



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: A02120055

Page 1 of 1

We received an allegation that an NSF program officer (subject¹) intentionally declined six NSF proposals² submitted by the complainant³ over an 8-year period. The complainant claimed that the subject deliberately selected scientists from the subject's former University to be *ad hoc* reviewers and panelists for the complainant's proposals so that he could get substantially more negative evaluations, which would decrease the probability of funding. Further, the complainant alleged that the subject promised him, on several occasions, that one or more of his proposals would be funded. Finally, the complainant alleged that the *ad hoc* reviewers and panelists for his proposals used some of his ideas in their own proposals and publications.

Our review showed that there was no evidence that the subject demonstrated any bias in the selection of panelists and *ad hoc* reviewers or in the declination of the complainant's proposals. We found that several panels included no scientists with any past or present affiliation – student, faculty member, or post-doctoral researcher – with the subject's former University. Further, no panel in our review included an unusual number of scientists with past or present affiliations with the subject's former University. Finally, *ad hoc* reviews submitted by scientists with present or former affiliations with the subject's former University rated the complainant's proposals more favorably than the average overall ratings for each proposal.

Our review found no evidence to support the allegation that the subject had promised funding. Rather, we found evidence that the subject attempted to be supportive of the complainant and assist him with his proposal submissions.

Finally, our review showed no evidence that any of the panelists or *ad hoc* reviewers for the complainant's NSF proposals used any ideas that were unique to the complainant.

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

¹ [REDACTED] program officer [REDACTED]

² NSF proposals include: [REDACTED]. There are seven proposals listed rather than six. This is because the complainant was unclear as to the specific proposals he was concerned about, so to be thorough, all the proposals with the same topic were included for this review.

³ [REDACTED] is [REDACTED]