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## SU figures indicted in funds theft

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By **JORDAN BLUM**  
*Advocate Capitol News Bureau*  
Published: Mar 3, 2011 - Page: 10A

Comments (4)

Law enforcement is looking for a Southern University professor and its former information technologies director for allegedly defrauding the university of more than \$150,000.

Parviz Sharif-Razi, a former mechanical engineering professor, and Scott Woodall, the IT director, were indicted on charges of mail fraud, money laundering and theft from Southern.

First Assistant U.S. Attorney Walt Green said the two concocted a "convoluted scheme" to steal from the university through false computer equipment orders and shell businesses dating back to at least 2008.

An arrest warrant is out for Razi, who other Southern faculty said is rumored to have left the country, and a federal court summons was issued to Woodall. They each face maximum sentences of more than 200 years in prison.

The indictments allege Razi and Woodall created shell companies, called Exterra Technologies and Nova Systems.

Woodall would submit requests for unnecessary computer equipment and they would ensure that Exterra or Nova were always the low bidders. They would then keep the state funds for themselves, a total of \$157,366, according to the indictments.

"It's a pretty significant case," U.S. Attorney Don Cazayoux said. "They manipulated the bids system and then created false invoices. Everybody was kind of in the dark."

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In a prepared statement, state Inspector General Stephen Street added, "It is shocking that an engineering professor and an (IT) director — whose job it is to help educate our young people — carefully devised this scheme to steal taxpayer money. Against the backdrop of the funding crisis facing our colleges and universities, it is particularly outrageous."

Southern Chancellor Kofi Lomotey said in a statement that the university has cooperated with the investigation.

"We have instituted new policies aimed at preventing this kind of incident from happening again," he stated.

Southern Faculty Senate President Sudhir Trivedi said Razi had his tenure revoked and his termination recommended by a review committee last year after he disappeared.

"He did not show up for class," Trivedi said. "He did not turn in grades. He was just gone."

Trivedi said, "It's unacceptable" that such fraud was allowed to occur if the allegations are true.

"We have to have a better system at Southern to make sure those kinds of things do not happen," he said.

There is a lot of "speculation" on campus that Razi has left the country, Trivedi said, but nothing is certain.

If that has occurred, Cazayoux said the federal government will track him down and work with other countries to have Razi returned.

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Good work on these arrests. Detestable conduct from these defendants. .  
[What's this?](#) POSTED ON MAR 03, 2011 AT 12:33 AM

Daddyrabbit:  
Do you wonder what our children learn in school??

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POSTED ON MAR 03, 2011 AT 5:23 AM

vwilliams:

The two people may have involved in stealing from the school, but stuff like this being going on for years at Southern. They need to work on getting the Southern System together than work on the merger.

[What's this?](#)

POSTED ON MAR 03, 2011 AT 8:52 AM

bailas:

vwilliams is correct. Abusing Federal funds is a norm. I am sure this will be a wake up call for all those abusers. The Management has to play an important role in cleaning up the place filled with such people as it turning into a Southern Culture to live of Federal and State funds only to abuse and misuse it.

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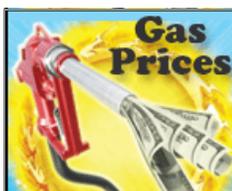
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