CLOSEOUT FOR M95030009

This case came to OIG on February 21, 1995. [redacted], a program officer in the Division of [redacted], informed us that she had received a telephone call from [redacted] of the Department of [redacted] at [redacted] (the complainant), who reported a suspected intellectual theft and violation of the integrity of confidential peer review. The complainant stated that Drs. [redacted] (Subject #1) and [redacted] (Subject #2) of the [redacted] (the subjects) had published an article[1] that was extraordinarily similar to a proposal that the complainant and two collaborators had submitted to NSF.[2] The complainant expressed concern that NSF had supplied one of the subjects with his proposal for confidential merit review and that the subjects had misappropriated the ideas in it.

OIG determined that neither subject reviewed the proposal and, furthermore, that no one from the subjects' university reviewed the proposal. In addition, none of the senior subject's recent collaborators (as listed on his latest NSF proposal) reviewed the proposal at issue.

OIG consulted two knowledgeable scientists, both of whom examined the proposal, the article, and the complainant's letter to OIG. Both concluded that, although there were similarities between the proposal and the article, these similarities in no way suggested that the article was derived from the proposal. Both scientists stated that the subjects and the complainant were pursuing a familiar analytic strategy in their area of research and that it was not surprising that they would develop similar equations and related lines of argument.

OIG concluded that there was no evidence of intellectual theft

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[1]The article is entitled [redacted]." It was published in [redacted].

[2]The proposal was [redacted], entitled [redacted] The PIs were Drs. [redacted] and [redacted] of [redacted]. NSF declined to fund the proposal.

or violation of the integrity of the confidential merit review process. This inquiry is closed and no further action will be taken on this case.