



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION  
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL  
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

## CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: I-20-0074-O

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We received an allegation of retaliation from a former grant administrator (Complainant) at a university-housed research center. In the Complainant's OIG Hotline and Whistleblower Complaint Form submissions to us, he reported that he disclosed policy violations to the legal office at his institution. The Complainant told our office he disclosed several issues, among them that a PI in his unit used funds from an NSF award to pay researchers who were working on other projects. The PI also allegedly asked him to falsify a timesheet for a graduate student who worked on the NSF award. After the legal office's investigation into the Complainant's disclosures, he claimed his supervisor and the PI retaliated for his disclosures by writing a poor performance review, which recommended his contract be allowed to expire. The Complainant provided us with a copy of the legal office's report describing its investigation and consensual recordings of his conversations with the legal office.

We noted that the issues about which the report drew conclusions did not include issues related to NSF or improper allocations to grants. We asked the Complainant directly if his disclosures to the legal office included the allegation that the PI used NSF funds as part of the salary for research staff working on non-NSF projects. He replied in the affirmative. However, after listening to the recordings, it became apparent that the written materials he submitted to us were not completely accurate when compared to the more definitive recorded dialogue. Importantly, there was no mention of NSF or other federal grants during his disclosures to the legal office. His meetings with the legal office primarily focused on issues unrelated to NSF or federal funding. Without that connection, no disclosure about an NSF award was made, and no violation of § 4712(a) with respect to NSF was established. Thus, after considering the totality of the facts presented, we concluded we lacked jurisdiction to investigate.

Accordingly, this case is *closed* and no further action will be taken.