

CLOSEOUT FOR M00080030

This case came to OIG on August 7, 2000, when an official¹ of a university² informed us that an inquiry had concluded that an allegation of plagiarism had substance and required investigation. The inquiry had found that two publications, one authored by the complainant³ and one authored by the two subjects,⁴ contained substantially similar text and data. The authors of both publications maintained that the work was original to them. The complainant and the subjects had formerly been members of the same department at the university.⁵ The subjects' publication acknowledged support from NSF.⁶

OIG deferred independent investigative activity until the university completed its own investigation. The university's investigation committee concluded that the data collection, analysis, and prose in dispute were the work of the subjects and had been misappropriated by the complainant. The University's Provost⁷ adjudicated the case for the university and concurred with the committee's conclusion.

OIG reviewed the university investigation committee's report and determined that the university's conclusion that the subjects had not committed misconduct was well supported by the evidence. In OIG's view, among the most important evidence supporting this conclusion were (1) records of data collection by the first subject, and the absence of credible records of data collection or even specific plans by the complainant to collect the disputed data; (2) documentation that the second subject had made analytic changes in response to reviewer comments on an earlier version of the

1 [REDACTED]

2 [REDACTED]

³ The complainant is Dr. [REDACTED] of the Department of [REDACTED] at the University. Her publication is entitled "[REDACTED]"

and appeared in [REDACTED], edited by [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] ([REDACTED], 1998), pp. [REDACTED]

⁴ The first subject is Dr. [REDACTED] of the Department of [REDACTED] at [REDACTED]. The second subject is Dr. [REDACTED] of the [REDACTED]. The subjects' publication is entitled "[REDACTED]"

and appeared in [REDACTED] ([REDACTED], 1998), pp. [REDACTED]

⁵ The Department of [REDACTED]

⁶ The subjects state that "[f]unding for data collection was obtained from the [REDACTED] / National Science Foundation Fund for the Advancement of the Discipline."

⁷ Dr. [REDACTED], Executive Vice President and Provost of [REDACTED]

subjects' manuscript, indicating that he could not have supplied the complainant with the analysis while they were collaborators, as she claimed; and (3) clear evidence that the complainant submitted falsified documents to the investigation committee, which drew further into question the authenticity of other doubtful material she submitted to the committee.

OIG concluded that the subjects had not committed misconduct in science. Because none of the complainant's actions in this case occurred in the course of "proposing, carrying out, or reporting results from activities funded by NSF" (45 C.F.R. § 689.1(a)(1)), OIG lacked jurisdiction over them and did not consider whether they might constitute misconduct in science.

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