



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: A12090063

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During our proactive review of 2011 funded proposals, this proposal¹ was flagged for review. It had a significant amount of copied text taken from one source, with smaller amounts taken from two other sources. None of the verbatim copied text was appropriately cited. We wrote to the PI, who responded that he believed using someone else's identical language was acceptable in the background section of the proposal. He disputed the text taken from one source as plagiarism because he collaborates with the author of the paper from which the text was copied. He said the text was originally written for a book manuscript the two of them are working on, so he could use that text. We contacted the source author who confirmed they are writing a book together.

We concluded that the PI's plagiarism was a departure from accepted community standards, but did not rise to the level of research misconduct. However, since none of the of the copied, verbatim text was distinguished from the PI's own text, together with the PI's misunderstanding about the need for proper citation in all parts of a proposal, we sent the PI a questionable research practice letter informing him of appropriate citation practices and NSF's policy on proposal authorship and preparation. Therefore, this case is closed and no further action will be taken.

¹ [REDACTED]