



# CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: A-03040017

Page 1 of 1

On 24 April 2003, we received an allegation that the subjects'<sup>1</sup> NSF proposal (focus proposal)<sup>2</sup> contained ideas similar to those in another NSF proposal (source proposal),<sup>3</sup> and that one or both of the subjects must have reviewed the source proposal and inappropriately copied some of the ideas. We determined that one of the subjects (subject 1) received the source proposal to review prior to submitting the focus proposal to NSF.

Our review showed that the subjects submitted three proposals to NSF over the past 3 years, the most recent of which was the focus proposal. The two earlier NSF proposals<sup>4</sup> had the same title and described the same project as the focus proposal with very few changes. Comparison of the reviewers' descriptions of the subjects' earlier proposal submitted prior to subject 1's receipt of the source proposal for review with the focus proposals submitted afterwards showed that the projects and ideas remained virtually unchanged. The existence of these essentially similar proposals showed that subject 1's receipt of the source proposal for review apparently resulted in no change to the subjects' focus proposal.

Further, the reviewers' descriptions of the source proposal's project showed that, although the source proposal and the focus proposal were similar, they were not the same. We concluded that the reviewers' assessment of the complainant's and the subjects' proposed projects showed that the projects were different and there was no substance to the alleged intellectual theft by the subjects.

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

<sup>1</sup> [redacted] (subject 1) and [redacted] (subject 2) are both faculty members in the [redacted]

<sup>2</sup> NSF proposal [redacted], entitled "[redacted]" with subject 1 as the PI and subject 2 as the co-PI, was submitted on [redacted]

<sup>3</sup> NSF proposal [redacted], entitled "[redacted]" was submitted by [redacted]

<sup>4</sup> NSF proposal [redacted], entitled "[redacted]" with the subjects as PI and co-PI, was submitted on [redacted]; and NSF proposal [redacted], entitled "[redacted]" with the subjects as PI and co-PI, was submitted [redacted].