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**Special Investigations Unit
Report Regarding Theft by a Public Servant
at Austin Community College**

July 12, 2000

Members of the Legislative Audit Committee:

An investigation by the State Auditor's Special Investigations Unit led to the conviction of Susanne Burnett, a former Administrative Assistant to the Dean of Student Services at Austin Community College's Riverside Campus. The investigation was referred to the Public Integrity Unit of the Travis County District Attorney, which obtained indictments and prosecuted the case in court. On May 4, 2000, a Travis County District Court found Ms. Burnett guilty of the offenses of theft and tampering with governmental records. On May 19, 2000, the 147th District Court sentenced her to a five-year term and a one-year term of imprisonment and ordered full restitution as a condition of parole. She will serve these sentences concurrently.

The convictions resulted from indictments by a Travis County Grand Jury on March 2, 2000, charging Ms. Burnett with one count of aggregated theft by a public servant and 29 counts of tampering with governmental records, which are third degree and state jail felonies, respectively.

Our investigation was prompted by allegations that Ms. Burnett defrauded Austin Community College (ACC) by submitting an invoice for services that were not provided and falsifying her time sheets. We determined that she:

- Submitted an invoice to ACC for sign language services she did not provide
- Submitted eighteen time sheets claiming overtime that she did not work
- Submitted eight time sheets falsely claiming supplemental compensation

ACC's loss as a result of Ms. Burnett's conduct exceeded \$11,000.

The Internal Audit Department of Austin Community College assisted the State Auditor's Special Investigations Unit during this investigation. If you have any questions contact Frank H. Coleman, Jr. or John M. Friou, Special Investigations Unit, at (512) 936-9500.

Sincerely,

Lawrence F. Alwin, CPA
State Auditor

cc: Austin Community College
Dr. Richard Fonté, President
Mr. James E. North, CPA, Director, Internal Audit
The Honorable Ronnie Earle, Travis County District Attorney

What is Austin Community College?

Austin Community College is a junior college headquartered in Austin, Texas. In 1998, it served over 25,000 students on 6 campuses located in Travis and Williamson Counties. In 1999, 42 percent of its funding was provided by the State.

The **Special Investigations Unit** investigates reports of illegal activity involving state agencies and universities. The Unit refers the results to prosecuting authorities.

To report suspected illegal activity, call 1-800-TX-AUDIT (1-800-892-8348), send a fax to (512) 936-9400, visit <http://www.sao.state.tx.us>, or mail information to the State Auditor's Office, Attn: SIU, P.O. Box 12067, Austin, Texas 78711.

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