NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: A-01050014 | Page 1 of 2

We were informed[1] that the subject[2] had submitted a proposal[3] in which he had failed to provide credit to other scientists for their research. Instead, by writing the proposal without citations for this work, it falsely appear that the work had been conducted in the subject's laboratory.

In response to our inquiry, the subject stated that he had not affirmatively claimed credit for the work described in the proposal. He stated that a graduate student[4] in another scientist's (the student's advisor) laboratory[5] conducted much of the work. After receiving his doctorate degree, the graduate student came to work for the subject and conducted further experimentation. Both the student's graduate and postdoctoral work were described in large portions of the proposal subsequently submitted by the subject. The postdoctoral researcher co-wrote the proposal with the subject with the knowledge of the other scientist. The subject explained that the proposal was designed to fund the postdoctoral researcher's work that would extend his graduate research and this position was described in the proposal's budget.

The subject subsequently provided us with an analysis of his proposal, noting where it relied on the unattributed work of others. He noted that:

- the original work on the research material was conducted by the other scientist when she was a postdoctoral researcher,
- the initial characterization of the research material and the subsequent refinement of that characterization was performed by the graduate student,
- discussion of this characterization and refinement appeared in the graduate student's unpublished dissertation,
- several figures in the proposal were unpublished and, although uncited, were used with permission of the student and his advisor, and
- one of the figures appeared in the student's dissertation.

[1] Program Officers [redacted] and [redacted] provided OIG with copies of [redacted] expressing [redacted] concern that the subject had failed to cite original sources for work described in his proposal.
[2] Dr [redacted], Professor [redacted] and Chair of the Division [redacted], [redacted].
[3] [redacted], submitted by the subject as the sole PI. It requested a total of $ [redacted] period.
[4] Dr [redacted].
[5] Dr [redacted] at the University of [redacted].

	Agent	Attorney	Supervisor	AIGI
Sign / date				

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

The subject explained that his institution would not permit postdoctoral researchers to be named as co-PIs on proposals. He stated he recently learned from his postdoctoral researcher that a chapter of his dissertation was devoted to this research project and that the research had been presented at a meeting approximately 1 year before the proposal was submitted.

The subject provided sufficient explanation and description of the sources of the information in his proposal for OIG to conclude that he had not plagiarized either the ideas or the text from other scientists. OIG concluded that he had failed to sufficiently reference the work of those in his laboratory.

It is doubtful this allegation would have arisen if his proposal had contained citations to the work in the other scientist's laboratory or to the dissertation of his postdoctoral researcher. OIG concluded there was insufficient reason to review this matter further and notified the subject and suggested that he carefully reference such work. In the absence of scientific publications, the use of "personal communication" and "unpublished results" citations will inform readers of his proposals that he has acknowledge the contributions of others to his proposal.

This case is closed and no further action will be taken in this matter.