CONFIDENTIAL

November 29, 2023

Corinne Peek-Asa, PhD
Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation

Subject: Final Inquiry Report for Dr. Stefano Brigidi, former UC San Diego (UCSD) postdoctoral scholar, Department of Neurobiology

The following members of the Integrity of Research Standing Inquiry Committee (Inquiry Committee) reviewed this Research Misconduct allegation:

Inquiry Committee Members Present:
[redacted]

Inquiry Committee Members Absent:
[redacted]

The Inquiry Committee was asked to determine whether there was Probable Cause to believe that Dr. Brigidi committed Research Misconduct in the form of fabrication and/or falsification related to the publication, "Genomic Decoding of Neuronal Depolarization by Stimulus-Specific NPAS4 Heterodimers", Cell. 2019 Oct 3;179(2):373-391.e27. doi: 10.1016/j.cell.2019.09.004. PMID: 31585079; PMCID: PMC6800120. The publication indicates that this research was not funded. Specifically, the Inquiry Committee was asked to respond to the following nine questions:

1. Is there Probable Cause to believe that Dr. Stefano Brigidi committed Research Misconduct in the form of fabrication and/or falsification by making up and/or manipulating the data in Figure 1, all panels, in the publication, " Genomic Decoding of Neuronal Depolarization by Stimulus-Specific NPAS4 Heterodimers" (cite listed on page one).

2. Is there Probable Cause to believe that Dr. Stefano Brigidi committed Research Misconduct in the form of fabrication and/or falsification by making up and/or manipulating the data in Figure 2, all panels, in the publication, " Genomic Decoding of Neuronal Depolarization by Stimulus-Specific NPAS4Heterodimers" (cite listed on page one).

3. Is there Probable Cause to believe that Dr. Stefano Brigidi committed Research Misconduct in the form of fabrication and/or falsification by making up and/or manipulating the data in Figure 3, all panels, in the publication, "Genomic Decoding of Neuronal Depolarization by Stimulus-Specific NPAS4Heterodimers" (cite listed on page one).

4. Is there Probable Cause to believe that Dr. Stefano Brigidi committed Research Misconduct in the form of fabrication and/or falsification by making up and/or manipulating the data in Figure 4, all panels, in the publication, "Genomic Decoding of Neuronal Depolarization by Stimulus-Specific NPAS4Heterodimers" (cite listed on page one).

5. Is there Probable Cause to believe that Dr. Stefano Brigidi committed Research Misconduct in the form of fabrication and/or falsification by making up and/or manipulating the data in Figure S1, all panels, in the publication, "Genomic Decoding of Neuronal Depolarization by Stimulus-Specific NPAS4Heterodimers" (cite listed on page one).

6. Is there Probable Cause to believe that Dr. Stefano Brigidi committed Research Misconduct in the form of fabrication and/or falsification by making up and/or manipulating the data in Figure S2, all panels, in the publication, "Genomic Decoding of Neuronal Depolarization by Stimulus-Specific NPAS4Heterodimers" (cite listed on page one).

7. Is there Probable Cause to believe that Dr. Stefano Brigidi committed Research Misconduct in the form of fabrication and/or falsification by making up and/or manipulating the data in Figure S3, all panels, in the publication, "Genomic Decoding of Neuronal Depolarization by Stimulus-Specific NPAS4Heterodimers" (cite listed on page one).

8. Is there Probable Cause to believe that Dr. Stefano Brigidi committed Research Misconduct in the form of fabrication and/or falsification by making up and/or manipulating the data in Figure S5, all panels, in the publication, "Genomic Decoding of Neuronal Depolarization by Stimulus-Specific NPAS4Heterodimers" (cite listed on page one).

9. Is there Probable Cause to believe that Dr. Stefano Brigidi committed Research Misconduct in the form of fabrication and/or falsification by making up and/or manipulating the data in Figure S6, all panels, in the publication, "Genomic Decoding of Neuronal Depolarization by Stimulus-Specific NPAS4Heterodimers" (cite listed on page one).

The following is a summary of the Inquiry Committee's review:

This matter was referred to the Office of Research and Innovation by a Complainant. The Office of Research Affairs contracted with ArcherHall, a forensics company, to examine the figures in the allegation as well as other grant submissions and publications that included the Respondent during his employment at UCSD. The Inquiry Committee examined the extensive research materials sequestered by the Office of Research and Innovation and the ArcherHall report, and then met remotely via Zoom to thoroughly discuss the matter. The Inquiry Committee interviewed the Complainant on [redacted] 2023, via Zoom. The Complainant extensively detailed the allegations related to the fabricated and falsified data and explained that Dr. Brigidi ultimately confessed to the Complainant about the fabrication and falsification of the data when the Complainant confronted him. Prior to the Inquiry Committee interviewing Dr. Brigidi, he sent a formal signed admission to Ms. Angela McMahill, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Research Compliance and Integrity (Return to Active Duty), confessing to all of the charged allegations. The Inquiry Committee interviewed the Respondent on November 27, 2023, via Zoom.

During the interview, the Respondent immediately confirmed that the admission letter was accurate and that he had fabricated and falsified the data as described in the nine charges as well as in two National Institutes of Health postdoctoral fellowship applications. In addition, the Respondent indicated that several of the figures noted in the charges were used by the Complainant in an R01 application that was funded by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (prior to the Complainant learning of the issues with the data). The Respondent stated that no other persons were involved or had prior knowledge of his actions.

Following the interview with the Respondent, the Inquiry Committee held a closed Zoom discussion. Regarding allegations 1 - 9, the Inquiry Committee voted 5 Yes and 0 No that there was Probable Cause that Research Misconduct may have occurred. The Inquiry Committee is recommending to the Vice Chancellor

for Research and Innovation that the Complainant retract the publication, “Genomic Decoding of Neuronal Depolarization by Stimulus-Specific NPAS4 Heterodimers” as soon as possible.

Submitted on behalf of the Integrity of Research Standing Inquiry Committee.

[redacted]

[redacted], Chair

November 29, 2023
Date