



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: I-20-0034-O

Page 1 of 1

We received three complaints regarding a graduate student who was an NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP) recipient. It was alleged the graduate student wrongfully maintained full-time employment outside the university, sabotaged other NSF-funded work within the research group, falsified data, and lied in her annual NSF progress reports.

The university informed us the graduate student's advisor had withdrawn his support from the graduate student's GRFP award and the award was terminated. Additionally, the university conducted two investigations but could not provide us the reports due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. We issued a subpoena for the reports.

On the matter of unallowed outside employment, the university determined its guidelines were unclear and inconsistently enforced. Thus, it did not make a finding against the graduate student. Regarding the alleged sabotage, the university made a finding and dismissed the graduate student from the university.

Laboratory sabotage does not fall under the federal definition of research misconduct of fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism. The graduate student's former advisor told us that to his knowledge, the graduate student had never falsified or fabricated data and that he did not rescind his support of the graduate student's GRFP award because of fabricated or falsified data.

As there was no research misconduct as defined in the federal definition, and as we concurred with the university that there was a lack of clarity in the university policies on outside employment, we consider the matter resolved.

This case is closed with no further action taken.

Approvals