



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: I-19-0003-O

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We investigated an allegation by a graduate student that his former research advisor threatened his degree plans, and subsequently removed him from his position in the lab run by the former research advisor, for reporting workplace harassment, age-based discrimination, and racial discrimination by members of the lab to the former research advisor. Additionally, the graduate student alleged that in further retaliation for his disclosure, his research contribution was not accurately acknowledged in a manuscript that was ultimately published.

We investigated this matter in accordance with the whistleblower protection provisions of 41 U.S.C. § 4712. We interviewed the graduate student and university personnel, and reviewed documents provided by the graduate student and the university.

Our investigation confirmed the graduate student made a protected disclosure to his research advisor and within a month of the disclosure the graduate student left the lab run by his former research advisor and subsequently associated with a new lab. The primary witnesses provided conflicting accounts of the voluntariness of the departure. Additionally, our investigation also confirmed that 22 months after the disclosure, the former research advisor changed the graduate student's order in the list of authors in a manuscript from second to third author due to additional contributions made by another individual. The primary witnesses provided conflicting accounts of the contributions of the graduate student, the justification for the change in authorship, and the graduate student's awareness of and acquiescence in the authorship changes.

After our investigation we submitted a report of our findings to NSF management, the university, and the graduate student. NSF reviewed the report and concluded that the former research advisor did not subject the graduate student to a prohibited reprisal.

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