

## **CASE STUDY # 6: IC Directors and Mentorship**

*Dr. Smith, the Director of the NINDS, also has an intramural laboratory at the NIMH. One of the postdoctoral fellows in his lab, Dr. Chen, submits a K99/R00 to NINDS. As the Director of the NINDS, Dr. Smith will have final sign off on all K99/R00 funding decisions, will participate in discussions on the program, and will make final decisions on how many grants NINDS should fund and how much money should be expended on the program.*

*How should the application from Dr. Chen be handled?*

Dr. Smith is recused from anything having to do with Dr. Chen's application. Unless the K99/R00 was submitted in response to an RFA, Dr. Smith may have oversight and final sign off on other applications competing with Dr. Chen, but Dr. Smith may not engage in any discussions of Dr. Chen's application, nor appear on any paperwork associated with this application.

Even with these precautions in place, there may remain a concern. Since the number of K99/R00 applications to be funded is limited, Dr. Smith's decision not to fund any one of these, in effect, increases the chances that Dr. Chen's application will be funded. But there needs to be a "reasonability" test. The precautions suggested seem reasonable and it seems highly unlikely that Dr. Smith would engage in elaborate and convoluted machinations to ensure the funding of Dr. Chen's application.

*Who approves documentation for Dr. Chen?*

All documentation associated with Dr. Chen's application should be sent to the DDER for signature.