



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: A05040019

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On 19 April 2005, we received an allegation of intellectual theft.¹ It was alleged that the subjects' NSF proposal (subjects 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5)² contained the same idea presented in an earlier declined NSF proposal (source document).³ In addition, it was alleged that subject 1, the Principal Investigator (PI) on the NSF proposal, acted as an *ad hoc* reviewer for the source document, from which he might have taken the idea. Finally, concern was expressed that the NSF proposal included the same participant, a foreign scientist, as was listed in the source document.⁴

Our review and comparison of the idea in the source document and in the NSF proposal submitted by the subjects showed that the idea was partly unique to the PI of the source document. However, we also noted that the subjects' NSF proposal clearly and adequately cited the appropriate articles and abstracts that discussed the idea. One of the citations in the subjects' NSF proposal included an article published after the source document was submitted. This later publication clearly was a continuation of the idea presented in the source document. Therefore, there was not intellectual theft of the idea.

We also determined that there was no violation of the confidentiality of peer review. We noted that the foreign scientist listed as a participant on the source document and the subjects' NSF proposal was one of the few experts in that country in the related specialized area of study. The selection of this scientist was a logical choice for a participant for both proposals.

This case is closed and no further action will be taken.

1 [REDACTED]
2 [REDACTED]
3 [REDACTED]
4 [REDACTED]