



STATE OF CONNECTICUT OFFICE OF STATE ETHICS

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Ex-Music Department Employee Pays Penalty for Ethics Violations

Hartford – James Birch of Bethel, CT paid a civil penalty for violating section 1-84(i) of the Connecticut General Statutes, which states, “[n]o . . . state employee. . . shall enter into any contract with the state, valued at one hundred dollars or more,. . . unless the contract has been awarded through an open and public process.”

Officials at the University reported to the Office of State Ethics that during parts of 2007, 2008, and 2009, Mr. Birch utilized his private business of servicing and tuning pianos, to enter into independent service contracts with individual departments at the University to tune and service those departments’ pianos.

The Office of State Ethics’ investigation of this matter demonstrated that Mr. Birch, a former part-time employee as a university assistant at Western Connecticut State University, entered into these contracts, while he was still employed, without those contracts being awarded through an open and public process.

Mr. Birch paid \$110 in penalties, which is the equivalent to one piano tuning.

“This provision of the Code of Ethics seeks to prevent state employees from using their position to gain an "inside track" on getting state contracts,” said OSE Executive Director, Carol Carson. “Contracts must be entered into through an open and public process.”

View: [Stipulation and Consent Order](#) Docket No. 2010-63 in the Matter of James Birch.

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The Connecticut Office of State Ethics mission is to ensure honesty, integrity and accountability in state government through education, interpretation and enforcement of the State of Connecticut Code of Ethics. To contact us please visit our website at www.ct.gov/ethics or call us at (860) 263-2400.