

January 27, 2009

Via Electronic Transmission

The Honorable Thomas C. Cross
Acting Inspector General
National Science Foundation
Office of Inspector General
4201 Wilson Blvd., Suite 1135
Arlington, VA 22230

Dear Acting Inspector General Cross:

As a senior member of the United States Senate and as Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Finance (Committee), it is my duty under the Constitution to conduct oversight into the actions of the executive branch, including the activities of the National Science Foundation (NSF). In this capacity, I must ensure that the NSF properly fulfills its mission to strengthen scientific and engineering research, and makes responsible use of the public funding provided for these research disciplines.

It has come to my attention through the most recent NSF Semiannual Report that there is a systemic issue at NSF regarding the use of government computers to view sexually explicit material. A particularly severe incident is described in the Semiannual Report, involving an NSF employee spending up to 20% of his official work time viewing pornography, which amounted to a potential loss of \$58,000 in employee compensation. Over a 24 month period, this particular employee charged more than \$40,300, to cover his on-duty extracurricular activity. The Semiannual Report indicates that the OIG identified a number of inappropriate use cases after a cursory review of only one of NSF's network drives.

Therefore, I would appreciate receiving any/all documentation with regard to these matters, to include specific reports of investigations, audit reports, evaluations and information supporting the examination of the NSF network drive. I would appreciate receiving these materials by January 29, 2009.

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter. Should you have any questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact Emilia DiSanto or Misha Kelly of my staff at (202) 224-4515. All documents responsive to this request should be sent electronically in PDF format to Brian_Downey@finance-rep.senate.gov.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member