

## CLOSEOUT FOR CASE M-00040017

The NSF program officer<sup>1</sup> brought an allegation of misconduct in science to our attention. The complainant,<sup>2</sup> who received the subject's NSF proposal<sup>3</sup> to review, alleged that some of the information in the subject's NSF proposal was taken (intellectual theft) from another researcher.<sup>4</sup>

We contacted the complainant who told us the only way the subject could have obtained some of the information he used in the proposal was from the researcher. She explained that she had worked with the researcher for 4 years before she left 3 years ago for a new position. We asked the complainant to provide specific details about what material she thought had been used by the subject inappropriately in the proposal, but she declined to provide this information. She did say that while at the subject's and researcher's institution, she was unaware of any work they had shared, despite the close proximity of their laboratories. She was surprised that, given what was contained in the proposal, that the researcher was not a co-PI. The complainant acknowledged that, since leaving the institution, she had not maintained contact with the researcher so that she did not know if the two had begun a collaboration since her departure.

The subject cites four published papers and one unpublished manuscript in the proposal that were co-authored by the complainant and researcher. In addition, the subject describes the researcher as a collaborator on the project in the proposal, and includes a detailed description of the new location of the subject's laboratory, immediately adjacent to the researcher's lab. Finally, the subject's proposal provides several examples of ways in which his and the researcher's departments were actively working to improve their formal and informal interactions to improve the communication of research interests and ideas.

Our review of several of the complainant's and researcher's joint relevant published papers revealed no similar text in the proposal and these publications. Without more specific information from the complainant, we have no reason to suspect that the subject has not done exactly what he states he has done, initiated a collaborative relationship with the researcher. This would explain any apparent shared information that might be contained in the proposal.

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

cc: Investigations, IG

<sup>1</sup> [REDACTED] for [REDACTED]  
<sup>2</sup> The complainant [REDACTED] is [REDACTED] at [REDACTED] in the [REDACTED]  
<sup>3</sup> The subject [REDACTED] submitted NSF proposal [REDACTED] entitled [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] as the sole PI. The proposal was declined. The subject is [REDACTED]  
<sup>4</sup> [REDACTED] is a professor [REDACTED] the [REDACTED]