



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: A14080040

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We received an allegation that a proposal submitted to NSF contained plagiarized text. We conducted an inquiry and learned the PI was responsible for the copied text. His explanation, that his students were responsible, did not resolve the issues, so we referred an investigation to the University.

The University's investigation did not find evidence supporting the PI's contention that his students were responsible for the plagiarism. Nevertheless, the University did not make a finding because, contrary to its own policy, it applied a higher standard of proof than preponderance of the evidence in determining the act. Additionally, its assessment of intent was not consistent with the evidence the investigation committee found. Thus, we did not accept its report. We asked for a re-evaluation, which the University provided. We accepted the reassessment of the act, which found the PI was responsible for the plagiarized text, but not its reassessment of intent. Although the University did not make a finding of research misconduct, it still required the PI to take a responsible conduct of research course and retract any published papers that contained significant plagiarism.

We concurred with the University that the PI was responsible for the plagiarism. We concluded the PI knowingly plagiarized, and therefore committed research misconduct. We recommended that NSF make a finding of research misconduct and notify the PI in a letter of reprimand. We recommended NSF require the PI to take a responsible conduct of research training course within 1 year, and the course should be interactive and include a discussion of plagiarism. Since the University required the PI to retract papers with significant plagiarism within 6 months, we recommended NSF require the PI notify it of any NSF-supported papers that were retracted. Additionally, for 1 year as of the date of NSF's finding, we recommended NSF require a certification and assurance for each document (proposal, report, *etc.*) the PI submits to NSF (directly or through his institution) and bar the PI from participating as a peer reviewer, advisor, or consultant for NSF. NSF enacted all our recommendations, except it required notification of all retracted publications, and imposed certifications, assurances, and the bar on participation as a peer reviewer, advisor, or consultant at NSF for 2 years.

This case is closed with no further action taken.