

CLOSEOUT OF M95030008

On March 3, 1995, OIG received a memorandum from the program director¹ that provided information that he had received from the complainant.² The complainant alleged that the subject³, had breached the confidentiality of peer review when he revealed to the complainant information from the Research Initiation Awards (RIA) panel discussion that had occurred on March 15, 1994. The subject allegedly informed the complainant that he "took pride" in blocking a proposal from being funded. The NSF proposal⁴ supposedly discussed was submitted by the PI⁵, a faculty member in the same department as the complainant.

The NSF proposal and award system showed that the subject had been a panel reviewer and discussion leader for the PI's declined RIA proposal. There are no other connections between the subject and the PI.

The PI's proposal was placed in the fund-if-funds-available category; this was the consensus of all panel members. The subject's summary of the PI's proposal had negative comments, but the subject was equally negative on other proposals in this category. The Panel Minutes indicate that all panelists signed all of the proposal summaries, excluding reviewers with conflicts of interest.

OIG spoke with the complainant who said he did not remember any conversations related to this matter nor could he recall anyone ever revealing information about what was discussed in a panel review. He also believes that the decision to decline funding of a proposal was the result of many people and not just one person.

The subject's summaries of the proposals, perhaps somewhat more negative than customary, was uniform. Because of the complainant's disavowal, there is no evidence to support the allegation that a breach of the confidentiality of peer review occurred.

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

cc: Staff Scientist, Deputy AIG-Oversight, AIG-Oversight, IG

¹ (footnote redacted).

² (footnote redacted).

³ (footnote redacted).

⁴ (footnote redacted).

⁵ (footnote redacted).