



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: A14020010

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We investigated the actions of a PI (Subject) who spent very little from seven grants over a several-year period, while claiming significant achievements in progress reports. We found the PI was spending from grants serially, from the oldest to the most recent, to support all current research activity under one grant. He requested multiple no-cost extensions for each grant and spent the funds of a given grant during its final extension year.

He changed universities and requested a transfer of four open grants. When NSF program officers learned of his unusually low spending rates and serial spending, they terminated all four, resulting in \$1,048,300 of funds put to better use. We presented evidence of students paid from grants on which they did not work to the Subject's former university, which repaid \$252,000 of mischarged grant funds.

The Subject's new university also reviewed charges for the Subject's new NSF awards and rectified certain minor issues, while finding no indication of continued questionable spending patterns.

In light of the behavior at the first university, and to ensure that the Subject's record of compliance at his new university continues, we recommended that the relevant NSF programs implement some additional oversight for grants with the Subject as PI, and NSF agreed. Specifically, the following actions were taken:

- The NSF program requested a spending plan from the Subject for remaining grant funds.
- NSF Division of Grants and Agreements will work with the Subject's university to ensure any no-cost extensions require NSF approval and are not automatically approved by the university.
- For each future NSF award to the Subject, NSF will consider continuing grants in lieu of standard grants. In the former, increments of funding are requested and distributed on an annual basis, increasing the likelihood of program officer review. In the latter, the entire award amount is available right away.

This case is closed with no further action taken.