

Former Michigan State dean William Strampel to be released after 8 months for good behavior

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LANSING – A former Michigan State University dean is set to be released from jail four months early due to good behavior.

William Strampel is scheduled to be released April 3 after serving eight months of the one year sentence that Ingham County Judge Joyce Draganchuk gave him last summer.

Strampel has been serving as an inmate worker for about a month and, like any other inmate, also is entitled to have his sentence reduced for good behavior, Ingham County Sheriff's Office Chief Deputy Jason Ferguson said.

"We're treating him no differently than anyone else," Ferguson said.



William Strampel, left, former dean at the College of Osteopathic Medicine at Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan, enters Ingham County Circuit Court Wednesday, June 12, 2019, with his attorney John Dakmak. The jury found him guilty of misconduct in office, and on two charges of willful neglect of duty related to the Nassar scandal. He was found not guilty of sexual assault. (Photo: Matthew Dae Smith/Lansing State Journal)

Strampel also is appealing one of his three criminal convictions.

A jury found Strampel guilty of misconduct in office and neglect of duty in June related to his behavior toward women during his tenure as dean of MSU's College of Osteopathic Medicine and his failed supervision of convicted sex offender Larry Nassar after a 2014 sexual assault complaint. The jury found him not guilty of a second-degree criminal sexual conduct charge that could have meant up to 15 years in prison.

In a brief filed Jan. 23, Strampel's attorneys asked the Michigan Court of Appeals to set aside his conviction for misconduct in office.

They argue Strampel is not a public official, which is required for the felony charge to apply, and Draganchuk erred both in finding he was and in allowing the charge to proceed to trial.

Defense: Finding 'forced' trial for charge that 'could not apply'

Prosecutors successfully argued that Strampel used his position as dean and other previous positions of authority to demean and degrade young women for decades.

Former students testified he made lewd comments during one-on-one meetings and that it seemed he was offering to help them out of academic peril if they performed sexual favors.

Those comments and their assumed intent, along with other conduct and a trend of comments many described as sexually inappropriate, were the basis for the misconduct in office charge.

Strampel's attorneys, though, argued that charge never should have made it to trial because it requires the person charged to be a public official.

They argued that in court, but Draganchuk determined the jury wouldn't address whether Strampel was a public official under state law and legal precedent.

"This finding forced Dr. Strampel to proceed through trial and ultimately be convicted of an offense that could not apply to him," the brief from Strampel's attorneys reads.

Though the brief refers to him as a doctor, Strampel agreed to permanently surrender his medical license and pay a \$35,000 fine in December as part of a state disciplinary action.

The 22-page brief lays out the various structures and boards at MSU and in the College of Osteopathic Medicine specifically as part of its argument that Draganchuk improperly found case law allowed Strampel to be defined as a public official.

Strampel's attorneys argue Draganchuk and prosecutors with the Michigan Attorney General's office never established two elements of a five-part test under common law to determine whether someone is a public official.

The test requires both that the position be created in the Michigan Constitution, legislature or another body through authority granted by the legislature and that the person in the position either has ultimate authority or reports to a governing body.

While Strampel's job met other elements in the test, the court established neither of those things as being true of the position of dean at the College of Osteopathic Medicine, the briefing argues.

It also says neither Draganchuk nor the AG could have established those things because "the layers of academic governance," not the legislature, created the position and the position does not have any more authority than any other dean at the university.

There is a statute that necessitates the dean is a doctor of osteopathic medicine, but that neither creates the position nor makes it report directly to the board, the brief reads.

The brief does not address the two charges of willful neglect of duty, which were misdemeanors.