

CLOSEOUT FOR M91100038

This case concerns alleged unfair treatment of a postdoctoral researcher in the laboratory of [redacted] (the subject), an NSF funded researcher at the [redacted] and alleged retaliation against a whistleblower who complained to NSF about this treatment. The complainant, [redacted], alleged that he was fired by the university in part for making complaints to NSF. OIG was informed of these allegations on October 18, 1991.

The complainant wrote to his Congressman about his ill treatment in the researcher's laboratory and sent copies of his letter to the Director of NSF and to "the Chairman, [redacted] Program" in the Division of [redacted] at NSF. He said that the subject had manifested an "impolite and undignified" attitude toward him and subjected him to insults and ridicule. [redacted], then division director in [redacted] replied to the complainant's letter one month later, telling him that NSF was not responsible for how faculty members administer their grants and that he should address his complaints to the grantee university. Three months later, the complainant again wrote to his Congressman (with copies to the same NSF officials) informing him that he had been dismissed from his position earlier that month. According to the complainant, university authorities gave as one of the reasons for his termination that he had written letters of complaint to his Congressman and to NSF officials.

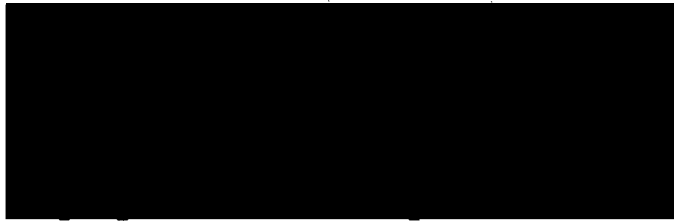
When we located the complainant, he assured us that he could produce the university termination letter to document his assertion of retaliation. He was unable to produce it, however, and now says that he appears not to have the letter. He is also unwilling to request a copy of the letter from the university personnel office. The complainant's inability to provide this most basic item of evidence to support his otherwise unsubstantiated allegation, combined with his unwillingness to endeavor to obtain it, lends little credence to his claims.

The program correctly dismissed the complaints of unfair treatment when they were originally made, noting that NSF delegates most aspects of the administration of its grants to the institutions that receive them. OIG determined that the alleged unfair treatment, while regrettable, is not misconduct in science. Because the complainant produced no evidence to support his allegation of retaliation, we chose not to pursue this further.

This case is closed and no further action will be taken.

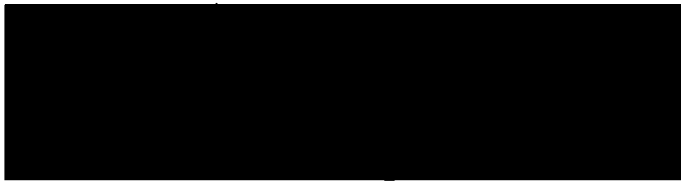
[redacted] 2/14/94  
Staff Scientist, Oversight

Concurrence:



Oversight

*noted*



cc: Signatories  
Inspector General