

Closeout for M93120060

This case was referred to OIG by [REDACTED] of NSF, on December 2, 1993. He had received copies of two letters from [REDACTED] (the complainant) of the [REDACTED], at the [REDACTED] alleging misuse of government funds. The letters were originally sent to Attorney General Janet Reno and [REDACTED], president of the [REDACTED] Foundation. The complainant has subsequently sent similar letters directly to [REDACTED] and to Dr. James Duderstadt, Chairman of the National Science Board. The complainant alleges that [REDACTED], a report of [REDACTED] (the report) edited by the subjects, [REDACTED] (the second author), [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] (the fourth author), used inappropriate criteria to select research priorities in social research. This report was sponsored in part by NSF, and the fourth author is an NSF employee. The complainant further argues that such criteria have been used more generally in decisions about social science research at [REDACTED] (the academy).

OIG contacted the complainant, who elaborated on his concerns and provided additional documents to clarify the issues he was raising. The complainant believes that government funding for social science research ought to go to projects with political significance and scientific value. The complainant argues that the scientific community should not reject politically significant and scientifically valuable research projects because they would be politically controversial and might adversely affect the prospects for future social science funding. In the complainant's opinion, the report appears to have made decisions about research priorities in an inappropriate way. The complainant supplied us with several academic papers and with copies of correspondence, including an exchange of letters between him and the second author of the report, that elaborate his point of view.

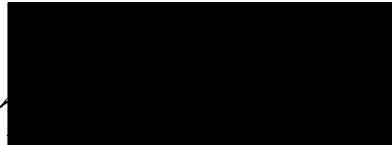
The complainant's disagreement with the funding priorities recommended in the report appears to be a normal intellectual dispute about social and scientific priorities. When the second author wrote to the complainant criticizing a research proposal that the complainant had sent to the academy, the complainant interpreted this as "backing off" in his scientific advice because of political bias. In the second author's letter to the complainant, however, the second author agrees that the complainant's proposal "raises questions that need analysis and research" and that "a careful study along these lines would be useful." The second author objects to the tone and style of the proposal rather than to its content. The second author does not indicate that political biases influenced his judgments, nor does the complainant provide other evidence that such biases affected the report's judgments about research priorities.

The complainant is dissatisfied that the academy dismissed his research ideas without a written statement of reasons. While perhaps regrettable, this is not evidence of bias, much less misconduct.

The complainant clearly has serious reservations about the current directions in which social science is heading and about the research priorities of the elite agencies that fund basic social science research. He provides no real evidence, however, that these priorities are the product of anything other than judgments about social needs and scientific value that the complainant does not share.

OIG advised the complainant that he could more effectively pursue his general concerns by taking them up with officials at NSF and elsewhere who are responsible for making policy decisions concerning government funding of social science research.

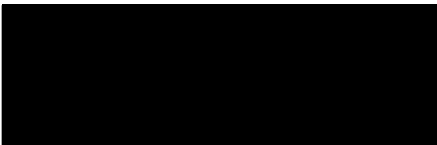
This case is closed and no further action will be taken.



3/7/94

Staff Scientist, Oversight

Concurrence:



3/21/94

Deputy Assistant Inspector General,
Oversight

noted

James J. Zwolenik
James J. Zwolenik

3/28/94

Assistant Inspector General for Oversight

Montgomery K. Fisher
Montgomery K. Fisher

Counsel to the Inspector General

3/21/94

cc: Signatories
Inspector General