

## CLOSEOUT FOR M98100028

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) received a telephone call from a National Science Foundation (NSF) program officer<sup>1</sup> who provided information concerning possible misrepresentation of the publication status of several manuscripts by a scientist<sup>2</sup> (the subject) in an NSF proposal.<sup>3</sup> According to the program officer, an NSF peer reviewer<sup>4</sup> noticed that several publication citations listed as accepted in the subject's NSF proposal have not subsequently appeared in the scientific literature.

A close examination of three NSF proposals and two progress reports<sup>5</sup> submitted by the subject confirmed the possible misrepresentation of the publication status of several manuscripts. These NSF proposals and progress reports contain two references to manuscripts with "conditional acceptance for publication"<sup>6</sup> or "accepted with revisions"<sup>7</sup> which have not appeared in the scientific journal after the passage of months or years. In addition, our office noticed several inconsistencies in the authorship lists<sup>8</sup> and titles<sup>9</sup> of publication citations at different points in the NSF proposals and progress reports. Accordingly, OIG sent a letter to the subject requesting a clarification of the present status (authorship, title and publication status) of these manuscripts.

The subject sent a reply letter explaining that a journal editor suggested title changes on two manuscripts. These changes were properly reflected in some, but not all sections of the subject's NSF proposals and progress reports. The change in the authorship list on one manuscript involved a last minute addition of a student researcher. In response to our questions concerning the delayed publication of several manuscripts, the subject explained that funding problems and significant additional research caused the protracted delay in the final publication of these manuscripts. The subject provided confirmation that these manuscripts are presently "in press" at the scientific journal.

After considering this response, our office sent a letter cautioning the subject about the phrases "conditional acceptance for publication" or "accepted with revisions" when the editorial revisions may require years of additional experimentation. In addition, OIG suggested the subject submit an amendment which corrected all inconsistent

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<sup>1</sup> [Footnote redacted]

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<sup>8</sup> [Footnote redacted]

<sup>9</sup> [Footnote redacted]

## **CLOSEOUT FOR M98100028**

publication citations in the recently declined 1999 NSF proposal. In response, the subject sent an email message to another NSF program officer<sup>10</sup> containing an amended bibliography for the 1999 NSF proposal. A copy of this email message was sent to our office. In this amended bibliography, the subject corrected all inconsistent publication citations contained in the 1999 NSF proposal. Accordingly, this case is closed.

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<sup>10</sup> [Footnote redacted]