

MEMORANDUM

Date: January 5, 1999
To: File No. I 9901 0001
From: [REDACTED]
Via: [REDACTED] Special Agent-in-Charge
Re: Case Closeout - [REDACTED] College of Engineering, Department
of Materials Science and Engineering

Background:

We received a letter and attachments from [REDACTED], dated November 18, 1998, regarding whistleblower case No. [REDACTED] at the [REDACTED] College of Engineering, Department of Materials Science and Engineering.

According to the official report, the State Auditor's Office received and investigated five allegations of "improper governmental" or financial activities. The allegations came via an unidentified whistleblower. In the report, the auditors detail their findings and the university's corrective actions thus far.

Report Findings:

Allegation 1: The use of university computers for personal matters.

The Chair of the Department was found to use 4 of his 5 university-issued computers for his personal use, as they were found to contain personal files and software. The University removed all his personal files from the computers and demanded he attend ethics training.

Allegation 2: Improperly purchasing equipment and computer software through the federal [REDACTED] grant program.

NSF funded the [REDACTED] grant for a five-year period starting [REDACTED]. The audit office found no evidence that the software, purchased with federal funds, was not being used for the [REDACTED] program and no equipment was purchased through federal funds.

Allegation 3: The [REDACTED] used a university computer for his personal use.

Several employees witnessed the [REDACTED] using the computer during regular work hours, while the [REDACTED] admitted that his use was limited to off-work hours (lunch, after hours). The [REDACTED] employment was terminated May 27, 1998.

Allegation 4: Equipment and materials and supplies were removed from the department without authorization.

No evidence was found to support this assertion.

Allegation 5: The [REDACTED] falsified cost transfer invoices to transfer unspent federal grant funds.

An investigation revealed that the [REDACTED] had falsified some cost transfer invoices totaling \$2,378.12 of [REDACTED] grant money. A check was issued to [REDACTED] in the amount of \$2,378.12.

Conclusion:

Of the whistleblower's five allegations, only the second was identified to deal directly with NSF grant funding of the [REDACTED] program. On this point, the Materials Science Department has since been cleared by the [REDACTED] of any misconduct in the purchasing of equipment and computer software through the program.

As the report reveals, the fifth allegation - falsifying invoices - was the only substantive assertion. A minor sum of [REDACTED] grant money was involved and paid off by the University. However, there is no evidence to suggest we have the standing and ground necessary to look into whether or not the [REDACTED] deceptive conduct affected NSF monies

Thus, no further review is warranted at this time. Case is closed.