



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION  
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL  
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

## CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: A12110078

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NSF OIG received an allegation that a PI (Subject)<sup>1</sup> copied text without adequate attribution into two NSF proposals (Proposal 1<sup>2</sup> and Proposal 2<sup>3</sup>) in violation of NSF's Research Misconduct regulation, 45 C.F.R. part 689.<sup>4</sup> We identified approximately 100 lines of copied text in the proposals. In Proposal 2, copied text from one source was contained entirely in the Proposed Research Plan and incorporated verbatim the source's direction for future research. Given the amount of copied text, we referred<sup>5</sup> the matter to the University.<sup>6</sup>

The University's investigation concluded, based on a preponderance of the evidence, that the Subject intentionally, knowingly, and recklessly committed plagiarism, which it deemed a significant departure from accepted practices. The University required: plagiarism reviews of all of the Subject's proposals, papers, and manuscripts for five years; attendance at a program on research integrity at the Subject's expense; and completion of an online responsible-conduct-of-research training program.

We reviewed the University's report and concurred that the Subject committed plagiarism, which we deemed a significant departure from accepted practice of the Subject's research community.<sup>7</sup> Our conclusions regarding intent, however, differed from those of the University: we concluded that the Subject acted knowingly in copying material into Proposal 1 and acted intentionally in copying material into Proposal 2. With regard to Proposal 1, the Subject quite simply knew he was including verbatim material into Proposal 1 and knew he was doing so without adequate citation. Conversely, the Subject's copying without adequate citation of a significant portion of Proposal 2's proposed research plan, which incorporated another researcher's ideas for future research, was an intentional act: the Subject copied the material into Proposal 2 with the purpose of presenting a purportedly novel research idea to reviewers making funding recommendations.

1 [REDACTED]

2 [REDACTED]

3 [REDACTED]

<sup>4</sup> A finding of research misconduct by NSF requires (1) there be a significant departure from accepted practices of the relevant research community, (2) the research misconduct be committed intentionally, or knowingly, or recklessly, and (3) the allegation be proved by a preponderance of the evidence. 45 C.F.R. § 689.2(c).

<sup>5</sup> See 45 C.F.R. § 689.5(d)(2).

6 [REDACTED]

<sup>7</sup> In keeping with 45 C.F.R § 689.6.



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We recommended the agency: make a finding of research misconduct; send the Subject a letter of reprimand<sup>8</sup>; require the Subject to certify compliance with his University's imposed requirements, and submit certifications<sup>9</sup> and assurances<sup>10</sup> to NSF for two years. NSF's Chief Operating Officer concurred with our recommendations, but did not require the Subject to certify compliance with the University-imposed actions.

Accordingly, this case is closed.

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<sup>8</sup> A Group I action, 45 C.F.R. § 689.3(a)(1)(i).

<sup>9</sup> This action is similar to 45 C.F.R. § 689.3(a)(1)(iii).

<sup>10</sup> A Group I action, 45 C.F.R. § 689.3(a)(1)(iii).