



**NEWS FROM:
NEW YORK STATE JOINT COMMISSION ON PUBLIC ETHICS**

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**DANIEL J. HORWITZ
CHAIR**

For Further Information Contact: (518) 408-3976

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**CUNY PROFESSOR PAYS \$65,000 IN FINES AND RESTITUTION FOR
HAVING COLLEGE BUY HI-TECH SOFTWARE FROM COMPANY HE
COVERTLY OWNED**

Professor assured CUNY and the State that only one company could provide the necessary software but he never evaluated other companies' products and failed to disclose he was the company's owner.

ALBANY (June 24, 2013) -- The New York State Joint Commission on Public Ethics announced today that an assistant physics professor at the College of Staten Island/CUNY has paid nearly \$65,000 in fines and restitution for steering a State purchase of hi-tech research software he said he needed to a company he covertly owned.

Under a settlement with the Joint Commission, the professor, Dr. Yasha Yi, violated Public Officers §73(15) which prohibits State employees from participating in contracting decisions involving the payment of more than \$1,000 to that employee.

"This CUNY professor's conduct was in direct conflict with his duties as a public employee," said Joint Commission Chair Daniel J. Horwitz. "By his actions, he violated the State ethics law and he violated the public's trust."

According to the settlement, in the summer of 2011, Dr. Yi initiated the procurement of a high performance illumination simulation tool he said he needed for renewable energy research at the school. That fall, he submitted a sole source memorandum attesting that only one company, 3G Institute of Renewable Energy, Inc. ("3G"), could supply the software product.

"After consulting with most of the available companies and experts, there exists no company other than (3G) that can meet the requirements for our research and it cannot be purchased from another supplier," said the memo, which went to CUNY and the Dormitory Authority of the

State of New York ("DASNY"), which funded the purchase under its Graduate Research and Technology Initiative.

Dr. Yi, however, never evaluated other providers of similar research software and never disclosed he was president of 3G.

In early 2012, Dr. Yi opened a business checking account and secured a P.O. Box on behalf of 3G as DASNY issued payment of \$44,831 for the research software. It was 3G's first and only sale of the research software.

Under the settlement agreement, Dr. Yi paid a fine of \$20,000 and refunded the entire purchase price of the software. CUNY cooperated with the Joint Commission throughout the matter.

The settlement is available by clicking [here](#).