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### Addition on NSF Award of Uninvolved PIs Leads to Settlement

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By Theresa Defino

A current professor in the University of Washington (UW) College of Engineering won an award from the National Science Foundation (NSF) based on a falsified application that named two other investigators who were actually never involved in the research.

In a case that contains a lot of unknowns, the professor's actions led to an \$801,756 payment to the federal government to resolve False Claims Act allegations, the Department of Justice (DOJ) said on Oct. 21.<sup>[1]</sup> The settlement comes on the heels of another grant fraud agreement with a second Washington university.

Washington State University (WSU) recently agreed to pay \$824,208, of which \$274,897 is a penalty, as part of a rare settlement with the HHS Office of Inspector General involving more than five dozen awards for which WSU exceeded a salary cap limitation.<sup>[2]</sup>

According to a brief announcement by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of Washington, Mehmet Sarikaya, who was not mentioned by name, was a principal investigator (PI) on NSF awards, including for the "highly competitive 'Designing Materials to Revolutionize and Engineer our Future' program."

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