

## CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM FOR CASE M 99120058

On 22 December 1999, an NSF program officer<sup>1</sup> brought an anonymous letter he received to our attention. The letter alleged racial discrimination and sexual harassment of graduate students by members of an academic department at a university.<sup>2</sup> First, a scientist<sup>3</sup> (subject 1) in the department allegedly discriminated against an unidentified graduate student on the basis of the student's race. Second, an unidentified subject 2 in the department allegedly sexually harassed a former graduate student.<sup>4</sup>

With respect to the alleged racial discrimination, our review showed that subject 1's last NSF award closed over a half year before the anonymous letter was written.<sup>5</sup> Because the letter indicated that the racial discrimination occurred recently, we have no apparent jurisdiction in this case. Further, even if we had jurisdiction, we could do very little without knowing who subject 1 allegedly discriminated against.

With respect to the alleged sexual harassment, our review showed that the former graduate student received her Ph.D. from the university 5 years ago. Therefore, the alleged harassment must have occurred at least 5 years ago. We considered it inappropriate to contact the former graduate student about an anonymous allegation from an unknown third party about an incident that occurred over 5 years ago by an unidentified subject.

Without additional information, we determined it was not reasonable for us to proceed with this inquiry. We shared the anonymous letter with NSF's Office of Equal Opportunity Program (OEOP). OEOP told us that there was nothing it could do with these allegations because of the limited information and because of the lack of clarity about whether NSF had jurisdiction in this case.

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

cc: Investigations, IG.

<sup>1</sup> [REDACTED] is a program officer in the [REDACTED]

<sup>2</sup> The Department [REDACTED] at [REDACTED]

<sup>3</sup> The subject [REDACTED] is a faculty member in [REDACTED]

<sup>4</sup> [REDACTED] is a former graduate student in the [REDACTED] is identified in the anonymous letter as the individual who was sexually harassed.

<sup>5</sup> NSF award [REDACTED] entitled [REDACTED] an equipment award for the department, was submitted by [REDACTED] subject 1, and [REDACTED] This standard award closed officially on [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] NSF award [REDACTED] entitled [REDACTED] does not list subject 1 as the PI. This award closed on [REDACTED] The anonymous letter is dated [REDACTED]