



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: M01020005

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On February 26, 2001, we received an allegation of verbatim plagiarism. Specifically, it was alleged that a computer scientist (Subject-1¹) submitted an NSF proposal² containing material plagiarized from published sources. The matter was opened for inquiry on February 27, 2001.

In a letter dated August 7, 2001, we informed Subject-1 of the allegation. Subject-1 responded that she contributed one page of the proposal, and that the remainder was written by an international collaborator (Subject-2³). In a letter dated October 1, 2001, we informed Subject-2 of the allegation. Subject-2 stated that the relevant section of the proposal was written by a student, who admitted to copying the materials. In the further course of our inquiry, we found that the proposal was originally submitted by Subject-2 to an international program administered by an interagency board under the aegis of the U.S. Department of State⁴. When this program selected NSF as the appropriate agency to review the proposal, Subject-1 (the U.S. collaborator) was directed by NSF to reformat the proposal and submit it through FastLane. In mid-December we consulted Dept. of State OIG, who requested that we take the lead.

The matter was opened for investigation on February 12, 2002. Because Subject-2's institution is a foreign, non-awardee institution, we could not defer our independent investigation. In the course of our investigation, we analyzed all sections of the proposal. We found that the intellectual content of the proposal resided in four pages, three of which were largely plagiarized. We concluded that Subject-2, as the primary author of the original proposal and the putative author of the pages in question, bore responsibility for these acts of plagiarism. Because of the special circumstances in the case, however, we determined that the most appropriate course of action was to focus on preventive measures. Accordingly, we wrote to Subject-2 informing him of our conclusions. We emphasized the consequences of research misconduct and requested that he send us a statement outlining the actions he will take to resolve this incident.

We have recommended to Dept. of State and NSF that the solicitation for this program be strengthened to include a statement on standards for research proposals, consistent with NSF's Grant Proposal Guide. This matter will be pursued in connection with a case involving another proposal submitted to this program. This case is closed and no further action will be taken.

¹ [redacted]

² [redacted]

³ [redacted]

⁴ [redacted]

	Agent	Attorney	Supervisor	AIGI
Sign / date				