

December 3, 2008

Holly Adams
Inspector General
Department of the Navy
Office of Naval Research
875 North Randolph Street
Suite 1425
Arlington, VA 22203-1995

Dear Ms. Adams,

I am writing in response to your letter dated 5 November 2008, in which you requested a written explanation as to whether the acceptance of a grant on September 15, 2008 from the National Science Foundation with Prof. Rusi Taleyarkhan as Principal Investigator is consistent with Purdue's previously imposed sanctions with regard to Prof. Taleyarkhan.

As we discussed during your visit to Lafayette, in a letter dated 27 August 2008, Provost Woodson detailed sanctions imposed on Prof. Taleyarkhan following findings of research misconduct by an investigation committee convened under the auspices of Purdue's Executive Memorandum C-22, which were upheld upon appeal. The sanctions imposed included the following:

"For a minimum of three (3) years from the date of this letter, your status as a member of Purdue University's Graduate Faculty will be limited to that of 'Special Graduate Faculty.' You will be permitted to serve on graduate committees but will not be able to serve as a major professor or co-major professor for graduate students during this time. During this period, your mentoring of graduate students will be monitored and reviewed. At the end of the initial three year period, your Graduate Faculty status will be reviewed by the Head of Nuclear Engineering, Dean of Engineering, and Provost. If there are no further issues involving your mentorship of graduate students, you may seek restoration of Full Graduate Faculty status from the Graduate School. If there are further documented issues of you engaging in inappropriate behavior involving graduate students, you will, at a minimum, continue as Special Graduate Faculty with continued review and monitoring for up to an additional three (3) years."

To understand the impact of this sanction requires an understanding of the roles of Graduate Faculty in the supervision of graduate degree programs and mentoring of graduate students at Purdue. A detailed summary of Policies and Procedures for Administering Graduate Student Programs at Purdue University can be found on the Graduate School's website at:

<http://www.gradschool.purdue.edu/faculty/publications.cfm>. As described in this document, each student pursuing a graduate degree at Purdue selects a Major Professor who serves as the chair of the student's graduate advisory committee and agrees to supervise the student's graduate study, research, and writing. The student and major professor are responsible for the selection of an advisory committee. The duties of the advisory committee are to assist the student in the preparation of the plan of study and to offer advice

during the period of graduate work, including research and thesis preparation, when these are required components of the student's degree program.

The sanction imposed on Prof. Taleyarkhan prevents him from serving as Major Professor or co-Major Professor for graduate students. However, as a Special Graduate Faculty, he may teach graduate courses, advise graduate students, supervise graduate research and teaching assistants, and serve as a member of a student's graduate advisory committee. He may not chair or co-chair graduate advisory committees.

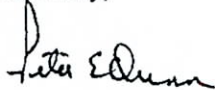
Within days of the imposition of the sanctions, Prof. Taleyarkhan met with his department head, who serves as the director of the nuclear engineering graduate program. Together, they identified nuclear engineering Graduate Faculty who would immediately assume responsibility as Major Professor for Prof. Taleyarkhan's current graduate students and transfer of this responsibility has been implemented. Prof. Taleyarkhan will continue to serve as a member of these students' graduate advisory committees, as allowed by his Special Graduate Faculty status.

Now let me address the NSF grant awarded on 15 September 2008. The budget for this award included support for two graduate research assistants who would work to satisfy project goals. Purdue's Provost instructed Sponsored Program Services to establish an account for the new award in the University's financial system and to lock this account pending development and approval of a written staffing plan for the project that is consistent with the sanctions imposed on Prof. Taleyarkhan. Prof. Taleyarkhan conferred with his department head and identified graduate students to work on this project. One of these graduate students is currently enrolled in the nuclear engineering graduate program and another nuclear engineering Graduate Faculty member (not Prof. Taleyarkhan) serves as the student's Major Professor. To staff the second position, a newly admitted applicant to the nuclear engineering graduate program has been offered support from the NSF grant for their graduate program. This offer of graduate program support specifies that the student's graduate degree program will be directed by another member of the nuclear engineering Graduate Faculty (not Prof. Taleyarkhan). This plan for staffing the NSF project is consistent with the sanctions imposed, has been approved by the Provost, and the grant account has been unlocked. Purdue will continue to monitor this and any future sponsored projects to ensure that staffing of the projects is consistent with the sanctions imposed by Provost Woodson.

I hope that the above summary clarifies the nature of the sanction imposed on Prof. Taleyarkhan regarding Graduate Faculty status and documents that Purdue is administering the NSF grant awarded on 15 September 2008 in a manner consistent with the sanctions.

Please let me know if you have further questions regarding this matter.

Sincerely,



Peter E. Dunn, Ph.D.
Associate Vice President for Research
Research Integrity Officer

Cc: Richard O. Buckius, Vice President for Research