

# Report on Research Compliance Volume 21, Number 8. August 01, 2024

## UMD: Differing Views, 'Errors' Prompted \$500K FCA Payment; 2nd Related to Dept. of Ed. Reports

---

By Theresa Defino

For the second time in recent months, a university agreed to pay a fine to the government stemming from research proposals that lacked disclosures of foreign support. But in something of a twist, the Department of Justice (DOJ) alleged the University of Maryland (UMD) violated the False Claims Act (FCA) because some Chinese collaborators and commercial funding it perhaps reported to the Department of Education (DOE) didn't appear as current or pending support on five proposals submitted to the National Science Foundation (NSF) and Army.<sup>[1]</sup>

In May, DOJ announced Cleveland Clinic Foundation paid \$7.6 million to settle allegations of FCA violations related to three NIH awards whose principal investigator (PI) didn't disclose support from an educational institution in China.<sup>[2]</sup> Unlike Cleveland Clinic's case, DOJ didn't claim that UMD's awards wouldn't have been made, but said in announcing the \$500,000 settlement that "non-disclosure of required information can result in missed opportunities for other applicants to receive funding for their own research."

UMD College Park officials would not answer RRC's questions about the settlement, including the basis for the \$500,000 payment. UMD's "decision to settle these accusations is not an admission of wrongdoing by the University or its faculty or staff," Gregory F. Ball, vice president for research, said in a statement. UMD "has consistently maintained, based on its own investigation and an independent investigation by outside counsel, that the nondisclosures were the result of good faith interpretations of agency disclosure guidance or unintentional clerical errors."

This document is only available to subscribers. Please log in or purchase access.

[Purchase Login](#)