



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: I-16-0023-O

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We received an allegation that a PI modified and reused a scientist's letter of support from an earlier proposal after the scientist told him she would not support his pending proposal. We also found 35 lines of copied text in the proposal. We referred the investigation to the University.

When questioned by the university, the PI admitted to falsifying the scientist's letter of support. The PI further admitted to modifying two additional letters of support from two other sources without permission and submitting them with two NSF proposals. Because of the PI's admissions, the university did not pursue the plagiarism allegation when making a finding of research misconduct.

We concurred with the University's finding. In addition, we conducted an in-depth plagiarism analysis of the PI's other proposals. We found 120 lines of copied text and 1 copied figure in 4 different proposals. Ultimately, we recommended that NSF make a finding of research misconduct, require the PI to take responsible conduct of research training, debar the PI for 1 year, bar the PI from participating as an NSF peer reviewer for 3 years, and require the PI to submit certifications and assurances with each document submitted to NSF for 3 years.

NSF did not debar the PI but concurred with our other recommendations. The PI appealed, but NSF's actions remained unchanged.

This case is closed with no further action taken.