



**BRIAN E. FROSH, MARYLAND ATTORNEY GENERAL**

# **PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
August 5, 2021**

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## **Former BCCC Professor Sentenced to Jail for Bribery and Misconduct**

**BALTIMORE, MD (August 5, 2021)** – Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh announced that Edward Ennels, 45, pleaded guilty to charges of bribery and misconduct in office before the Circuit Court for Baltimore County. Ennels was sentenced to 10 years incarceration, 9 years suspended, followed by five years of supervised probation upon release, and restitution of \$60,000.

For 15 years Ennels was a professor of Mathematics at Baltimore City Community College (BCCC), and president of the BCCC faculty senate from 2016 to 2018, and from 2020 until his resignation from BCCC. From 2018 to 2019, he was the chairperson of the faculty senate's Ethics and Institutional Integrity Committee. From 2013 to 2020, Ennels took advantage of his public office to obtain money from BCCC students through two illegal schemes conducted primarily from his residence in Baltimore County – selling academic access codes and soliciting and receiving bribes in exchange for favorable grades.

From March 2020 to December 2020, Ennels solicited and received bribes from his students at BCCC in exchange for favorable final grades in courses he taught. In March 2020, Ennels sent an email from one of his alter egos, “Bertie Benson,” to another of his alter egos, “Amanda Wilbert.” Ennels, as Benson, offered to complete all of a student’s math assignments for them, guaranteeing an A, for \$300. Ennels, as Wilbert, forwarded this email to 112 students enrolled in a class taught by Ennels. Ennels soon began to directly solicit students via email to make payments to him in exchange for favorable grades. Ennels often haggled with students regarding the amount of the bribe, and set different prices based on the course and grade desired. For example, he would charge \$150 for a C or \$250 for a B or \$500 for an A in a higher-level course.

Most of the students from whom Ennels solicited bribes declined to pay them. Ennels often persisted, offering to lower the amount of the bribe or offering payment plans. For example, on August 9, 2020, Ennels solicited \$500 from a student in exchange for a passing grade. The student responded “Oh I don’t have that sorry. I will be sure to keep studying and pass my exam.” Ennels responded “How much can you afford?” That student and others ultimately agreed to pay bribes to Ennels in exchange for favorable grades. After receiving payment from

his students, Ennels would either simply issue the agreed grade as the student's final grade, complete a grade change form to change the student's final grade, or make changes to the grades the students received for individual assignments and tests in order to cause the student's final grade calculation to arrive at the agreed grade.

Between June 2020 and December 2020, Ennels received 10 bribes totaling \$2,815 paid by 9 students.

In addition to the bribery scheme, Ennels used his official position to promote several vendors selling the academic access codes required by BCCC students to view instructional materials and to complete assignments. In fact, each of the "vendors" was Ennels. In August 2013, when Ennels began his scheme, he used his official BCCC email account to encourage the faculty of the Math and Engineering Department to distribute a flyer to students urging them to purchase their academic access codes from a "Tom Smith," instead of from the bookstore. Tom Smith was one of Ennels's alter egos, and the email address provided to students and associated PayPal account were controlled by Ennels. Over the course of his scheme between 2013 and 2020, Ennels distributed these flyers throughout the campus and routinely emailed large groups of students directly in his official capacity to encourage them to purchase access codes from his alter egos. In violation of BCCC's ethical rules, from August 2013 to February 2020, Ennels sold at least 694 access codes, for approximately \$90 each. Ennels went to elaborate lengths to conceal his identity, including on one occasion emailing an associate dean at BCCC as "Tom Smith," informing the dean that he had recently undergone throat surgery and could not speak by telephone.

Ennels obtained the academic access codes through at least two fraudulent means. Academic publishers that issue access codes often provide a number of these codes to schools to distribute to students with financial hardship. Ennels obtained these codes directly from publishers on behalf of BCCC and also obtained them from BCCC through his associate dean. On multiple occasions, Ennels told his associate dean that specific students were experiencing financial hardship in order to obtain access codes. He then sold the codes he received for students with financial hardship to other students, and ultimately sold different codes to the students he indicated had financial hardship. Ennels also obtained access codes by making fraudulent representations to customer service.

"Ennels used his position as professor to implement an elaborate criminal scheme to take advantage of his students," said Attorney General Frosh. "I appreciate the cooperation of BCCC in helping bring this case to a successful conclusion and holding Ennels accountable for his criminal actions."

In December 2020, a student Ennels solicited to pay a bribe for a favorable grade reported his actions to BCCC. BCCC promptly disclosed the matter to law enforcement for criminal investigation, which ultimately revealed both the scope of the bribery scheme and the existence of the access code scheme.

In making today's announcement, Attorney General Frosh thanked Assistant Attorney General Alexander Huggins for handling this case, the Maryland State Police and Corporal John Wildman for their assistance with the investigation, and Baltimore City Community College for bringing this matter to the attention of the Office of the Attorney General and for their full cooperation throughout the investigation.

<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2021/080521.pdf>