



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION  
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL  
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

## CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: A11110080

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An anonymous complainant alleged a previous Closeout Memorandum (A06110051) contained erroneous information in that it stated NSF lacked jurisdiction. That case involved allegations of plagiarism by students in their theses at the University.<sup>1</sup> The complainant provided evidence that an NSF grant<sup>2</sup> was acknowledged in two students' (S1<sup>3</sup> and S2<sup>4</sup>) theses, so it appeared NSF should have had jurisdiction.

We learned both S1 and S2 were students of the grant's co-PI, and the co-PI and the PI were on the thesis committee of both students. The grant included support for graduate students, and the title of the grant aligned with the title of the two theses.

We contacted the University and asked if it had been aware of these students' theses, their connection to NSF, and if it reviewed those theses as part of its inquiry into the plagiarism allegations. The University noted it had previously told OIG there was an NSF connection to one student, but that student was deceased, and the University had not provided his name to OIG (it was S2). It had not previously realized the connection of S1 to the grant. The University confirmed it had previously reviewed the proposals of S1 and S2; that review found examples of improper citations, but concluded they were not sufficiently serious to warrant a finding of plagiarism.

Because of the connection of the two students to the NSF grant, our previous case should not have been closed because it lacked jurisdiction, it should have been closed because the two theses did not contain plagiarism that warranted a finding of research misconduct. We also note the theses were written over two decades ago, and agree with the University's difficulties described in the original Closeout about pursuing these allegations. Accordingly, this case is closed with no further action taken.

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<sup>1</sup> [redacted].

<sup>2</sup> [redacted] was awarded to the University, with [redacted] as the PI and [redacted] as the co-PI. The budget lists support for three graduate students, whose salaries and benefits comprise the largest (budgeted) expenditure of the grant.

<sup>3</sup> [redacted].

<sup>4</sup> [redacted].