

CLOSEOUT FOR M91110042

This case was brought to the attention of OIG by [REDACTED] on October 29, 1991. At that time [REDACTED] was a program officer in the Division [REDACTED] the Directorate [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] informed OIG that he had received a letter from the complainant, [REDACTED], alleging that the funded proposal [REDACTED] submitted by [REDACTED], the subject, contained material plagiarized from [REDACTED] declined proposal [REDACTED] and that that material had been obtained during the complainant's confidential peer review of the subject's proposal. The subject is the Director of [REDACTED] in the Department [REDACTED] at [REDACTED], and the complainant is the Director [REDACTED] in the Department [REDACTED] at [REDACTED] University.

OIG compared the subject's and the complainant's proposals and found that the subject had served as a peer reviewer for the complainant's proposal. Four passages of the subject's proposal contain text that is similar to that found in four passages in the complainant's proposal. The subject's proposal also contains two phrases that are identical to phrases in the complainant's proposal.

When contacted by OIG the subject stated that he had reviewed the complainant's proposal, but it is his standard practice to immediately discard proposals after he has reviewed them. He pointed out that his proposal was submitted over a year after the complainant's proposal had been submitted to NSF. He stated that he had not violated the confidentiality of peer review, that he had not plagiarized the complainant's proposal, that the ideas in his proposal were independently developed, and that some of the similar phrases were technical descriptions that permitted little stylistic latitude. He also attributed the similarities in the two research proposals to the independent efforts of two investigators in a newly defined research area described by a limited number of scientific publications. He provided copies of two of these publications in which he had highlighted selected passages to show their similarity to some of the OIG-identified passages in the subject's and the complainant's proposals. The passages in the proposals contained references to these publications.

OIG reviewed the materials provided by the subject and concluded that, though some of the similarities between passages in the two proposals have not been explained, there was insufficient evidence to pursue these allegations further in an investigation. This case was closed without a finding of misconduct.

[REDACTED] 6/4/93
Staff Scientist, Oversight

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Concurrence:

Donald E. Buzzelli 6/7/93
Donald E. Buzzelli
Deputy Assistant Inspector General,
Oversight

James J. Zwolenik 6/7/93
James J. Zwolenik
Assistant Inspector General for Oversight

MF 7 Jun 93
Montgomery Fisher, Ph.D.
Counsel to the Inspector General

cc: Assistant Inspector General for Oversight
Inspector General