



Office of the Inspector General Commonwealth of Massachusetts

IG's Westfield State University Investigation Team Receives Manuel Carballo Governor's Award for Excellence in Public Service, June 2015

The Office of the Inspector General's Westfield State University Investigation Team received this year's Manuel Carballo Governor's Award for Excellence in Public Service. The Carballo Governor's Award is given annually to employees or groups of employees for providing exceptional service to the public. It is the highest award in the Commonwealth's Performance Recognition Program, which honors the contributions of public workers in delivering quality services to the citizens of Massachusetts. The recipients of the Carballo Governor's Award are chosen by a selection committee comprised of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President of the Senate and community leaders.

Eileen O'Brien, Director of Investigations, led the Westfield State University Investigation Team. The core group making up the team included Christopher Adams, William Bradford, Neil Cohen, Kevin Floster, Jack Meyers, Bridget Oliveira and Kelsey Sullivan. Its work resulted in a report documenting former Westfield State University President Evan S. Dobelle's extensive misuse of public funds, repeated misrepresentations to the Board of Trustees and unethical conduct. The report recommended a number of reforms, including enhanced training and guidance to trustees of public colleges and universities across the state. To help meet this goal, staff from the Office's training division developed and conducted an educational program for trustees, aimed at reducing the likelihood of similar misconduct occurring in the future.

For more than a year, the Westfield State University Investigation Team interviewed scores of witnesses and assembled and analyzed a wide array of documents that enabled the Office to put together a comprehensive picture of Dobelle's chronic misuse of university funds and his efforts to disguise vacations and other personal expenses as having an official university-related purpose.

As a result of the Office's investigation, the Attorney General's Office filed a civil suit against Dobelle pursuant to the Massachusetts False Claims Act, M.G.L. c. 12, §§ 5B-5O, seeking damages, civil penalties, costs and attorneys' fees. In May 2015, Dobelle agreed to a consent judgment to settle the lawsuit. The judgment required Dobelle to pay triple damages and fees totaling \$185,000, and to dismiss his state lawsuit against WSU for breach of contract. The judgment also prohibits Dobelle from ever again working for a public college or university in Massachusetts.

The Westfield State University Investigation Team will be recognized at a special event at the State House on July 30, 2015.

For information on the Westfield State University Investigation, see:

- the executive summary at [Review of Spending Practices by Former Westfield State University President Evan S. Dobbelle - Executive Summary](#)
- or the full report at [Review of Spending Practices by Former Westfield State University President Evan S. Dobbelle, July 2014](#)