

Former Iowa State Professor Pleads Guilty to False Statements

Written by Val Quast

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Dr. Palaniappa Molian made false statements to the National Science Foundation to procure grant payments.

DES MOINES, IA – United States Attorney Nicholas A. Klinefeldt announced that Dr. Palaniappa Molian, of Ames, pled guilty on January 24, 2014, to two felony counts relating to false statements made to the National Science Foundation.

According to the written plea agreement, in December of 2009, Dr. Molian, as a principal investigator on a National Science Foundation grant to Iowa State University, submitted a reimbursement expense voucher that contained false statements. Dr. Molian claimed in a requested reimbursement that he traveled to Boston, Massachusetts, to work on an Iowa State University National Science Foundation grant research experiment. Dr. Molian admitted in the plea agreement that he did not perform any work on the grant research experiment in Boston, and that he traveled to Boston for unrelated reasons.

The plea agreement also provides that Dr. Molian, in his capacity as president of Photon Energy Technology, submitted a Small Business Innovation Research Program Report to the National Science Foundation on July 1, 2010, that contained false statements. Dr. Molian claimed and sought payment for approximately \$20,000 in laser rental costs, when he had access to a laser at no cost. Dr. Molian spent the excess grant funds he was awarded on unrelated personal expenses.

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Dr. Molian will be sentenced on April 25, 2014, before the Honorable James E. Gritzner. Making a false statement to a federal agency carries a maximum sentence of imprisonment of up to five years and a maximum fine of \$250,000.

This case was investigated by the National Science Foundation Office of the Inspector General and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and was prosecuted by the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Iowa.

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