The final word

Misconduct allegations against professors Bruce Eaton and Dan Feldheim and Ph.D. candidate Lina Gugliotti started at N.C. State more than eight years ago and included three investigations. Here’s a quick look back:

June 2008: An 18-month investigation at N.C. State finds that the Science article written by Eaton, Feldheim and Gugliotti was based on falsified data. It found that Feldheim acted negligently overseeing the research but did not act recklessly and did not reach the level of research misconduct.

Based on a preponderance of the evidence, the Committee finds that the statement, “A combination of scanning electron microscopy and electron diffraction showed that the hexagonal particles were crystalline Pd” in the Respondents’ Science (2004) paper is false.

December 2008: The University of Colorado, where Eaton and Feldheim had relocated, interprets the N.C. State investigation as an exoneration and closes the case, finding no wrongdoing.

Inquiry Subcommittee meeting of 24 October 2008

Given the thorough evaluation completed by the North Carolina State Investigation Committee and its exoneration of Professors Eaton and Feldman of any and all charges, the Inquiry Subcommittee unanimously concluded that these two allegations were unfounded.

September 2013: The National Science Foundation’s Office of Inspector General finds that Eaton, Feldheim and Gugliotti committed research misconduct by publishing "recklessly falsified research data."

We investigated an allegation of falsification in research connected with NSF proposals. We concluded, based on a preponderance of the evidence, that the Subjects’ recklessly falsified research data, and that this act was a significant departure from accepted practices.

Sept. 2015: The NSF issues a letter of reprimand to Eaton, Feldheim and Gugliotti that stops short of research misconduct but bars them from future funding unless they clarify the significant omissions in the Science article.

In this case, NSF has identified significant findings that you and your co-authors failed to disclose including: 1) a clear and consistent description of the composition of the data used in Publication #1; and 2) the fact that data was not properly prior to Publication #1. These omissions were as significant to the published research record in question as the significant findings that you did prepare and submit for publication.

The NSF’s descriptions of the omissions meet its definition of falsified data.

(2) Falsification means manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record.

Sources: NCSU, University of Colorado, National Science Foundation