



**Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics & Public Trust**

**Report of Inquiry**

**CASE  
CLOSED**

**Investigator: Sylvia Batista**

Date: 4/2/15

<b>Case:</b> PI14-059	<b>Case Name:</b>	<b><u>Date Opened:</u></b>	
<b>Complainant(s):</b>  Joseph Centorino, Executive Director of the M-D County Commission on Ethics and Public Trust,	<b>Subject(s):</b>  Forged signatures on Certificates of Completion for the lobbyists refresher seminar issued by FIU.	<b>11/12/14</b>	

**Allegation(s):**

The COE received copies of nine (9) Certificates of Completion of Professionalism and Ethics for Lobbyists Refresher Seminar (the "Certificates") issued by FIU to lobbyists with Bilzin Sumberg, Attorneys at Law, who completed the course pursuant to City of Miami Code Section 2-654. An irregularity was noted on the signatures of Joseph Centorino that appear on the Certificates.

The COE initiated an inquiry as to the reason for the irregular signatures and the extent to which irregular signatures were present on other Certificates.

**Investigation:**

**11/13/14 – Howard A. Frank, Director of the Metropolitan Center, Florida International University –**

Dr. Howard A. Frank (Frank) was contacted and informed of the irregular signatures on the Certificates. Frank advised that any issue with the Certificates was in Ms. Jacques's purview and provided her e-mail address.

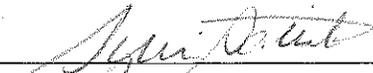
**11/13/14 – Jannette Jacques, Training Coordinator with the Florida Institute of Government at FIU -**

Jannette Jacques ("Jacques") was contacted as the person with the most knowledge on the subject of the Certificates. Jacques said that she was the person who had written Joseph Centorino's name on several Certificates. Jacques explained that she made the decision to sign the name on the Certificates because she had run out of the previously signed Certificates and could not get additional ones in time to issue them on the day the course was held at Bilzin Sumberg. Jacques said that she did not get authorization from anyone to do this—she did it on her own for expediency. Jacques said that the presentation took place at Bilzin Sumberg and all lobbyists who completed the course were given a certificate.

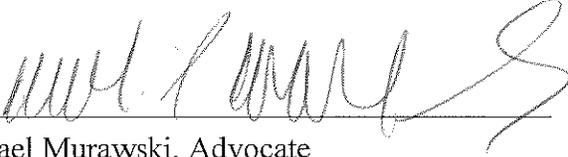
**March 2015** – A review of Certificates of Completion of the Professionalism & Ethics for Lobbyists Refresher Seminar issued by Florida International University in 2014 provided by the City of Miami revealed that most of the signatures placed over Joseph Centorino's name were, in fact, not signed by Mr. Centorino. Attached is a copy of a list of lobbyists' names and dates of completion of the seminar which indicate the status of the signatures. From a total of 66 certificates issued in 2014, 48 appear to have been falsified. A review of the certificates issued in 2013, reveals that only two certificates had irregular signatures, with one irregular signature over the name of Robert Meyers, the COE's previous Executive Director.

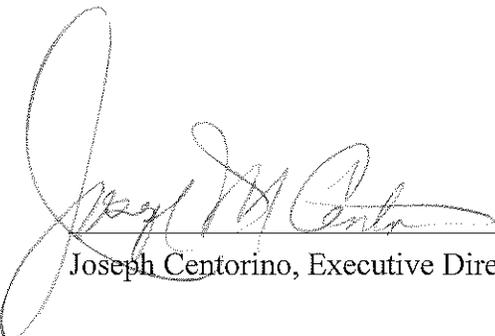
**Conclusion:**

11/17/14 – Joseph M. Centorino hand delivered a letter to Frank advising him that, due to the recent circumstances and resulting concerns over how the program is being run, the COE has decided to suspend its authorization for the lobbyist ethics course to be provided by the FIU Metropolitan Center. This case is closed with no further action.

  
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Sylvia Batista, COE Investigator

Approved by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael Murawski, Advocate

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Joseph Centorino, Executive Director

Date: 4/2/15