



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on April 4, 2011

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Lysenkoism at OSU?

In the annals of politicized science, Trofim Lysenko provides a supreme example of ignorance and ignominy wedded to power. Lysenko was a two-bit horticulturist who rose to great prominence in the Soviet Union under dictator/mass murderer Joseph Stalin, becoming director of the Soviet Academy of Sciences' Institute of Genetics. Subjugating science to communist ideology and personal whim, Lysenko succeeded in outlawing biological research that was not in accord with his crackpot notions of genetics. And Lysenko's corollary was the extension of Stalin's infamous purges to the ranks of Russian scientists, many of whom were denounced, demoted, exiled, jailed, tortured — or even executed. After all, these dangerous folks were guilty of the serious thought crime of "deviationism": dissenting from the glorious truths of "the people's science," as defined by the Party and Lysenko.



Lysenkoism, obviously, resulted in deep personal tragedy for the scientists directly affected, but it spelled even larger tragedy for Russian science in general and greatly exacerbated the famines caused by Stalin's agricultural collectivization policies.

The charge of "Lysenkoism" is the ultimate opprobrium that can be leveled at a scientific institution or organization, suggesting scientists are being destroyed for "deviating" from the ideological path prescribed by the political powers that be. Has Lysenkoism infected Oregon State University? If charges by Dr. Arthur Robinson turn out to be substantiated, yes.

Dr. Robinson is a distinguished scientist: Ph.D. in chemistry, former professor at the University of California San Diego; former president and research professor at the Linus Pauling Institute; current president and research professor at the Oregon Institute of Science and Medicine; publisher of the *Access to Energy* newsletter; and author of many scientific research papers. He also was a recent candidate for Oregon's 4th Congressional District, which has been the domain of *uber* liberal-left Democrat Rep. Peter DeFazio since 1987. Last November Robinson nearly pulled off what many thought impossible, turning in a stunningly close race (54.5 to 43.6 percent) in what has heretofore been considered a "safe" district for DeFazio. In fact, despite being outspent, many believe Robinson might have won, save for a desperate smear campaign by DeFazio and his media allies in the closing days of the campaign.

Dr. Robinson recently announced that he is going to run against DeFazio again in 2012. Around the



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same time, he dropped another bomb: In a column he authored for World Net Daily, Robinson charged that three of his adult children, who are in the Ph.D. program at Oregon State University's Department of Nuclear Engineering and Radiation Health Physics, are being targeted for expulsion from the program as "payback" for their father's political activities. On the website he launched to expose and oppose this alleged attack on his family (www.oregonstateoutrage.com), Robinson says that DeFazio supporters at Oregon State University have "initiated an attack on my three children — Joshua, Bethany and Matthew — for the purpose of throwing them all out of the OSU graduate school, despite their outstanding academic and research accomplishments. OSU is a liberal socialist Democrat stronghold in Oregon that received a reported \$27 million in earmark funding from my opponent, Peter DeFazio, and his Democrat colleagues during the last legislative session."

The facts appear to justify Robinson's claims. Joshua is a four-year Ph.D. student and the "prompt neutron activation analysis facility Joshua built for his thesis work ... which he built and added to the OSU nuclear reactor with the guidance and ideas of his mentor, Michael Hartman, earned Joshua the award for best Masters of Nuclear Engineering thesis at OSU and has been widely complimented by scientists at prominent U.S. nuclear facilities." Robinson's daughter Bethany, another four-year Ph.D. student, has a 3.89 GPA and, he says, "Some of Bethany's graduate work has already been used, without credit to Bethany, in the thesis of another favored student now recently hired on the department faculty." And according to Robinson, he was initially warned about the coming attack on his kids from Dr. Jack Higginbotham, a tenured professor and president of the OSU Faculty Senate, who opposes the actions against the Robinsons. Professor Higginbotham, reportedly, has been ordered not to speak to the press and threatened with loss of his job.

The university will not comment on Dr. Robinson's accusations except to say that they are "baseless and without merit." According to OSU spokesman Todd Simmons, the type of unethical, politically motivated machinations Robinson charges "just don't happen" in academe, and definitely not at OSU. Tell that to Dr. George Taylor, former head of Oregon Climate Services at OSU. In 2008, Taylor was bounced from OSU (after a stellar 19-year career) for refusing to cave in to the global-warming Lysenkoists. As the Climategate scandals have shown, Lysenkoism may have been officially repudiated in the Soviet Union, but it still thrives in the hallowed groves of academe.



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