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February 25, 2002

Dr. Kweku K. Bentil, Dean
Southern University Graduate School
Post Office Box 9860
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70813

Dear Dr. Bentil:

We received a complaint that a graduate student earned grades for courses taken during the 2001 fall semester, although he was serving time in a federal prison. An auditor with my office did a limited review based on this complaint and determined the following:

- Kawambe Maye was enrolled in graduate school for the fall 2001 semester that began August 27, 2001, and ended December 5, 2001. Kawambe earned 9 hours in BIOL-598-01 (Supervised Research) and made a "B" in the course. He also received a passing grade for the *Comprehensive* during this semester. Kawambe Maye graduated with his M.S. degree on December 15, 2001.
- Kawambe Maye was charged with federal crimes and he pleaded guilty on May 7, 2001. He was sentenced on September 4, 2001, and began serving time in the Federal Correctional Center in Beaumont, Texas, on September 24, 2001. Therefore, Kawambe was available less than one month (August 27 – September 23, 2001) to participate in the fall semester at Southern University. Kawambe's release date is scheduled for September 22, 2002.
- Kawambe selected the nonthesis option. Under this option, the graduate school policy requires that the student pass a comprehensive written examination on the major field of study (page 27 of the *Graduate School Bulletin*). Kawambe was given a passing grade although he did not take a comprehensive written examination. The professors that gave Kawambe a passing comprehensive grade informed us that they waived the written test requirement.
- The nonthesis option requires a final capstone project or report resulting from an in-depth independent investigation. It is expected to be viewed as a thesis with a little less originality and depth (page 26 of the *Graduate School Bulletin*). Kawambe received 21 hours of credit (BIOL-598-01 Supervised Research) for his capstone project. The course (BIOL-598-01) started in the fall 2000 semester and concluded with the fall 2001 semester. Kawambe's advisor informed us that Kawambe's capstone project was on "Computerized Information on Antifungal Materials." She said that Kawambe would obtain articles on antifungal materials from the Internet and meet periodically with her to discuss those articles.

At best, this information obtained from the Internet would take an average person with no knowledge of antifungal materials no more than several hours to obtain. The entire capstone project consisted of copies of the information obtained from the Internet. Therefore, it did not comply with the graduate school policies. Although not all inclusive, the capstone project did not include the following:

- Written project objectives
 - An outline of the steps to be taken in conducting the research project, including benchmarks to measure the progress of the project
 - Documentation of what was expected to complete the project
 - Documentation of the research process
 - Documentation of conclusions
 - A written report
 - Documentation of supervision by the advisor, such as a log of the dates and times the advisor and Kawambe met and a brief description of the meetings
- Kawambe Maye received student loans for graduate school. To qualify for these loans he had to be a full-time student (6 hours summer semester and 9 hours fall/spring semesters). The hours he received for BIOL-598-01 Supervised Research, from the fall 2000 semester through the fall 2001 semester (21 hours of credit) agreed to the number of hours he needed to be a full-time student. For example:

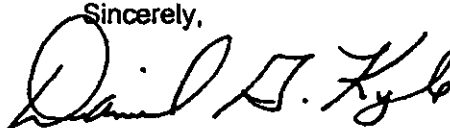
<u>Semester</u>	<u>Regular Course Work Hours</u>	<u>BIOL-598-01 Supervised Research Hours</u>	<u>Total Hours</u>
Fall 2000	7	2	9
Spring 2001	5	4	9
Summer 2001	None	6	6
Fall 2001	<u>None</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>
Total	<u>12</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>33</u>

- There were posting errors on Kawambe Maye's transcript for grades submitted to the Registrar's Office for the Department Comprehensive (BIOL-000-01). The Biology Department professor administering the test submits a handwritten list of the student names and grades to the Registrar's Office. The Registrar's Office inputs these grades on the student's transcript. However, posting errors were made by the Registrar's Office in inputting these grades.

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This series of faults deserve your immediate attention, as well as a determination as to whether this is an isolated incident or an indicator of larger problems. I would like the results of your evaluation of this situation. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at (225) 339-3839 or Mr. Gary McCrary of my staff at (225) 339-3886.

Sincerely,



Daniel G. Kyle, CPA, CFE
Legislative Auditor

DGK:GLM:db

xc: Dr. Leon Tarver, President
Southern University

Dr. Robert Miller, Dean
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Southern University

Mr. Grover Austin, CPA

Mr. Robbie Robinson, CPA

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