



# Department of Justice

United States Attorney Carter M. Stewart  
Southern District of Ohio

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CONTACT: Fred Alverson  
614-469-5715

## **FORMER UNIVERSITY OFFICIAL PLEADS GUILTY TO STEALING COMPUTER ITEMS PURCHASED WITH FEDERAL GRANT**

DAYTON – James Marshall, 28, a former network and data administrator in the Information Technology Services Department at Wilberforce University, pleaded guilty in United States District Court here today to one count of theft of government property for stealing more than \$10,000 worth of computer equipment purchased with a federal grant and selling it through his established internet business in 2007.

Carter M. Stewart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, Keith L. Bennett, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and Randall Kizer, Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Inspector General, (DOE) announced the plea entered today before United States District Judge Thomas M. Rose.

According to court documents, the university received a grant from the U.S. Department of Energy in September 2005 to create and operate a functional advanced disaster modeling and simulation laboratory. Marshall began to work on the grant in October 2005, eventually transitioning to full-time as Strategic Director of Research and Information Systems for the grant. In this position, Marshall was responsible for procuring all computer hardware and software for the grant. The grant budget for July 30, 2005 through July 30, 2006 included \$200,000 for high speed networking and simulation laboratory; \$30,000 for high resolution projector and screen; \$100,000 for simulation software; \$50,000 for statistical software; \$110,900 for high speed computers and laptops; and \$100,000 for software development and expert system shells. In November 2005, Marshall instructed vendors to ship merchandise directly to him.

In March 2007, the Wilberforce Information and Technology Department staff conducted a preliminary visual inventory of equipment located in the Lab. They discovered approximately 103 hard drives and other computer equipment missing from the Lab. The staff also determined that some of the same items were observed being sold on an eBay site belonging to Marshall.

The university dismissed Marshall after the theft was discovered.

Theft of government property is punishable by up to 10 years imprisonment, three years of supervised release, and a fine of up to \$250,000. Marshall also agreed to make restitution to the Department of Energy for the items he stole. Judge Rose will set a date for sentencing.

Stewart commended the cooperative investigation by FBI and DOE agents, the assistance provided by Wilberforce officials, and Dayton Branch Chief Laura Clemmens, who is prosecuting the case.

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