Federal prosecutors on Tuesday charged a top Harvard University scientist with lying to the Department of Defense about his work for a Chinese-run talent recruitment program.

Charles Lieber, the chair of Harvard's Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology, allegedly violated federal law by not disclosing his involvement in China's Thousand Talents Plan to the Defense Department, including money he received, according to the charging document.

"The charges brought by the U.S. government against Professor Lieber are extremely serious," Harvard said in a statement. "Harvard is cooperating with federal authorities, including the National Institutes of Health, and is initiating its own review of the alleged misconduct."

The university added that Lieber has been put on "indefinite administrative leave."

Federal agents allege the professor violated U.S. law by not disclosing the money he received to the Defense Department.

"The Thousand Talents program tries to recruit experts from Western universities to work in China and ramp up its progress in science and technology. In a complaint, the FBI said the program has "rewarded individuals for stealing proprietary information and violating export controls."

The charging documents, unsealed Tuesday, allege that under the Thousand Talents contract Lieber was paid $50,000 in monthly salary by China's Wuhan University of Technology and another $158,000 in living expenses. He was also awarded some $1.74 million to set up a research lab there.

Lieber additionally made false statements to the National Institutes of Health about his involvement in the recruitment plan and his affiliation with the Chinese university. He was in federal custody as of Tuesday afternoon, a senior federal law enforcement official told NBC News.
"Today's case involving the Harvard professor offers much needed awareness to China's Thousand Talents Program and its extension to recruiting non-Chinese nationals," Frank Figliuzzi, a former assistant director for counterintelligence at the FBI, said.

Federal law enforcement agencies also announced charges against a Chinese national who is accused of working with the Chinese army while she was allegedly a student at Boston University.

Yanqing Ye, an alleged lieutenant in the People's Liberation Army, conducted research for China's National University of Defense Technology while she attended BU from October 2017 to April 2019, prosecutors say.

She is also charged with granting a military researcher in China access to her BU virtual private network login so the researcher could conduct web searches from overseas without detection. She is said to have left the country before charges could be unsealed.