



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: ~~A3030011~~
A03030011

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On March 5, 2003, an NSF program officer informed us of an allegation of plagiarism. Specifically, a reviewer alleged that an NSF proposal¹ was plagiarized from a graduate student's project report available on the web². The allegation, which was based on a Google search, was supported by a marked-up copy of the proposal and the URL for the student paper. The matter was opened for inquiry that same day.

We compared the two documents and found almost complete overlap. However, our review of relevant documents indicated that the PI and the graduate student, though at different campuses of a state institution, are active collaborators with many joint publications. We considered the possibility that the proposal was co-authored by the student and the PI. To resolve the question of authorship, we wrote to the PI on June 2, 2003.

The PI immediately replied that he and his graduate student collaborated simultaneously on the student's project and on the NSF proposal. The student then provided us with specific written information about the collaboration, which we confirmed in a telephone interview. The student explained that preparing an NSF proposal was valuable experience for an academic career.

In our conversation with the PI, we advised him that he would have done well to acknowledge his student's contribution in a footnote to his proposal. He expressed chagrin and agreed.

We conclude that the allegation of plagiarism is not substantiated. Accordingly, this case is closed.

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