



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION  
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL  
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

**CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM**

Case Number: I-16-0116-O

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NSF OIG received an allegation that a letter of support a PI<sup>1</sup> submitted with a CAREER proposal<sup>2</sup> contained a materially misleading statement. Specifically, the PI's department chair (Subject)<sup>3</sup> stated in the letter that the Subject was eligible to receive a CAREER award, despite knowing that the PI had recently been denied tenure. Because a condition for receiving a CAREER award is that the PI be in a tenure-track or equivalent position, the Subject's statement in the letter was material to the funding decision.

The Subject himself informed NSF of the PI's ineligibility two days after NSF made the award<sup>4</sup> and, when asked about his inaccurate statement, said that the letter was accurate at the time of submission because the PI could still have appealed his tenure rejection and won. The University<sup>5</sup> subsequently relinquished the award prior to any expenditures.

We sent the Subject a questionable practice letter, reminding him of the need to accurately represent information contained in letters of support and to be extra cognizant of the unique conditions for CAREER awards when writing such letters. Accordingly, this case is closed with no further action taken.

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