

# University of Oklahoma Professor and Wife Sentenced to Prison for Federal Grant Fraud

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**For Immediate Release**

U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District of Oklahoma

OKLAHOMA CITY – **SHAORONG LIU**, 60, and **JUAN LU**, 60, both of Norman, were sentenced to serve more than three years collectively in federal prison and ordered to pay \$2.1 million in restitution for making false statements involving a Department of Energy grant, announced United States Attorney Robert J. Troester.

On February 18, 2021, a federal grand jury returned a 16-count Superseding Indictment against Liu and Lu. On April 21, 2021, Liu pleaded guilty to making a materially false statement regarding a matter pertaining to the United States Department of Energy. On May 24, 2021, Lu pleaded guilty to using documents containing materially false statements regarding a matter pertaining to the Department of Energy.

Public records reflect that Liu served since 2008 as a professor at the University of Oklahoma in its Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry. In approximately 2001, Liu and his wife Lu formed and controlled a company called MicroChem Solutions (MCS). Through MCS, they applied for and received federal grant monies from the Small Business Technology Transfer Program of the Department of Energy. The mission of the grant program was to support scientific excellence and technological innovation through the investment of federal research funds in critical American priorities to build a strong national economy. However, Liu and Lu spent this grant money on matters unrelated to the purpose of the grant funding, including on personal expenses. Liu and Lu also made false statements and submitted altered documents to the Department of Energy regarding how they spent grant money.

At recent sentencing hearings, United States District Judge Scott L. Palk sentenced the defendants as follows:

- Shaorong Liu was sentenced on June 21, 2023, to 27 months in federal prison and a \$10,000.00 fine. This term of imprisonment will be followed by two years of supervised release.
- Juan Lu was sentenced on June 28, 2023, to 14 months in federal prison and a \$10,000.00 fine. This term of imprisonment will be followed by two years of supervised release.

In addition to the prison sentences and fine, the Court ordered the defendants to pay \$2,100,000.00 in restitution to the United States Department of Energy. In fashioning the sentences, Judge Palk found that Liu and Lu were unintended recipients of the grant due to their false statements and noted the seriousness of the offense and the need to deter others from engaging in similar conduct.

This case is the result of an investigation by the Department of Energy Office of Inspector General, the National Science Foundation Office of Inspector General, and the FBI Oklahoma City Field Office. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Will Farrior and Matt Dillon.

Reference is made to public filings for more information.

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