

## CLOSEOUT FOR CASE M99010002

On 25 January 1999, NSF staff<sup>1</sup> brought an allegation of misconduct in science to our attention. It was alleged that the subject<sup>2</sup> falsely certified to the truthfulness of two NSF proposals,<sup>3</sup> one of which was pending, when he included photocopies of letters of support that had been written for earlier NSF proposals, some of which he had altered.

We reviewed the letters of support submitted with the two proposals as well as letters of support contained in six earlier NSF proposals,<sup>4</sup> five of which were declined, submitted by the subject. We found the originals for the letters in the two proposals in the earlier proposals. We noted that the subject's changes to the photocopied letters were minor; they did not disguise the fact that the photocopied letters had been written in support of the earlier NSF proposals. We also found additional original letters of support from the same sponsors in the earlier proposals. Further, many of the letters of support in the earlier proposals stated that the sponsor planned to continue to support the subject in his future research projects. Finally, several letters of support described both previous financial assistance provided the subject as well as planned future support.

The subject told us that he did not know he could not reuse letters of support from earlier proposals. He said that his sponsors had supported his research for many years and continue to do so. He admitted that the reuse of these letters was a short cut to save his and his supporters' time, but explained that all the proposals which contained these letters of support planned work on related research projects. At our suggestion, he wrote to the program manager who was handling the subject's currently pending proposals to explain that he had reused letters of support originally written for his earlier proposals. He said that if any of his pending proposals were recommended for funding, he would get new letters of support from these supporters, if required. The subject said that, in the future, he would seek new letters of commitment for each proposal and not reuse letters.

We concluded that, in this case, the subject's reuse of original letters of support intended for earlier proposals and the few alterations he made to several of them, although not a good practice, did not rise to the level of misconduct in science.

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

cc: Integrity, IG.

<sup>1</sup> [REDACTED] brought the allegation to our attention.

<sup>2</sup> The subject, [REDACTED] is [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] (the Department) at [REDACTED]

<sup>3</sup> NSF pending proposal [REDACTED] entitled [REDACTED] was submitted by the subject with [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] a [REDACTED] NSF declined proposal [REDACTED] entitled [REDACTED] was submitted by the subject with [REDACTED]

<sup>4</sup> The NSF proposals which included the subject as a PI are: [REDACTED]