

CLOSEOUT FOR M94030007

This case came to OIG on March 4, 1994, when we received a telephone call from [REDACTED] (the complainant), who is the wife of [REDACTED], a former graduate student in the Department of [REDACTED] at [REDACTED].

The complainant alleged that Mr. [REDACTED] (the subject) had misrepresented himself as holding an M.S. degree in [REDACTED] from the University of [REDACTED] and a Ph.D. from the University of [REDACTED]. The complainant said that these misrepresentations had appeared in various departmental brochures and in grant proposals to other agencies. She also complained that the subject treated graduate students irresponsibly and had misrepresented himself as an assistant professor when he was in fact an instructor.

OIG examined the subject's two declined NSF proposals and the award jacket for the subject's only NSF grant. The declined proposals are [REDACTED] ([REDACTED])

[REDACTED], "submitted by the subject and Drs. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] ([REDACTED])" submitted by the subject and Drs. [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and [REDACTED]. The funded proposal is [REDACTED], awarded to the subject and Drs. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and entitled [REDACTED] " [REDACTED]

Although these proposals indicated that the subject possessed a M.S. degree and was anticipating receipt of his Ph.D. and promotion to assistant professor within four months of the proposal submission date, OIG learned that the subject had in fact received neither an M.S. nor a Ph.D. as of the date of the allegation. The proposals represented the subject's faculty rank accurately.

OIG wrote to the subject to ask for his explanation. The subject informed us that he believed in good faith that the representations concerning his M.S. degree had been correct when he made them. At that point, he had successfully defended his M.S. thesis, submitted a report to complete an unfinished course requirement, been told by a member of his thesis committee that all necessary materials were in hand, and begun receiving requests for alumni contributions. Only after he had submitted the three

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proposals did he learn that an administrative error had prevented the final conferral of the degree. The subject also noted that, after this situation came to light, he had been awarded the degree without having to perform any additional work. The subject informed OIG that his current institution had examined this matter and had solicited a written account of the circumstances surrounding the awarding of the subject's degree from a member of the subject's thesis committee. OIG contacted the subject's current institution, which supplied a copy of this account. OIG also spoke to the chair of the department in which the subject studied for his M.S. Both the thesis committee member's letter and the department chair's statement confirmed the subject's account. OIG concluded that, while the subject might have been careless in failing to verify that the degree had been conferred, his carelessness could not be considered so gross as to be misconduct.

With regard to the subject's representation that he was imminently about to receive a Ph.D., the subject explained that he had completed all the course work required for his degree and had been formally advanced to candidacy for the Ph.D. in August, 1987, well before he submitted his NSF proposals. Thus he needed only to complete and defend his dissertation to receive his Ph.D. degree. OIG received an official transcript from the subject's Ph.D. institution confirming these claims. OIG concluded that, even if the subject made optimistic projections of his Ph.D. date, his projections had enough basis in fact that they could not be considered misrepresentations. OIG concluded that the allegation that the subject's projections were misconduct lacked substance.

OIG determined that in this case the subject's representations to the general public or other funding agencies and his performance as teacher or adviser, because they did not involve his NSF proposals or awards, were outside our jurisdiction.

The allegations of misconduct in this case either lack substance or do not involve NSF. This inquiry is closed and no further action will be taken on this case.