



Third Extension for the HEA

By Charisse Dengler



On Monday, October 2, the last of eight people associated with fraud charges at Barton Community College were sentenced to jail time by a federal judge. The reason for the sentencing was “institutionalized fraudulent conduct.” In addition to the sentencing of these eight individuals, the fraudulent activity led to the dismissal of the college’s president.

Ryan Cross, a basketball coach, and Neil Elliott, the school’s athletic director, received sentences of four months in federal prison and three years of probation. Elliott admitted to obtaining a medical hardship ruling for a member of the basketball team in order to allow the player to participate for another year, even though the player was not eligible for the ruling.

“I admit I made mistakes,” Elliott said in an ESPN interview. “I wish I could go back and change some things.”

Cross was convicted of one count of wire fraud for his complicity in a situation involving basketball player Kareem Johnson and the University of Cincinnati. He also admitted to having an assistant coach pose as Johnson and enroll in an online course at Barton under his name. This occurred while he was working at Chipola Junior College in Marianna, FL.

Lyles Lashley, a track coach, was sentenced to 12 weekends in the county jail and three years of probation. He is also responsible for paying back \$19,000. Lashley was convicted of one count of theft of programs and openly admitted having created fake time sheets on behalf of athletes for work that was not done.

Lance Brauman, a former track coach, was sentenced to a year and a day in federal prison and three subsequent years of probation. He will also have to join Lashley in paying back the \$19,000.

Like Elliott, Brauman found illegal means to get around scholarship and academic regulations on behalf of athletes. He was convicted of three counts of mail fraud, one count of theft, and one count of embezzlement.

U.S. District Judge Monti Belot is disappointed in the parties who were involved; he wonders what actions such as these have been teaching students at the college.

Other individuals involved in the scandal include Matthew B. Skillman, David “Soupy” Campbell, Shane Hawkins, and Ryan Wolf. All four are currently on probation.