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By Theresa Defino

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◆ On the heels of the first determination that an investigator's misconduct was based solely on "reckless" actions, a second such decision has been issued, this time involving a researcher from the University of Connecticut (UConn). On Aug. 28, the HHS Office of Research Integrity (ORI) announced that Li Wang, professor of physiology and neurobiology, submitted six grant applications containing fabricated data; none resulted in awards. Typically ORI's announcements of misconduct findings state they were the result of an investigation by the researcher's institution and an oversight review by the agency, but that is missing from the public notification of Wang's sanctions. "In addition to making an admission, [Wang] cooperated fully with UConn and ORI, has expressed remorse for her actions, and took full responsibility for her reckless behavior," ORI said. No other details, such as when the questionable grant submissions occurred, were released as part of the voluntary settlement agreement.

In a statement to RRC, UConn said Wang and the university shared a commitment to having the erroneous information clarified. A spokesperson did not address other specific questions from RRC, including how the misconduct was discovered. According to ORI's notice, which also was published in the Federal Register, Wang agreed to have her work supervised should she receive funding from the Public Health Service and to refrain from being a PHS adviser of any sort for a period of one year beginning Aug. 14. The first finding based on a reckless determination was made public in July. An administrative law judge sentenced a former Wayne State University (WSU) investigator to a five-year, governmentwide debarment. Previous cases have rested on the conclusion that fabrication, falsification or plagiarism was the result of knowing or intentional actions—the two other misconduct criteria in the law. The WSU researcher has appealed (RRC 9/18, p. 1). (9/13/18)

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