

Closeout for M99030010

In August 1999, an NSF Division Director¹ told us that a co-PI² of an NSF award³ felt he was inappropriately denied the PI role.⁴ We contacted the co-PI who was surprised we knew of this matter and told us his University was already looking into the matter. A University administrator⁵ told us that the University had asked a faculty member to look into the matter. The Administrator also thought the issue was more of grant management than misconduct in science. We thought it possible that misconduct-in-science issues might have been present, so we asked to be kept informed of the University's conclusions.

The University's inquiry report concluded that no investigation was warranted and no official action should be taken. It further concluded that it was appropriate for the current PI to remain PI although the co-PI had initiated an earlier research collaboration on this project that led to the current award. The inquiry report noted that it was not possible to determine if the change in PI had been appropriately carried out. Both the Administrator and the Provost agreed with those conclusions.

While there may be disagreements about who should have been PI, we agree that this is a matter of grant management best addressed by the University rather than by OIG. NSF allows the grantee to select the PI of its proposals and the grantee has full responsibility for the management of the project. As long as NSF approves of the choice of PI, and it did in this instance, that choice is the University's prerogative. This inquiry is closed and no further action will be taken on this case.

cc: Investigations, IG

¹ (redacted).

² (redacted).

³ (redacted).

⁴ (redacted).

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