

Closeout for M98070020

On July 28, 1998, we received a telephone call from the complainant¹ who alleged that her Chairperson (the subject)² had committed plagiarism. The complainant said her proposals,³ which she had submitted to NSF, had been seen by the subject in her position as Chairperson of the complainant's department. The complainant's proposals were for the purchase of equipment and outlined research that she would carry out using that equipment. The complainant said the subject had told her she was preparing a proposal for NSF that would utilize the same equipment the complainant had previously requested and asked the complainant to participate in the project. The complainant said she expected to be a co-PI on the subject's NSF proposal,⁴ but she discovered she was not. She alleged the subject committed plagiarism because the text she provided for the subject's proposal was not attributed to her. The complainant also alleged the subject misrepresented the complainant's participation in the project because the subject failed to inform NSF that the complainant's contract at her university would not be renewed, but nonetheless, included the complainant as a participant in the project.

The subject's grant was intended to help improve the department's facilities for its students. The subject told us she asked the participating faculty members to provide write-ups describing their intended contributions to this project. She said the complainant knew the subject's grant was a departmental one, and that the complainant gave the subject a diskette with the material from her earlier proposal to use as her contribution. For the most part, the subject included each faculty member's contribution into the grant unedited. NSF and its reviewers recognize that a grant of this type represents a department-wide effort and includes contributions from people other than the PI, *i.e.*, the participating faculty members. Although each person's contribution is not necessarily quoted or offset, NSF and its reviewers understand that the PI is not the sole researcher on a project of this type. Under these circumstances, the presence of the complainant's text in the subject's grant does not constitute plagiarism.

Regarding the complainant's status, the subject told us the complainant would remain at the university for 1 year after the decision not to renew her contract was made. In that year, she anticipated the complainant would still make contributions to the project. NSF's Program Manager⁵ told us that even if the complainant weren't involved with the project, the department had sufficient expertise to carry out all of the proposed research.

¹ (footnote redacted).

² (footnote redacted).

³ (footnote redacted).

⁴ (footnote redacted).

⁵ (footnote redacted).

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Based on the evidence we have, this inquiry is closed and no further action will be taken on this case.

cc: Integrity, IG