

## Report on Research Compliance Volume 21, Number 3. February 22, 2024 After 2022 ORI Finding, Purdue Pays \$737,391 in FCA Settlement

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By Theresa Defino

Nearly a year after a veterinary researcher formerly with Purdue University was debarred for 10 years, Purdue officials settled allegations that her research misconduct amounted to violations of the False Claims Act (FCA).

The HHS Office of Research Integrity announced in December 2022 that Alice C. Chang, also known in the past as Chun-Ju Chang, formerly an associate professor of basic medical sciences at Purdue's College of Veterinary Medicine, had inserted fabricated and/or falsified data in two published papers and 16 funding applications.<sup>[1]</sup> She had received two awards from the National Cancer Institute.

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“The university will pay the government \$737,391, to resolve allegations under the False Claims Act, which includes restitution and punitive damages,” Johnson’s office said.

“When the university received evidence from [HHS] calling into question the authenticity of research that Dr. Chang had included in submissions to federal agencies, Purdue University cooperated and thoroughly investigated the alleged misconduct. Purdue, based on its findings, agreed with the federal government that the funding was not deserved and should be returned,” according to the announcement.

In contrast to the government’s statements, Purdue spokesman Tim Doty told *Retraction Watch* that the settlement amount did not include a penalty.

“When in mid-2018 the university received notice from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services calling into question the authenticity of some results that Dr. Alice Chang had included in proposal submissions to federal funding agencies since 2014, Purdue University cooperated and thoroughly investigated the alleged misconduct. When Purdue’s investigation was nearing conclusion in mid-2019, Dr. Chang left the university. Based on its investigation, Purdue agreed that the funding was not deserved and should be returned,” he told the website.<sup>[3]</sup>