NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: I-13030015

Our office initially received a complaint from an individual[1] against a university[2] alleging research misconduct (RM) as a result of the failure, on the part of university researchers, to acknowledge his contribution to their research activities when they published articles on those research activities. Our office did not substantiate the complainant's original allegation.[3]

Thereafter, the same individual wrote to numerous NSF officials, including the NSF Inspector General, General Counsel, and Director, alleging that OIG investigators did not substantiate his earlier allegation because they "covered it [the research misconduct] up in order to protect"[4] the university.

We travelled to the complainant's current university[5] and interviewed him concerning his allegation of wrongdoing on the part of our investigators. When asked if he had any evidence to suggest possible wrongdoing, the complainant readily acknowledged that he had no such information, stating that he had no "direct evidence" of any intention to protect the university or individuals at the university. He opined that there could be no reason, other than to protect the university or someone at the university, for their conclusion. The complainant expressed obviously heartfelt disagreement with the conclusions drawn regarding his initial complaint. We reminded him that our investigation was limited to the allegation he raised concerning impropriety on the part of NSF OIG investigators. We reviewed the language of the NSF RM regulation and explained that a number of subjective determinations had been made in the previous investigation. We noted that the issue was one of "appropriate credit," which is a subjective standard. We explained that the NSF RM regulation does not apply to authorship disputes.

We interviewed the investigator responsible for the inquiry into the complainant's initial allegation to determine if there was any suggestion of an association with the university or individuals at the university that may have created a conflict or appearance thereof. There was none.

There being no support for the allegation, this case is ***closed*** with no further action to be taken.

1 [redacted]
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