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U.S. Attorney's Office

Eastern District of Pennsylvania

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Wednesday, September 28, 2016

## Lehigh County Couple Sentenced For Scheme To Defraud NASA

A federal judge today sentenced Yujie Ding to a year and a day in prison for his role in defrauding NASA's Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program. U.S. District Court Judge Harvey Bartle III also ordered Ding to pay a fine of \$3,000 and restitution of \$72,000. Last week, Ding's co-defendant and wife, Yuliya Zotova, was sentenced to 3 months in prison, along with a fine and restitution.

In August 2009 and July 2010, Ding and Zotova submitted proposals to NASA, seeking funding for scientific research. The defendants' proposals claimed they would conduct the research at their business, ArkLight, and would subcontract some of the work to Lehigh University, where Ding was employed as a professor. Instead, the defendants used ArkLight as a front to funnel federal grant money to themselves for research performed by students and others working under Ding's supervision at his university lab. The defendants sent invoices to NASA, via interstate electronic transmissions, for research in which the jury found that ArkLight had not participated.


The case was investigated by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Office of Inspector General, the Defense Criminal Investigative Service, and the United States Air Force Office of Special Investigations. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Elizabeth F. Abrams and Gregory B. David.

USAO - Pennsylvania, Eastern

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