



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: A02020013

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In February 2002, the complainant¹ alleged that a PI's announcement seeking students to participate in research contained a word that might be a potential violation of NSF policy. The PI of an REU (Research Education for Undergraduates) site award² solicited undergraduate students—particularly women, minorities, and underrepresented groups—to participate in long-term, multidisciplinary research. The complainant alleged the use of the word “particularly” indicated those groups would be given preferential treatment, which was against NSF policy.

We asked NSF's Office of General Counsel if such language did indeed represent a violation of policy. We learned the Science and Engineering Equal Opportunities Act of 1980³ directs the Foundation to support activities designed to increase the participation of women and minorities in courses of study at the undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate levels. Thus, any NSF program or grantee institution that emphasizes the importance of increasing the participation of women or minorities is consistent with this statute, and NSF's policy embodies this Congressional mandate. Accordingly, this case is closed and no further action will be taken.

¹ (footnote redacted).

² (footnote redacted).

³ 42 U.S.C. 1885, *et seq.*

	Agent	Attorney	Supervisor	AIGI
Sign / date				