



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: A14090045

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The NSF program office notified us of an alleged breach of confidentiality of a panel reviewing the progress of a large cooperative agreement.¹ Interested parties likely to be affected by the recommendations of the panel contacted the program office in short order suggesting inside information had been passed to them.

In addition to the panelists and NSF staff present during the review, members of the awardee institution management team were present for some of the presentations and discussions. The panel and NSF staff also met without the institutional staff in closed sessions. The information allegedly leaked was presented in an open session and had been the subject of rumor before the panel presentation. Although the majority of attendees were physically present, some attended virtually by video or audio conference with no absolute means to confirm whether additional people were present. Furthermore, access to the presentation slides was open to all attendees via a shared account and password. Given the large number of attendees and the possibility of unidentifiable observers it is unlikely that a breach and the source responsible can be demonstrated sufficiently to support a recommended action.

Accordingly, this case is closed.

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