

## CLOSEOUT FOR M93090047

On September [REDACTED] 1993, Drs. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] NSF staff in the Division [REDACTED], provided OIG with a copy of message that had appeared on a generally accessible electronic bulletin board. The message was written by the complainant, [REDACTED] an employee of the [REDACTED].

The complainant is a past employee of the [REDACTED] (the Department) in the [REDACTED] (the Center). The Center is governed by the [REDACTED] (the Corporation) and is supported, in part, through a cooperative agreement with NSF.

The complainant alleged that the management practices of the Center, and specifically those of the Department, were abusive to employees, that Department employees were fired for political rather than performance reasons, that the Corporation had formed a committee to monitor employee speech and internal activities, and that the Corporation management was corrupt, engaging in lavish retreats and a questionable real estate deal.

OIG interviewed the complainant to obtain sufficient details to pursue the allegations. OIG then interviewed the relevant program staff, employees of the Department, the Corporation, and the Corporation's internal auditor assigned to investigate the allegations.

For his independent report the internal auditor interviewed the complainant and reviewed the personnel files for the individuals identified by the complainant. The auditor found that these individuals had been released as part of a reduction in staffing, fired for documented reasons, or demoted for similarly documented, valid reasons. The auditor found that the expenses for the retreats were well within acceptable limits and that any personal expenditures incurred during the retreats were paid by the appropriate participant; neither Corporation nor federal funds covered these expenses. The real estate deal was a well-publicized and scrutinized transaction. The financial transactions were reviewed at the time and none were questionable; similarly the internal auditor's review did not uncover any financial impropriety by the Corporation.

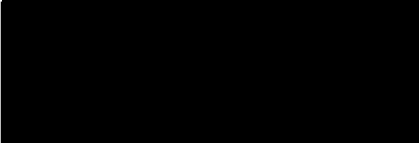
OIG found that many of the issues raised by the complainant stemmed from the newly-hired Department Director's efforts to refocus the Department's research and improve staffing and the Corporation's efforts to sensitize its employees to actions that might be construed as sexual harassment. OIG found that, prior to his hiring, the Director had filed a proposed plan for his changes with the Corporation. The plan had been reviewed by the Corporation and the Director subsequently hired. A panel commissioned to review the Center echoed the newly-hired Director's desire to revitalize and refocus the Department research in its comments about the Center. The Director's staffing efforts were reviewed in his plan and guided by the recommendations of a site review team.

Highly publicized cases of sexual harassment not related to the Corporation raised concerns among its employees about proper behavior in the work place. The Corporation

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responded by forming a committee to address sexual harassment issues. That committee engaged an expert to present a several-hour seminar on sexual harassment issues. The seminar was repeated several times to provide all the employees with an opportunity to attend. The complainant objected to these seminars, viewing them as a waste of resources more appropriately spent on research support. NSF supports institutions' efforts to ensure gender and racial equality in the work place.

OIG found that the complainant's allegations were developed from inaccurate conclusions formed on the basis of partial information. OIG could not find any information to support these allegations and closed this case.

 11/9/93

Staff Scientist, Oversight

Concurrence:

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