

## CASE REPORT

### Excerpt of Case Report

#### Professional Standards Commission

**Ethics Violation:** Misrepresentation or Falsification  
Criminal Acts  
Public funds and Property

### INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

#### Synopsis:

The Professional Standards Commission (PSC) issued the educator, a teacher, an L-7 certificate and the school system paid her at a higher rate based on the doctorate degree she obtained from a University. The PSC determined that the University is what is commonly referred to as, a "diploma mill." (The term "diploma mill" refers to institutions that award diplomas for money.) The PSC recalled the educator's L-7 certificate.

The educator maintains that she completed the work necessary to be awarded a doctorate degree from a University and properly submitted her information to the PSC.

#### Investigative Findings:

- The educator applied for an upgrade of her certificate based on an Ed.D. degree that she obtained from a University.
- The PSC recalled the educator's certificate.

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### Appendix

The Professional Standards Commission (PSC) was made aware that educators in the state were obtaining degrees from a University and submitting the degrees to the PSC to obtain upgraded certification. The information that the PSC received indicated that the University was a "diploma mill" (money for degrees). Educators from three different school systems contacted the PSC and reported this practice.

The PSC Executive Secretary ordered the PSC Director of Special Projects to determine the validity of the University's degrees. The investigation indicates that the University executes a well-orchestrated scam that includes issuing a degree and providing a credentialing service to validate the degree in the United States.

The Executive Secretary then instructed the PSC Director of Certification to review all certificates issued based on degrees obtained from foreign universities. As a result of the Director of Special Projects investigation the Executive Secretary ordered that all PSC certificates issued based on degrees from the University be recalled, and asked the PSC to initiate an investigation of all educators who submitted applications for upgrades based on degrees obtained from the University.

### **Investigative Findings:**

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An administrator in another state's Office of Degree Authorization (ODA) has researched and written extensively regarding Liberian interests in international validation of degrees in the U.S. He reports that a privately owned entity called the National Board of Education (NBOE) was created to accredit distance-education colleges anywhere in the world. NBOE's only known address is a Web site and phone/fax number in Washington, D.C. NBOE offers accreditation for a fee, there is no evaluation process, and they operate a transcript service. (See the quote regarding NBOE below) The following information was obtained from that state's website:

- **Diploma Mills (D)** "Diploma mill" or "degree mill" means an unaccredited school that meets any one of the following conditions. (a) Issues degrees without requiring any student academic work. (b) Issues degrees based solely on the student's life experience or portfolio without requiring any college-level work submitted to and evaluated by faculty with appropriate academic degrees from standard institutions. (c) Issues degrees using more than 50 percent of required credits based on the student's life experience or portfolio.

Certain Liberian officials have apparently authorized a privately owned entity called the "National Board of Education" (NBOE) to "accredit" distance-education colleges anywhere in the world. The NBOE also owns one such entity.

- A professor at a large Midwestern state University has also studied the situation extensively. He says there is absolutely no doubt that the University in question is bogus. He was in contact with the U.S. Embassy in Monrovia who actually sent somebody to check the University's address in the S&G Building on Carey Street in

Monrovia and said it does not exist. He also states that these Liberian diploma mills are owned and operated by a group of people (he states names) that seem to move from place to place.