



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: A04070051

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We received an allegation¹ that a NSF Directorate's Assistant Director (AD) and Division Director (DD)² inefficiently managed a PI's proposal,³ and the program officer mishandled it.

With respect to the AD and DD, we determined that both, at the request of the PI, provided separate reconsiderations for the PI about the handling of the proposal. Both reconsiderations upheld the original decision to decline the proposal. Following these reconsiderations, the PI was encouraged to seek a final reconsideration by NSF's Deputy Director. However, the PI said he could not do so because the President of his institution would not approve it, a requirement by NSF to proceed to the final reconsideration.

We reviewed the program officer's handling of the proposal. We noted that the program officer requested seven scientists to do *ad hoc* reviews. After receiving three *ad hoc* reviews, the program officer sent reminders to the remaining reviewers requesting reviews for the proposal. However, none of the reviewers provided a review. The program officer, with the *ad hoc* reviewers' comments and the panel's advice, declined the proposal, a decision that was reasonable given the evaluations provided.

Our review of the handling of this proposal revealed no evidence that anyone at NSF did anything inappropriate or unethical. There is no evidence that the *ad hoc* reviewers or panel members selected to examine the complainant's proposal was in any way selected inappropriately. Finally, the PI received reconsiderations from the DD and the AD, both of which were done according to procedures and both of which upheld the declination of the proposal. The PI did not receive a final reconsideration by NSF's Deputy Director because the PI's administration did not agree to do so.

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

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