

Closeout for M00030010

A former Program Director¹ informed us, before he left NSF, that a PI² allegedly failed to provide accurate pending support information for each of two simultaneously submitted proposals (proposals 1 and 2)^{3,4} in that neither proposal acknowledged the other as pending. The Program Director noted that there was some budgetary overlap between the two proposals. He also stated that he was unsure as to how he should proceed given this situation and his understanding that the PI had previously been asked to withdraw a proposal for the same reason. We recommended that he adhere to the normal practices of his division and keep us informed.

Aside from confirming that the PI failed in each proposal to acknowledge the other as pending, our comparison of proposals 1 and 2 revealed that they were almost identical from a budgetary and personnel standpoint, but quite different scientifically. According to NSF records, two of the PI's previous proposals (proposals 3 and 4)^{5,6} were listed as withdrawn. Furthermore, proposals 3 and 4 possessed identical titles and almost identical budgets to those of proposals 1 and 2 respectively.

Because the overlap between proposals 1 and 2 was budgetary and not scientific, the former Program Director's Acting Deputy Division Director⁷ was not concerned about it. He stated that it is the Division's practice to leave the handling of such proposal compliance issues to the discretion of individual Program Directors. He also indicated that proposal 2 was to be declined and its declination letter could be tailored to include some reference to the importance of properly acknowledging pending support on submitted proposals. We recommended that he follow this course of action. Both proposals were declined by NSF.

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

cc: Investigations, IG

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4 Footnotes Redacted

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