

## CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM FOR M-99110050

On 3 November 1999, an NSF program officer<sup>1</sup> brought concerns of possible misconduct in science to our attention. An *ad hoc* reviewer<sup>2</sup> (the complainant) alleged that the PI and co-PI (the subjects) for the NSF proposal,<sup>3</sup> plagiarized text from the complainant's paper (the paper)<sup>4</sup> into the proposal, and misrepresented and/or misinterpreted scientific results summarized from cited publications.

Our review of the alleged plagiarized text showed that two sentences in the background section of the subjects' proposal are essentially identical to two sentences in the background section of the paper. We noted that the subjects reference the complainant's paper in the proposal, but the reference appears in the paragraphs before and after the copied text. We could find no other examples of essentially identical text in the subjects' proposal. We determined that, although this is a deviation from accepted practices, it does not rise to the level of misconduct in science according to NSF's definition.

We reviewed the allegation that the subjects' proposal misrepresented and/or misinterpreted the published conclusions. The complainant admits that, although the paper does not specifically describe the conclusion that the subjects attribute to him in the proposal, the subjects, nevertheless, could have reworked his data and arrived at this conclusion. With respect to other publications allegedly misrepresented in the subjects' proposal, the complainant concedes that the subjects could have interpreted the publications differently than he had. We determined that the subjects' reviews of these publications presented in the proposal represented their interpretations of the publications' results, which were different from the complainant's. Differences in interpretations are not issues of misconduct in science.

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

cc: Integrity, IG

<sup>1</sup> [REDACTED] is an NSF program officer in [REDACTED]

<sup>2</sup> [REDACTED] the complainant, is [REDACTED]

<sup>3</sup> NSF proposal [REDACTED] entitled [REDACTED] was submitted by the subjects, [REDACTED] both of whom are [REDACTED]

<sup>4</sup> [REDACTED] by the complainant appears in the [REDACTED]