



# Department of Justice

**United States Attorney Jessica D. Aber  
Eastern District of Virginia**

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## **Richmond Community College Director Charged with Stealing Student Financial Aid Funds**

RICHMOND, Va. – A federal grand jury returned an indictment yesterday charging a Richmond woman with orchestrating a nearly decade-long scheme to defraud the United States Department of Education and the Commonwealth of Virginia of student financial aid funds.

According to the indictment, from about 2006 through 2017, Kiesha Pope, 47, was the Director of Financial Aid at J. Sargent Reynolds Community College (JSRCC), a public community college servicing the greater Richmond area. Pope is alleged to have used her access to financial aid systems at JSRCC to boost the financial aid eligibility for co-conspirators, who were Pope's friends and family members and who were not otherwise eligible for financial aid benefits at JSRCC. Pope allegedly had agreements with these same co-conspirators to receive a portion of the improperly obtained financial aid funds as compensation. Pope is alleged to have spent these financial aid funds on various personal expenses, including repairs for her personal vehicle, retail shopping, and expenses for her minor-aged daughter.

The indictment alleges that, from 2011 to 2017, Pope procured financial aid for her son, knowing that he was not attending JSRCC in this timeframe. In another instance, Pope also allegedly procured financial aid for her ex-fiancé from in or about 2010 through in or about 2015 while he was serving a term of incarceration and not attending JSRCC. To conceal her scheme, Pope allegedly falsified supporting justification for the financial aid. In one alleged instance, Pope forged medical documents and financial aid documents reflecting that her goddaughter, for whom Pope also procured financial aid, was failing to meet academic eligibility due to a breast cancer diagnosis, despite knowing that her goddaughter had no cancer diagnosis.

The indictment further alleges that in or about September through October 2017, JSRCC leadership confronted Pope about her relationship with various academically ineligible students receiving high amounts of financial aid. In those conversations, Pope is alleged to have claimed not to know these students when such students were, in fact, Pope's son, goddaughter, and cousin. Pope allegedly claimed that all such students had supporting justification for receiving continued financial aid, but when pressed for the documentation, Pope resigned from JSRCC.

Pope is charged with conspiring to commit wire fraud, wire fraud, and aggravated identity theft. Pope faces a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison if convicted of any of the fraud offenses, and a mandatory two-year term of imprisonment, to run consecutive to any other sentence imposed, if convicted of aggravated identity theft. Actual sentences for federal crimes are typically less than the maximum penalties. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after taking into account the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

Jessica D. Aber, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia; Stanley M. Meador, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI's Richmond Field Office; Michael C. Westfall, State Inspector General for the Commonwealth of Virginia; and Sandra D. Bruce, Inspector General of the Department of Education, made the announcement.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Avi Panth is prosecuting the case.

A copy of this press release is located on the website of the [U.S. Attorney's Office](#) for the Eastern District of Virginia. Related court documents and information are located on the website of the [District Court](#) for the Eastern District of Virginia or on [PACER](#) by searching for Case No. 3:22-cr-9.

*An indictment is merely an accusation. The defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.*

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