

CLOSEOUT FOR M90090033

This case was brought to the attention of OIG by [REDACTED] Program Director for the [REDACTED] Program, Division [REDACTED], Directorate [REDACTED] on September 12, 1990. [REDACTED] reported that two investigators had submitted proposals under the [REDACTED] in the area of [REDACTED] that used identical language in their discussions of the general research problem and broad technical approach. The subsequent specific discussions of technical approaches in the proposals were different. The two investigators in question were [REDACTED] (Subject #1) (Proposal Nos. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] (Subject #2) of [REDACTED] (Proposal Nos. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. When contacted by OIG, both subjects reported that the identical material derived from a proposal written by [REDACTED] (the original author), the Director [REDACTED] and submitted by him to the [REDACTED] Subject #1 had been [REDACTED] and had assisted in compiling the original author's proposal. Subject #2's [REDACTED] had served as industrial partner with [REDACTED] in the proposal submitted to the [REDACTED]. The original author told OIG that, after the proposal was rejected by the [REDACTED] he had given verbal permission to Subject #2 to submit it elsewhere with Subject #2 as prime contractor. Having forgotten his arrangement with Subject #2, he then gave permission to Subject #1 to submit the proposal to NSF on behalf of Subject #1's [REDACTED]. Thus the original author gave both investigators permission to adapt his proposal and submit it for funding. However, both used verbatim excerpts in their submissions to NSF, and neither subject cited the proposal or the original author when he did so.

OIG determined that insufficient evidence existed to pursue an investigation of misconduct in science. Two factors shaped our decision to close the case at this stage. (1) Both subjects were close collaborators of the original author and listed either his research center as a subcontractor (Subject #1) or the original author as an unpaid consultant (Subject #2) in their proposals. (2) In response to our inquiries, both subjects indicated that they believed in good faith that they had permission to revise and adapt the original author's proposal and then submit it as their own. The original author confirmed that his conversations with both subjects reasonably could have led them to this belief.

OIG also concluded that both subjects and the original author were guilty of negligent practices. We wrote a letter to Subject #1 criticizing him for incorporating language from an earlier research proposal by another investigator without indenting the material, enclosing it in quotation marks, or citing the original source. We wrote to the original author criticizing him for giving two researchers permission to adapt and submit his proposal and not clearly specifying the terms of their collaboration or the credit

due him for his original contributions to the proposals derived from his work. Subject #2 died before we closed the case.
This case is closed without further action.



Concurrence:

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