"The defendant conspired to provide false information about Fox programs and students in order to boost its appearance and fraudulently manipulate those who sought to support a top-tier school," said U.S. Attorney Williams. "Today an unhappy chapter for higher education in Philadelphia has come to a close and Moshe Porat has been sentenced to a term of imprisonment appropriate for his crime."

"This defendant was, at one time, a well-respected member of academia," said Special Agent in Charge Jacqueline Maguire. "But when he conspired to game the system and cheat potential students, he blurred the lines and went from well-educated professional to run-of-the-mill fraudster. The FBI does not care about your status in life when you break the law. We will bring to justice anyone who defrauds the government and, by extension, the public."

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the United States Postal Inspection Service, and the Department of Education's Office of the Inspector General; and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Mark B. Dubnoff, Nancy Potts and M.T. Soltis.