



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: I-21-0037-O

Page 1 of 1

We received an allegation of plagiarism in a declined NSF proposal submitted by a PI and three Co-PIs. It was alleged that the PI and one Co-PI collaborated with another individual that was not named in the proposal. We contacted the PI and Co-PI about the allegation.

The PI responded that the individual was a former collaborator who was not employed by his institution, and the PI's institutional practices precluded him from naming the individual in the proposal. The PI provided a letter from the institution that supported this assertion. The PI further stated that the individual was a contributor, but the PI's entire team was the author of the proposal. The Co-PI responded that the individual worked under the direction of the PI and that the proposal was submitted by the PI's institution according to that institution's practices. The PI and Co-PI both stated and provided evidence that the individual was fully aware that he was not named in the proposal when it was submitted and that he did not express concerns at the time.

We determined that the omission of the individual's name does not warrant a research misconduct investigation because it was an error that arose from poor institutional guidance and practices.

We wrote the institution a Questionable Administrative Practices letter reminding them of NSF policies regarding attribution and urging them to carefully review all NSF proposal preparation instructions. We wrote the PI a Questionable Research Practices letter urging him to properly attribute the individual contributions of team members and to follow all proposal preparation instructions when preparing NSF proposals.

This case is closed with no further action taken.