

Closeout for M98110040

On June 1998, we received an anonymous note. In it the author contended that the review process for proposals submitted to a particular NSF program¹ were "transparent and favorable" to certain PIs and were therefore "unfair." The author said that PIs helped program managers select reviewers and that the reviewers were biased. The complainant suggested that a broad evaluation of NSF's review process be undertaken. According to NSF's *Grant Proposal Guide*

Proposers are invited to suggest names of persons they believe are especially well qualified to review the proposal or persons they would prefer not review the proposal. These suggestions may serve as one source in the reviewer selection process as the Program Officer's discretion.²

The information provided by the complainant is insufficient to focus any inquiry on a specific allegation about inappropriate reviewer bias. Absent specific information from the anonymous complainant about bias or unfairness, we found no evidence that program officers had acted in ways that were inconsistent with the guidance provided in the *Grant Proposal Guide*.

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

Cc: Integrity, IG

¹ The author contended that the review process for the materials research centers were biased.

² *Grant Proposal Guide* (NSF 98-2), page 16.