

CLOSEOUT FOR M-95060026

On 21 June 1995, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] brought an allegation of misconduct in science to OIG's attention. The complainant was [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The complainant's *ad hoc* review of NSF proposal [REDACTED] contained an allegation of plagiarism against the subject and sole PI of the proposal, [REDACTED] a faculty member [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He alleged that the subject plagiarized text from [REDACTED]² (the Article) in the proposal.

OIG identified about eighteen lines of similar or closely paraphrased text from the Article in the proposal that had not been offset or referenced to the Article. All the identified similar text appeared in the methods section of the proposal.

OIG wrote to the subject requesting an explanation for the observed similar text. The subject explained that he was using the methodology presented by the Article's authors. He acknowledged his failure to apply proper "care and thoughtfulness" with his proposal preparation. He admitted that he failed to make appropriate citations for the three paragraphs that were significantly similar to the Article's text. He explained that somewhere in the process of preparing the proposal, he had failed to properly cite this text. He said that, because of a proposal's limited distribution, he viewed it differently than publications that are widely disseminated. He said that, "[i]n retrospect, [he felt] that [his] mental distinction between a 'proposal' and a 'publication' [had] influenced [his] judgment (or lack of it), leading to the oversight." He concluded that "[s]ome lessons are learned the hard way; [he knew he had] learned this hard lesson"

The subject deviated from accepted practice when he copied text from the Article in the proposal. However, OIG determined in this case the deviation was not sufficiently serious to proceed to an investigation. Only about 18 lines of text were copied from the Article that were not offset and referenced to the original source document. The copied text was part of a description of the methods that the subject planned to use in accomplishing the proposed work. Two other papers published by one and both of the authors of the Article were acknowledged in the proposal in a later paragraph as the source of some of the methods to be used by the subject.

OIG requested that the subject correct the proposal to accurately identify and attribute the text or ideas that were derived from others' work. The subject sent corrected copies of the relevant

¹ NSF proposal [REDACTED] was entitled [REDACTED]

² The paper, entitled [REDACTED] by [REDACTED] was published in the [REDACTED]

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pages of the proposal to the program officer. OIG verified that the subject had adequately addressed all the issues related to the copied text and that the corrected pages had been placed in the program jacket.

This case was closed and no further action will be taken.

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