

Closeout of M91010002

This is a case of alleged plagiarism involving Principal Investigator [REDACTED] (the subject) of the University [REDACTED]. It concerned the subject's proposal entitled "[REDACTED]", submitted to the [REDACTED] Program, the Division [REDACTED], Directorate [REDACTED] on [REDACTED]. The case was brought to our attention on January 15, 1991, by [REDACTED], the NSF cognizant program officer of the proposal, [REDACTED], who received a letter from [REDACTED] (the complainant) of [REDACTED] University, one of the panel reviewers of the proposal, stating that several sentences in the introduction to the proposal were taken from his recent book, [REDACTED] without proper quotes or references.

On [REDACTED], OIG wrote to the subject and asked for an explanation regarding the plagiarism that had allegedly occurred on two of the pages of the proposal. In an undated reply, the subject admitted to using the sentences due to "sloppiness" but denied that he was guilty of misconduct as defined "in part 689 of [NSF] guidelines". On [REDACTED], OIG wrote to the subject and explained that according to the NSF misconduct regulation (45 CFR part 689), the use of someone else's material without proper quotes and/or references, as he did, was plagiarism even if it only appeared in the background section of his proposal to a limited extent. OIG proposed to the subject to rectify this situation by 1) correcting the introductory section of his proposal using source citations for the quoted passages from [REDACTED] book, [REDACTED] sending these corrections to the NSF cognizant program officer for inclusion in the subject's proposal, and 3) sending a copy of the same to OIG. However, the subject responded that he was currently working on the "revised application" for resubmission of proposal [REDACTED] to NSF. He would include in it a sentence "acknowledging the improper quotation of material in the original submission".

Since the subject's response was unsatisfactory, on [REDACTED], OIG urged him to make the corrections as he was previously instructed and forward the corrections to NSF to be included in the file of his proposal. When the corrections were forwarded to NSF, OIG noticed that on one of the pages the subject had paraphrased the materials without using proper reference. On [REDACTED], OIG pointed this out to the subject who readily corrected this oversight and sent the corrected page to the NSF cognizant program officer with a copy to OIG.

The subject has acknowledged that he has made errors in his proposal by quoting materials without proper citations. He has promised in writing that he will "not ever be so careless again in the future". Also, it appears to be a minor case of plagiarism since the copied passages were in the introductory section of the

proposal and not in the main body of the proposal. Hence, this case can now be closed with a strong letter to the subject urging adherence to the standard practice of citation when using the words of others. The complainant will be notified that the case is being closed.



January 20, 1992

CC: Inspector General (IG)
Assistant IG for Oversight

Donald E. Buzzelli 1/22/92

concur: James J. Zimolnick 2/12/92

MRP 25 Feb 92