

Closeout for M98120042

On [REDACTED] October 1998, a program manager¹ informed us that he had received an electronic mail message from a complainant.² The complainant alleged that the department chairman³ was abusing authority created by his submission of an NSF proposal⁴ that requested graduate student training funds. Allegedly he was forcing the department to change the way its faculty members were teaching courses and using the possibility of a large NSF award to ensure these changes. The complainant also alleged that the subject was proposing to pay students to participate in an undergraduate research seminar series.

In agreement with OIG, the program manager assessed the problems in a site visit conducted in connection with NSF considerations about whether to fund the proposal. The site visit occurred shortly after OIG had been informed of the allegations. He reported that the complainant's issues about changing the department's teaching methods did not appear to be related to the NSF proposal. The subject's suggestion to pay students for attending a seminar series had its roots in a misreading of the NSF solicitation. Since no funds had been expended (the proposal had not been funded), the program officer was able to resolve the misunderstanding.

We considered the complainant's allegations to be primarily management issues that were satisfactorily resolved during the site visit. The complainant expressed satisfaction that any additional problems could be brought to NSF's attention and would be addressed in a timely way. We closed our inquiry and will take no further action in this case.

Cc: Integrity, IG

¹ Dr. [REDACTED] the [REDACTED] Program cluster coordinator within the Division of [REDACTED] in the Directorate for [REDACTED]

² [REDACTED] a faculty member in the Department of [REDACTED] at the University of [REDACTED]

³ Dr. [REDACTED]

⁴ [REDACTED] a 5-year request for funds to support a mathematics training program.