



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: I-20-0079-O

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More than 5 years after receiving his Ph.D., a former NSF-funded doctoral student (Subject) voluntarily self-reported to his Ph.D. advisors that he fabricated and falsified data in his dissertation and in eight publications. The Subject began pursuing retractions and reported the misconduct to the University. The University conducted an inquiry that concluded an investigation was warranted. We referred the investigation to the University.

The University's investigation concluded, by a preponderance of the evidence standard, that the Subject knowingly and intentionally committed data fabrication and falsification, and that the act seriously deviated from the accepted practice of the Subject's research community. It further determined the Subject's actions impacted the research record but found no pattern of misconduct. The University retracted the dissertation, required the appropriate parties to pursue retraction of three affected articles, and said it would continue promoting responsible conduct of research and the integrity of research records. The University also revoked the Subject's Ph.D.

We accepted the University's report in part, but further investigated the Subject's degree of intent and whether the Subject exhibited a pattern of plagiarism. We determined, by a preponderance of the evidence standard, that the Subject intentionally committed data fabrication and falsification, and that the act was a significant departure from accepted practices of his research community. We also determined the Subject's actions exhibited a pattern of data falsification, noting an email the University provided in which the Subject self-reported falsifying data in an award-winning poster he prepared as an undergraduate student at another institution.

We recommended NSF make a finding of research misconduct; send the Subject a letter of reprimand; and require he certify to NSF his completion of an RCR training program within 1 year. We also recommended that, for 3 years, NSF prohibit the Subject from participating as an NSF peer reviewer, advisor, or consultant; require he submit certifications and assurances; and require he submit a detailed data management plan with each NSF proposal.

NSF accepted our recommendations.

This case is closed with no further action taken.