

CLOSEOUT FOR M95080033

This case came to NSF on August 3, 1995, when NSF's Deputy Director received a letter from [REDACTED] (the complainant) of the [REDACTED]. The Deputy Director referred the letter to the Assistant Director for Biological Sciences for reply. OIG was informed of the case on August 11, 1995, when we received a message from Dr. James L. Edwards, executive officer for the Directorate for Biological Sciences (the executive officer). He had noticed that the letter mentioned misconduct, and he asked that we assess it.

OIG examined the complainant's letter and discussed it with him. The complainant alleged that adherents of a certain scientific perspective were so single minded that they could not see the merits of work in their discipline that derived from perspectives other than their own. He further alleged that, as a result, these scientists unreasonably gave low ratings to meritorious proposals.

OIG determined that these were not allegations of misconduct in science. Reviewers are supposed to provide NSF with their honest scientific evaluations of proposed projects, and there is no allegation that the class of reviewers who were the subject of the complaint did otherwise.

We informed the executive officer and Dr. Judith Sunley, Assistant to the Director, that we were closing the case. We advised them that the complainant was raising concerns about program management and that NSF should take whatever steps it believed necessary to ensure that the programs in question were weighing reviewer biases appropriately and funding the most meritorious research.

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