



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION  
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL  
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

## CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: A03050025

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In August 2002, we referred an allegation of plagiarism to a university for investigation.<sup>1</sup> In that case, the university's Investigation Committee noted a proposal,<sup>2</sup> which was a 'source' proposal in that case, contained text that appeared copied from two other papers.<sup>3</sup> The PI of the source proposal is the subject of this case.

We reviewed the similar text in the proposal and two papers. The text appeared in the first paragraph of a new section and explained the general background idea of why research in that area was interesting and what results had been previously obtained. The proposal text consists mostly of paraphrased, multi-word technical descriptions that would seem difficult to phrase another way; there is not an entire, single sentence copied from either paper.

The first paper is referenced at the end of the paragraph in which the questioned text appears, and the second paper is referenced twice (including mentioning the author of the second paper by name in the text), both adjacent to text paraphrased from the second paper.

The Committee described the similar text from the second paper as paraphrased, and the only attribution generally required for paraphrased text is a citation to the source, and the subject provided not one, but two. While the similar text from the first paper could have referenced the first paper more frequently, there was a citation to the first paper in the same paragraph. Given the references, the small amount of questioned text, and the nature of the text, we conclude there is no substance to the allegation of plagiarism. Accordingly, this case is closed.

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<sup>1</sup> That case was A02020007.

<sup>2</sup> (footnote redacted).

<sup>3</sup> (footnote redacted).