



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION  
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL  
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

## CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: I-20-0031-O

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We received an allegation that an NSF-funded Ph.D. student (Subject) committed data fabrication and/or falsification. Specifically, the Subject was alleged to have used identical figures in different versions of his dissertation to represent the results of different experiments. The University conducted an inquiry that concluded no research misconduct occurred and allowed the Subject to defend his dissertation with a newly constituted committee.

We obtained the University's inquiry report and disagreed with its conclusion that no investigation was warranted. We opened our own investigation and issued a subpoena to the University for relevant records. We also requested and reviewed information from the Subject and his original dissertation advisor (Advisor). After reviewing the resulting documentation, we sought the opinion of a subject matter expert (SME) about the dissertation data and statements made by the Subject and Advisor.

Neither the Subject, Advisor, nor University could locate the relevant research and equipment records. The SME concluded that the questioned figures did not conclusively result from acts of research misconduct. Consequently, we cannot conclude by the preponderance of the evidence standard, that the Subject committed research misconduct.

We will send questionable research practice letter to the Subject reminding him to avoid research misconduct and to the University and Advisor reminding them to retain records associated with NSF-funded research.

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