

CLOSEOUT FOR M94040015

This case was brought to the attention of OIG on [REDACTED] by [REDACTED] a program officer in the [REDACTED] Program in the Directorate for [REDACTED]. The program officer had received information from [REDACTED] the complainant. The complainant is a faculty member at the University [REDACTED] and served as a reviewer for proposal [REDACTED] (the second proposal) submitted by [REDACTED], the subject. The proposal was entitled "[REDACTED]". The complainant alleged that the subject made a false claim in his proposal about his knowledge of a book by another scientist.

OIG learned that the subject's second proposal was a revision of a previously declined proposal (the first proposal). OIG found that the reviewers of the first proposal had commented negatively on the PI's failure to discuss the work (including a recently published book) of another scientist in the field that the reviewers thought should have been included in the proposal. The subject's second proposal, in part, responded to the first proposal's reviewers' comments. The subject said that the other scientist's book had not been published until after the subject's first proposal had been submitted. The subject also said that the other scientist's book did not "deal intelligently with the kind of evidence [he was] planning to use." OIG noted that he had included several references to that scientist's work within the second proposal.

The complainant alleged that, prior to the first proposal's submission, the subject had seen a manuscript of the book as part of an external, confidential tenure review for the other scientist. The complainant also objected strenuously to the subject's negative characterization of the other scientist's book.

Panel and mail reviewers for the second proposal reacted strongly and negatively to the subject's characterization of the other scientist's book. Among the few faults in the proposal that the panel reviewers listed were: "the proposal fails to engage actively the existing literature in the area," and "the proposal does not adequately address reservations presented in the previous reviews [of the first proposal]." Reviewers rebuked the PI for what they viewed as his inappropriately negative critique of the other scientist's work. The panel recommended that the proposal not be funded.

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OIG concluded that the subject's comments about the contents of the other scientist's book and his initial failure to cite work by the other scientist may have been inappropriate, but were not misconduct in science, and that they had been appropriately addressed as part of the peer review process.

Therefore, OIG closed this inquiry, and no further action will be taken in this case.

cc: Staff Scientist, Deputy AIG-Oversight, AIG-Oversight, IG