



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: A-02010005

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We received an allegation that the PI and co-PI (subjects 1 and 2, respectively) submitted an NSF proposal¹ that contained an idea that had been taken inappropriately (intellectual theft) from earlier collaborative proposals submitted by the subjects and other PIs.² The subjects' NSF proposal used verbatim text from the earlier collaborative proposals, which, because the subjects were co-authors on these earlier proposals, was appropriate. However, a reference³ to the idea that was cited seven times in the collaborative proposals as part of the verbatim text used by the subjects' in their proposal had been removed from the subject's proposal and replaced with other citations.

When we asked the subjects for an explanation, subject 2 explained that his participation in the preparation of the NSF proposal was limited to a small section that was unrelated to the citation issue. He explained that subject 1 prepared the bulk of the proposal and, therefore, would respond to our concerns.

Subject 1 supported subject 2's contention that subject 2 had not been involved in the sections of the proposal that included the removed citation. Subject 1 provided supporting documentation and complete explanations about the removal of the single reference from the recent proposal. Subject 1 argued that the idea was an old idea that was neither original nor unique to the single citation that was removed.

Because of the technical nature of the information provided by subject 1, we asked an expert to review his response. The expert reviewed subject 1's response as well as other related literature sources. The expert stated that the idea in the NSF proposal for which the single reference had been removed bordered on textbook type information. As such, subject 1 appropriately referenced the idea with the changed citations.

1 [REDACTED]

2 [REDACTED]

3 [REDACTED]

	Agent	Attorney	Supervisor	AIGI
Sign / date				



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We concurred with the expert's evaluation. The evaluation supported subject 1's contention that the idea was not original or unique to the single reference. This case is closed and no further action will be taken.