



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: A10050035

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A University¹ conducted an inquiry into allegations of data fabrication and falsification raised against an NSF-funded² faculty member (Subject).³ The University determined an investigation was warranted and we referred the investigation to the University.

The University concluded, based on a preponderance of the evidence, that the Subject's behavior "indicates the abdication of supervision and oversight responsibilities which borders on being reckless" because he did not adequately monitor his laboratory conditions. It found no evidence that the Subject forced others to manipulate data. The Subject was reprimanded and prohibited for one year from supervising graduate students and other research staff.

We reviewed the case materials, University Report, statements of the Subject and Complainant, and materials related to a previous case.⁴ While we determined the allegations made seemed highly credible, we could not establish by a preponderance of the evidence that the Subject had instructed his research staff to fabricate/falsify data or was otherwise directly involved in the data fabrication/falsification. We therefore conclude that there is insufficient evidence to substantiate the allegations.

However, we concluded the Subject failed to perform due diligence in overseeing his laboratory and his assistants, in monitoring the laboratory conditions, and in reviewing their work. We sent a strongly worded questionable research practice letter to the Subject, reminding him of his responsibilities and indicating that similar future allegations made against him would likely result in our office recommending that NSF make a finding of research misconduct.

Accordingly, this case is closed with no further action taken.

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