



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: I-18-0047-O

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We investigated an allegation that a PI on an NSF award was affiliated with another institution and listed the other institution and not the awardee university on a public abstract acknowledging the NSF award. We found that the PI took two extended overseas absences during the award without the requisite notification to NSF, and served as an NSF reviewer between those two absences. The PI took an unpaid leave of absence from the awardee university while holding concurrent employment at the other institution, which was not disclosed to either the awardee university or NSF. When we subpoenaed the PI for information related to employment outside of the awardee university, the PI acknowledged other employment, but declined to provide documentation in response.

We recommended NSF suspend the award, which NSF did; the awardee university subsequently agreed to terminate the award, resulting in nearly \$240,000 in unspent award funds put to better use, and the awardee university also returned over \$50,000 to NSF for expenditures beginning from the date of the PI's first extended overseas absence. The awardee university also took corrective action concerning internal communication about a faculty member's leave of absence and informed us that the PI is no longer employed there. We referred the matter to the U.S. Department of Justice, but the case was declined for prosecution. We recommended that the PI be prohibited from serving as an NSF panelist or reviewer for three years, and NSF accepted our recommendation.

This case is **closed** with no further action taken.