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NIH-Funded NY State Scientist Pleads Guilty to Making False Statements

Gerwin Schalk, a research scientist employed by New York State and deputy director of the National Center for Adaptive Neurotechnologies, pled guilty Oct. 31 to making false statements, admitting he “knowingly and repeatedly lied about, and failed to disclose, payments he was receiving from a company whose products [he] regularly purchased and used in connection with his research,” the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Northern District of New York announced. “Schalk admitted that the company paid him at least \$70,000, from July 2013 to April 10, 2019, and that he signed at least 15 conflict of interest forms during that time, never once disclosing a payment from the company as he was required to do.” Schalk was arrested in August (“In Uptick in Prosecutions, Three PIs Face Charges Over Foreign Support, ‘Theft,’” RRC 16, no. 11).

As part of his plea, “Schalk has agreed to pay \$70,000 in restitution: \$49,000 payable to the State of New York and \$21,000 payable to NIH. He has also agreed that within 60 days he will terminate his employment with the State of New York,” the office said. Schalk still faces a possible jail sentence. Sentencing is scheduled for April 20, 2020; possible terms are five years in prison, three years of parole, and a fine of \$250,000.

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