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**STATEMENT BY DOI COMMISSIONER ROSE GILL HEARN
ON THE SENTENCING OF DIPLOMA MILL DEFENDANTS IN WASHINGTON STATE
AND THE CASE'S IMPACT ON NEW YORK CITY**

Three individuals involved in operating an internet-based diploma mill, and issuing diplomas through the fictitious institution "Saint Regis University," among others, were sentenced yesterday in the federal court in Washington state. DOI thanks the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Washington for alerting DOI to the scam's impact on the New York City Fire Department.

With that information, DOI investigated and last year the Fire Department disciplined 14 employees who used the bogus diplomas to obtain promotions and appointments. DOI recommended that the Fire Department, and other City agencies, more closely scrutinize the authenticity of academic degrees.

DOI's investigation also led to the arrest of six applicants in New York City for submitting fake academic degrees to the Fire Department. Of the six cases, five have resulted in guilty pleas, and one is pending in court.

City job applicants must provide truthful information and DOI's hope is that our investigation, report and arrests will serve as a deterrent to any individual contemplating submitting a fake academic degree to the City.

DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country. The agency investigates and refers for prosecution City employees and contractors engaged in corrupt or fraudulent activities or unethical conduct. Investigations may involve any agency, officer, elected official or employee of the City, as well as those who do business with or receive benefits from the City.

Get the worms out of the Big Apple.
To report someone ripping off the city, call DOI at (212) 825-5959.