



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION  
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL  
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

## CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: A-04120076

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On 17 December 2004, we received an allegation<sup>1</sup> that subjects 1, 2, and 3<sup>2</sup> took an idea (intellectual theft) from the manuscript<sup>3</sup> written by other scientists and used it in their published paper.<sup>4</sup> The paper cited NSF support for the research.<sup>5</sup>

Our review showed that the manuscript was first presented at a conference<sup>6</sup> 3 years before the paper was published. Further, no conference proceedings were ever published. We learned that the manuscript had been widely circulated to others prior to its subsequent submission for publication. However, the manuscript was not accepted for publication.<sup>7</sup> We were informed that the manuscript was recently resubmitted for publication.

We do not have an official copy of the original manuscript, making any comparison of ideas with the paper uncertain at best. Further, we do not know with whom the manuscript was shared and, as a consequence, who discussed the ideas contained in the original manuscript. Nor can we assess how the ideas were subsequently disseminated within the community over the 3 years between the preparation and sharing of the manuscript and the publication of the paper. We determined that there was no method to reasonably determine if there was any substance to the allegation of intellectual theft given the unavailability of the original document and the history of sharing of information over a 3 year period.

This case is closed and no further action taken.

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