

Closeout for M99080043

On May 18, 1998, the Office of Inspector General received a letter containing an allegation of possible administrative abuse in the NSF proposal process by a state university.¹ According to this allegation, after a professor² opposed discriminatory practices against minorities by the department and university administration, the department chair placed laboratory space restrictions on the professor's NSF proposal. The professor's NSF proposal is co-authored by a minority faculty member.³ The professor repeatedly complained about the department chair's conduct to university officials.⁴ However, according to this letter, the university does not have standard policies and procedures for handling misconduct allegations.

After considering this letter along with the enclosed correspondence between the professor and the department chair, university officials and colleagues, OIG found no connection to NSF's jurisdiction. This allegation involves an interdepartmental dispute concerning the allocation of laboratory space, with the department chair maintaining that individual professors cannot reserve a particular space without permission.

In an earlier inquiry closeout memorandum,⁵ OIG addressed a related complaint by different faculty members concerning the failure of the same university to establish policies and procedures for handling misconduct allegations. As stated in the earlier closeout memorandum, NSF's statutory misconduct regulation does not mandate any particular investigative procedures, and accordingly the failure of a university to establish misconduct policies and procedures is not a violation of NSF's statutory regulations.

¹ [Footnote redacted].

² [Footnote redacted].

³ [Footnote redacted].

⁴ [Footnote redacted].

⁵ [Footnote redacted].