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Panel in Britain clears scientists of misconduct allegations in 'Climate-gate'

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An independent commission in Britain cleared climate-change researchers of charges of academic misconduct Wednesday, completing an inquiry begun after hundreds of e-mails from the scientists were released to the public.

The commission, chaired by a Scottish university administrator, was the latest to find no evidence that researchers embroiled in the "Climate-gate" scandal had violated academic standards. After examining e-mails and research from the University of East Anglia's Climatic Research Unit, the commission said, "we find that their rigor and honesty as scientists are not in doubt."

The scandal began last fall, after more than 1,000 e-mails were taken from the unit's servers. In one, Phil Jones, the unit's director, wrote a colleague that he would "hide" a problem with data taken from Siberian tree rings with more accurate local air temperature measurements. In another message, Jones talked about keeping research he disagreed with out of a United Nations report.

The university also investigated and found "no evidence of any deliberate scientific malpractice" in the e-mails. Another inquiry, at Pennsylvania State University, examined e-mails sent by Professor Michael Mann, and found that "there is no substance" to allegations that he violated research standards.

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