NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: I-19-0002-O

We received an allegation of plagiarism in a proposal. Our analysis found 123 lines of text and 8 figures copied from 7 sources. In response to our inquiry, the PI said that, due to time pressure, he mistakenly submitted a draft version of the proposal. We referred the investigation to the PI's University.

The University reviewed the PI's recent proposals with plagiarism software. When informed of the similarity indexes for the PI's proposals, the PI admitted he knew that the proposal in question, as well as several others, contained plagiarized material when submitted. He said he was not concerned because he believed the amount of copied material was below some threshold of acceptability. The University also compared the proposal to a previously submitted version of the proposal and found that the PI added the plagiarized material to the proposal in response to the program officer's comments on his original submission. The University concluded the PI intentionally plagiarized and offered the PI the opportunity to resign or be dismissed. The PI chose to resign.

We conducted a more in-depth plagiarism review of a subset of the items the University reviewed. We reviewed two additional proposals the PI submitted to NSF as sole PI and a proposal the PI submitted to an industry source. We found substantial amounts of plagiarism in the materials we reviewed. More than half of the proposal submitted to the industry source consisted of plagiarized material. The two additional proposals submitted to NSF contained an additional 114 lines of text and 4 figures copied from 9 sources, for a combined total of 237 lines of text and 12 figures copied from 16 sources into the 3 proposals submitted to NSF (including the proposal named in the allegation).

We concluded the PI intentionally plagiarized text and figures in three NSF proposals. We recommended NSF make a finding of research misconduct; prohibit the PI from serving as an NSF peer reviewer, advisor, or consultant for 3 years; and require the PI to submit certifications and assurances with each document submitted to NSF for 3 years. NSF concurred with our findings and recommendations.

This case is ***closed*** with no further action taken.