OIG Management Activities

OUTREACH

Outreach is a productive tool in accomplishing our mission to prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse and to promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in NSF programs and operations. We undertake numerous proactive activities, including educating NSF awardees about fraud recognition and prevention, research misconduct and responsible conduct of research, and their financial and programmatic responsibilities.

Continuing to respond to Congressional concerns regarding the prevention and detection of fraud in Small Business Innovation Research / Small Business Technology Transfer (SBIR/STTR) Programs, the Inspector General is leading the SBIR working group, under the auspices of the Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) Research Misconduct Working Group. In June, the Working Group conducted a government-wide workshop focused on initiatives to help ensure integrity, improve oversight, and enhance fraud prevention in these programs. The workshop was attended by over 130 individuals from 25 federal agencies, congressional staff, and representatives from the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board (RATB).

In addition, the Inspector General leads a Suspension and Debarment (S&D) Working Group with the Federal Housing Finance Agency IG, under the auspices of the CIGIE Investigations Committee. This group, which consists of representatives from the RATB and thirteen OIGs, is focused on increasing knowledge and use of S&D to protect government funds against fraud. In the past six months, the group reported the results of two surveys, one of the IG community and one of agency S&D officials, and is exploring options about ways to enhance the use of S&D in Recovery Act awards and other awards impacted by significant wrongdoing.

The Inspector General addressed several organizations on issues such as science and public policy, research misconduct, and the role of inspectors general. Presentations at the International Workshop on Accountability in Science and Research focused on identifying and managing fraud risk from the perspective of a research funding and using technology to prevent and detect fraud.

The Assistant Inspector General for Investigations (AIGI) and the Assistant Inspector General for Audit (AIGA) also participated in outreach efforts such as presentations on the more effective use of S&D to combat fraud against the government, training for audit peer review standards, efforts to establish peer review for investigations among the Designated Federal Entity Offices of Inspector General, grant oversight, and research misconduct.

The AIGI shared her experience and insights with the Association of Directors of Investigations on how S&D can be more effectively employed to combat fraud against the federal government. She also provided a lecture on research integrity to the Research Ethics Symposium.   The AIGA is leading the RATB's working group on grant fraud indicators and chairs the Federal Audit Executive Council under the auspices of CIGIE, which sponsored a conference attended by more than 160 auditors and others from 56 federal agencies.

Our extensive experience in investigating grant fraud and research misconduct matters is well recognized in the community, and we continue to receive numerous requests from universities and others in the research community to provide assistance and training on the prevention, detection, and investigation of research misconduct. Among other things, we conducted research miscon-duct briefings at six universities, participated in a curriculum review for fraud courses provided at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC), and provided instructors to FLETC for grant fraud related courses. These activities demonstrate our commitment to maintain a robust outreach program to the greatest degree possible under current fiscal restraints.

As reported in our March 2011 semiannual, NSF OIG investigation closeout memo-randa, describing the nature of our investigations and whether they resulted in administrative, civil, or criminal action, are publicly available on our website at: *www.nsf.gov/oig/closeouts.jsp*. The memoranda are organized into searchable cate-gories such as grant fraud, contractor fraud, computer intrusion, and PI misconduct. We have recorded over 15,000 hits, about 2500 hits per month, since this online access was made available. The public release of the closeout memoranda makes our work more transparent, and reduces our need to respond to requests under the Freedom of Information Act for these documents.