



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: I-00030008

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We received information from a U.S. university¹ that the subject,² a physics professor and former PI on three NSF grants,³ had been found to have a full-time position at a foreign university⁴ at the same time he was a full-time professor at the U.S. university. He had since lost both positions. The subject had initially taken 67% leave from the U.S. university for 3 years to work at the foreign university, but in 1997 had returned to the U.S. university ostensibly to resume full-time status there. However, the subject continued traveling back and forth, spending most of his time away from the U.S. university. Following an audit by the U.S. university, the subject retired in May 2000.

As a result of the time spent by the subject at the foreign university, the U.S. university requested and received two no-cost extensions (NCEs) of the subject's then-current NSF grant.⁵ Another NSF grant was awarded just before the subject's retirement,⁶ and the U.S. university requested and was granted a successor PI by NSF.

We were concerned about whether, in light of his back-and-forth travels, it was appropriate for the subject to have been paid summer salary from his NSF grant. Based on information provided by the U.S. university and the subject, we concluded that the NSF salary payments complied with NSF requirements. (While NSF policy does not allow PIs to receive salary from grant funds at the same time they are receiving salary from the grantee institution, the policy is silent with regard to income received by PIs from other sources, such as the foreign university.)

We were also troubled by the subject's statement in one of his NCE requests to NSF that he had returned to full-time status at [REDACTED] in 1997. The subject later asserted that this statement was intended to refer only to the summer of 1997, which is untenable (he made the statement in 1998, and in the context it clearly referred to all future work under his NSF grant). Nevertheless, the subject did subsequently perform substantive work on the NSF grant, both and [REDACTED] and while at the foreign university, and provided a satisfactory final report to NSF (which acknowledged collaboration with the foreign university). In these circumstances, the subject's statement to NSF, while indisputably false, was insufficiently grave to warrant further action.

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, and . Expenditures under the grant were not implicated in this matter.

	Agent	Attorney	Supervisor	AIGI
Sign / date				



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At our request, the U.S. university reviewed its audit findings and determined that the subject made unallowable charges to his NSF and DOE grants for (1) travel to and from the foreign university and (2) salaries for employees to work on a journal for which he was editor. As a result, the U.S. university agreed to repay \$8,315.72 to NSF (because that grant was closed) and credit \$24,026.65 to the DOE grant (which was still active, with a successor PI). The U.S. university indicated that it intended to endeavor to recover these funds from the subject.

Accordingly, this case is closed.