

CLOSEOUT FOR M00060026

This case came to OIG on June 7, 2000, when a division director¹ informed us of an allegation of misconduct in science. The complainant,² in explaining his request that the subject³ not review the complainant's pending proposal, alleged that the subject had "attempted to take credit for earlier discoveries . . . that I and my colleagues had earlier introduced and of which he was aware."

OIG contacted the complainant, who said that the subject's alleged intellectual theft occurred over ten years ago. OIG concluded that this matter was too old to pursue.

When OIG contacted the complainant, he mentioned that he had heard an allegation of intellectual theft against another scientist.⁴ The complainant said that this allegation had been made to him in confidence, and he declined to give specific information. The complainant added that he had been told that the scientist's university had concluded that this allegation lacked merit. OIG concluded that this allegation was too vague to pursue.

OIG noted that the division director who brought this allegation to our attention had learned of it from a program officer⁵ in his division. The program officer had sent a message to the division director and four other staff members in their directorate calling their attention to the allegation. OIG reminded the division director that allegations of misconduct should be brought to OIG's attention and not otherwise widely circulated.⁶ The division director said he would so inform the staff member who had brought the allegation to his attention.

This inquiry is closed and no further action will be taken on this case.

¹ Dr. [REDACTED] Director of NSF's Division [REDACTED] in the Directorate of Education and Human Resources.

² Dr. [REDACTED] of the Department [REDACTED] at [REDACTED]

³ Dr. [REDACTED] of the Center for [REDACTED] at [REDACTED]

⁴ Dr. [REDACTED] of the [REDACTED]

⁵ Dr. [REDACTED] of NSF's Division [REDACTED] in the Directorate of Education and Human Resources.

⁶ OIG Bulletin No. 92-01 (page 3) states that "Staff members may tell their supervisors, as well as others within NSF who are working with the same proposal or award and who need to know. Otherwise, the information should be kept strictly confidential, in order to protect the reputations of those involved."