



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION  
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL  
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

## CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: I-16-0103-O

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Our office received an anonymous allegation that an NSF-funded article<sup>1</sup> (Article) contained text plagiarized from a dissertation<sup>2</sup> (Dissertation). The Article was authored by several people, with the Subject<sup>3</sup> as the first author.

After we opened a case to review the above plagiarism allegation (Allegation1), we received a separate allegation (Allegation2) against another of the Article authors (Subject2<sup>4</sup>) that he published an NSF-funded article (Article2<sup>5</sup>) describing work he had previously published (Article1<sup>6</sup>) (and credited to his NSF award) years before. The complainant also alleged both articles contained text plagiarized from a third article (Article3<sup>7</sup>).

Regarding Allegation1, our analysis of the documents indicated the questioned text ultimately originated in earlier documents co-authored by the Subject and the Dissertation author. Therefore, we concluded Allegation1 is unsubstantiated.

Regarding Allegation2, we found the sole author of Article3 was a co-author on both Article1 and Article2. Our office does not review issues of copied text when articles have shared authors unless the article is clearly separable (*i.e.*, it is stated to the reader who wrote which sections). Furthermore, NSF's definition of plagiarism excludes issues of "republishing" or so-called "self-plagiarism." Therefore, we conclude that Allegation2 is unsubstantiated.

This case is closed with no further action taken.

1 [REDACTED]