

CLOSEOUT FOR M95050021

This case came to OIG on May 31, 1995, when Dr. [REDACTED], a program officer in NSF's [REDACTED], informed us that she had received allegations of misconduct from Dr. [REDACTED] (the complainant) of [REDACTED]. The complainant had received a proposal submitted by Dr. [REDACTED] (the subject) of [REDACTED] for review and alleged that the subject reputedly stole others' ideas. The complainant recounted an incident in which the subject had allegedly misappropriated the ideas of Dr. [REDACTED] (the colleague). The colleague subsequently refused to supply a reference to the published paper in which the alleged misconduct took place. In a subsequent conversation, the complainant said that she had also heard complaints about the subject's conduct from Dr. [REDACTED] of the [REDACTED] (the informant). In a telephone conversation, the informant supplied OIG with details of his concerns. Neither complaint included evidence that the alleged wrongdoing involved an NSF proposal or award.

Both incidents involved alleged failures by the subject to credit mathematicians whose work preceded the subject's and who had developed ideas similar to the subject's. Both the complainant and the informant stated that it was quite possible that the subject did not realize that his ideas derived from these sources. Both noted that when mathematicians rework publicly available ideas they sometimes lose track of their intellectual debts. The informant characterized the subject's failure to cite related work in the literature as inappropriate but did not believe that it was so serious as to constitute misconduct. OIG concluded that neither the complainant nor the informant had provided evidence of misconduct in science involving an NSF proposal or award and that their accounts of the two incidents indicated that it was unlikely that misconduct had taken place and, in any event, that it would not be possible to prove that misconduct had taken place.

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