



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: A05-32

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Our office received an allegation, from a PI, that an institution inappropriately “froze” his research grants¹. The institution also requested his resignation after an allegation of personal misconduct was lodged against him. He claims the institution acted inappropriately by freezing his grant money, and eventually canceling the grant, without giving him due process. He also stated that the institution acted to gain economic advantage because they would not have to expend a significant amount of resources it pledged in cost-sharing to purchase research equipment.

We wrote to the institution to obtain their perspective of the events. The institution stated that the purchase of the equipment was originally delayed because of renovation efforts taking place at their science center. Subsequently, the institution says it was notified that the PI had “engaged in activities incompatible with campus values”. The PI was asked to leave campus and was eventually dismissed. The institution further stated that no other faculty member had sufficient expertise to properly use the equipment the grant was supposed to purchase. Therefore, the institution felt obliged to return the funds.

The actions of the institution, as it regards the NSF grant, appear to be reasonable. Accordingly, this case is closed.

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