



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION  
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL  
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

## CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: A12020010

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A University<sup>1</sup> informed us that it was initiating an investigation into an allegation of data falsification against a former graduate student (the Subject<sup>2</sup>), who was supported by her advisor's NSF grant. Since the Subject had graduated with a Ph.D. degree and left the University, she claimed the University lacked authority to investigate her and sued to stop the investigation. After the court ruled in the University's favor, it began its investigation, culminating in 2-day hearing before an Investigative Panel. The Subject told the Investigative Panel she collected two sets of data: bad data due to instrument problems followed by good data after she corrected the problem. She said she subsequently deleted all her good data, which is why only bad data were found on the instruments and the lab computers where the data were analyzed. The Subject's advisor so convincingly demonstrated the Subject's data were falsified that the Subject eventually acknowledged the data were falsified. However, the Subject then blamed her ex-roommate for hacking into her data files to falsify them. The University concluded the Subject falsified data in her dissertation and provided her advisor with falsified data for publication. It revoked the Subject's Ph.D., which the Subject appealed; the Board of Regents upheld the University's decision and directed the University President to revoke her Ph.D.

NSF concurred that the Subject falsified data and took the following actions: issued a letter of reprimand conveying a finding of research misconduct, required the Subject to complete an interactive responsible conduct of research training course within 1 year, and debarred the Subject for 5 years. Accordingly, this case is closed with no further action taken.

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