



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: A03040019

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During a panel discussion at the end of April 2003, the panel discussed two allegations that the NSF Program Managers subsequently brought to our attention. The first allegation was that the subject,¹ who was the PI on proposal 1² and a co-PI on proposal 2,³ used text from his previous publications in proposals 1-2 without citing his previous publications, *i.e.*, what is commonly referred to as 'self-plagiarism'. The second allegation is the subject did not disclose the existence of proposal 2 on the Current and Pending Support (C&PS) form in proposal 1 and vice versa.⁴

'Self-plagiarism' does not meet our definition of plagiarism, which is defined as "the appropriation of *another* person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit."⁵ While it would have been better to reference his paper, and it may seem odd that he did not, self-plagiarism is not research misconduct within our definition. Thus, the first allegation was dismissed.

Regarding the C&PS forms, the reason each proposal was not disclosed within the other is because the subject's C&PS form is not present in either proposal, and he is the common link between these two proposals. Instead of the subject's C&PS, proposal 1 contains the CP&S of a co-PI on proposal 2.⁶ The PI's and the other co-PI's C&PS forms are both in proposal 2. Clearly, these proposals were prepared at the same time (in fact, they were submitted by the university only hours apart), and it appears the proposals were rather clumsily prepared. We sent the subject a letter suggesting he more carefully prepare his submissions to NSF and provided a URL for NSF's *Grant Proposal Guide*.⁷ Accordingly, this case is closed.

¹ (footnote redacted).

² (footnote redacted).

³ (footnote redacted).

⁴ These proposals were reviewed by the same panel.

⁵ See 45 CFR § 689.1(3); emphasis added.

⁶ (footnote redacted).

⁷ http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2003/nsf03041/nsf03_041.pdf