



## Search The Site


[More options](#) | [Back issues](#)
HomeNews
[Today's news](#)
[Current issue](#)
[Special issues & data](#)
[The Faculty](#)
[Research & Books](#)
[Government & Politics](#)
[Money & Management](#)
[Information Technology](#)
[Students](#)
[Athletics](#)
[International](#)
[Community Colleges](#)
[Short Subjects](#)
[Gazette](#)
[Corrections](#)
**Opinion & Forums****Careers****Presidents Forum****Technology Forum****Sponsored  
Information &  
Solutions****Campus Viewpoints****Travel****Services**

## THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

*Today's News*

Friday, June 9, 20

## Former Researcher at Chapel Hill Will Retract Papers After Federal Finding of Spurious Data

By [SAM KEAN](#)

Washington

advertisement

The federal government has barred a former professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill from receiving federal research grants for five years, after investigators uncovered eight published papers with what they called "falsified" data.

The professor, Steven Anthony Leadon, had previously retracted two prominent papers published in *Science*, and he will retract three additional articles, published in other journals, under the terms of a [settlement](#) announced on Thursday by the federal Office of Research Integrity, which is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The settlement, reached after five years of investigation, stipulates a harsher penalty than the usual three-year ban on receiving federal grants. "Dr. Leadon went beyond the norm in terms of the time frame and the scope" of misconduct, explained John E. Dahlberg, director of the research office's division of investigative oversight.

Mr. Leadon, a former professor of radiation oncology, studied how DNA is damaged and repairs itself

The right tool for every job in academe



**The Chronicle**  
Click to get 4 free issues

**Article tools**
[Printer friendly](#)

[E-mail article](#)

[Subscribe](#)

[Order reprints](#)
**News Headlines From The Chronicle**

[People oppose](#) government interference in academe, poll finds, but some are wary of radical professors

[Key spending bill](#) in Congress would repeal disputed rule on student-loan consolidation

[College "affordability gap"](#) hits lower-income students hardest, report says

[Changes proposed](#) for federal student-aid form could make it less useful to some colleges

[Foundations saw drop](#) in annual returns on their investments in 2005

[Help](#)[Contact us](#)[Subscribe](#)[Manage your account](#)[Advertise with us](#)[Rights & permissions](#)

in cells, and his work had applications in breast-cancer research and Cockayne's syndrome, an inherited disease that causes premature aging and extreme sensitivity to sunlight.

"His work was considered very exciting and important," said Mr. Dahlberg. "He was the only person in the world who could do it. He was involved in a lot of collaborative projects."

However, Mr. Leadon was under investigation at the University of North Carolina as early as 2001. And in 2003 and 2005 he retracted papers in *Science* on which he was a co-author.

In a written statement, Mr. Leadon said, "I did not engage in scientific misconduct -- an error was discovered in the experimental protocol."

He declined two requests from *The Chronicle* to elaborate on the nature of the error. He said he had agreed to the settlement because of "the huge legal costs to fight with a government agency about this."

Mr. Leadon resigned his post at the University of North Carolina in 2003 and is no longer involved in scientific research.

**Former researcher** at Chapel H will retract papers after federal finding of spurious data

**State Digest:** a petition for increases in education funds in Michigan, and other news from the states

**2 professors** are among winners of \$446,000 Kyoto Prizes

**Commencement speakers** are announced by 9 colleges

**Information Technology**  
**A new tagging system** could help computers understand and compare research results