



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: A03010003

Page 1 of 1

We received an allegation¹ that plagiarized text appeared in a proposal² submitted by the subject³ to NSF. We established substance to the allegation, and also identified a small amount of potential plagiarism in another proposal⁴ submitted by the subject to NSF. Analysis of other NSF proposals submitted by the subject provided no support for other instances of potential plagiarism. Both proposals in which plagiarism was detected were declined for funding. The duplicated text was not set off from the other text in the proposal, either through explicit attribution or quotation. We contacted the subject.

The subject admitted that the plagiarized text appears as identified in his proposals. He claims that the plagiarized text was inserted into the proposal by a graduate student who assisted in proposal preparation. The duplicated texts are predominantly introductory material as might be assigned to a graduate student for composition, and, since the plagiarized text is available on the web, the explanation is believable. The subject expresses regret that the text from the source documents was not appropriately paraphrased in his proposal. The subject attempts to minimize the impact of the identified plagiarism by describing the content of the text as consensus ideas of the community. In a follow-up letter to the subject, we expressed our strong disagreement with this assertion, emphasizing that use of another's exact words for expression of the ideas is indeed a serious violation of scholarship standards. We also addressed the need for clear communication of standards of scholarship to all involved in the preparation of a proposal in letter.

We examined other NSF proposals by the subject and found no evidence of plagiarism in those proposals. The need for strict attention to standards of scholarship in the composition of NSF proposals is emphasized in our letters to the subject. The strong exhortation is sufficient to protect NSF's interests. Accordingly, this case is closed.

¹ redacted.

² redacted.

³ redacted.

⁴ redacted.