



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: A12110075

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A university¹ notified us that it was investigating allegations against one of its former graduate students² for data fabrication and falsification in research she conducted with 2 different PIs³ using funds she received under an NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program award. We concurred with the university that an investigation was warranted. At the conclusion of its investigation, the university provided us with its report wherein it found that the former student lacked the intent necessary to support a finding of research misconduct.

We reviewed the report which described three different data sets that the subject agreed demonstrated bias and were therefore invalid. The bias was consistently in the direction of the hypothesis and the university identified no accidental or inadvertent means by which the student had become un-blinded to the experimental conditions. Neither of the PIs' labs had taken measures to secure the key to the randomized experimental conditions for each trial or to require independent reliability coding prior to the student's dissertation defense. Despite these circumstances, there was insufficient evidence to substantiate by a preponderance that the student had a culpable level of intent (*i.e.*, at least reckless).

Accordingly, this case is closed.

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