

Report on Research Compliance Volume 17, Number 3. February 20, 2020 UCF Researchers Who Allegedly Traded Degree Help for Grants Fight Terminations

By Theresa Defino

Although the director of a University of Central Florida institute at the center of a scandal over a doctoral student has agreed to retire, two other individuals are fighting termination from UCF.

Effective Feb. 7, Randall Shumaker retired as director of the Institute for Simulation and Training (IST), a position he had held since 2002. Shumaker was placed on administrative leave in late January for “misconduct” and given the option of resigning or retiring, as well as fighting the proposed termination—which is what Lauren Reinerman-Jones and Daniel Barber, associate and assistant professors, respectively, are doing.

UCF announced Jan. 27 that it was moving to terminate the three after a “lengthy investigation found they were involved in helping a student obtain a doctoral degree in exchange for grant funding and with inappropriate assistance from faculty advisors and others.”^[1]

It also said it was in the process of “revoking that doctoral degree as a result of the investigation’s findings.”

At IST, “some doctoral students were also employed by sponsors who oversee grants. Students who were also grant managers had the power to influence funding for the ongoing grants, including one grant in the case involving the Ph.D. student that was up for renewal,” according to the investigative report and other documents UCF issued.^[2]

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