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UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA NUCLEAR ENGINEERING PROFESSOR AND WIFE CONVICTED OF FEDERAL CONTRACT FRAUD

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 25, 2011

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA – A nuclear engineering professor, formerly employed by the University of Florida, and his wife, the president of a research and development company specializing in high-tech engineering research, have been convicted of fraud and related offenses in connection with more than \$3 million in government contracts, announced Pamela C. Marsh, U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Florida.

Following a three-week jury trial in Gainesville, Samim Anghaie, 61, and his wife, Sousan Anghaie, 56, were convicted of conspiracy to commit wire fraud. In addition, Samim Anghaie was convicted on 28 substantive counts of wire fraud, and Sousan Anghaie was convicted on 26 substantive counts. Samim Anghaie was also convicted of producing false documents to a federal agency.

Evidence presented at trial established that between 1999 and 2009, Samim Anghaie was employed as a professor at the University of Florida and served as the Director of the Innovation Nuclear Space Power and Propulsion Institute (INSPI) there. Sousan Anghaie was the president of New Era Technology, Inc. (NETECH), a business in which Samim Anghaie had formerly served as director and vice-president.

Working together, the couple submitted fraudulent contract proposals to obtain more than \$3 million in contracts with NASA and the Air Force. The defendants falsely represented that NETECH would provide research services of scientists, engineers, and laboratory assistants, working in a state-of-the-art analysis and data communication laboratory. The Anghaies also represented that NETECH would be collaborating with INSPI to provide important research and data to the government.

The Anghaies submitted contract proposals and reports to NASA and the Air Force, in which they falsely claimed that research and analysis had been performed by NETECH as part of the contracts. In reality, the research and analysis had been taken from research projects, theses, and presentations of graduate and doctoral students at the University of Florida, used by NETECH without the students' knowledge or consent. Contrary to the Anghaies' representations, the information provided by the Anghaies under the contract was not the product of work done by NETECH, but was taken from work performed at INSPI, at the UF's Major Analytical Instrumentation Center (MAIC), and at a laboratory located in Russia.

Defendants submitted fraudulent invoices seeking reimbursement for payments they claimed to have made to various employees who purportedly provided research and other deliverables under the government contracts. Defendants then kept the funds paid by the government for themselves. In addition to depositing the fraudulently obtained government funds in their own accounts, the defendants also deposited funds into bank accounts held by their sons, only to later transfer the money back into their own accounts.

The defendants face a maximum sentence of 20 years' imprisonment on each count of wire fraud and conspiracy. Samim Anghaie also faces a sentence of up to five years' imprisonment for the production of false documents. Sentencing will be scheduled at a later date.

"This case should serve as a stark warning of the consequences awaiting those who seek to line their own pockets with money stolen from hard-working taxpayers. This Office and the Department of Justice will continue to pursue and hold accountable those who engage in such fraudulent schemes." Ms. Marsh praised the tremendous efforts of the NASA Office of Inspector General, the Air Force Office of Special Investigations, and the Defense Criminal Investigative Service, whose joint investigation led to the

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indictment and convictions in this case. U.S. Attorney Marsh also commended the University of Florida, which had been unaware of the criminal conduct and cooperated fully in the investigation immediately upon learning of the fraudulent activity.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Gregory P. McMahon and Thomas F. Kirwin.

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