



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: I-19-0070-O

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We received an allegation of verbatim plagiarism in an NSF proposal. We contacted the PI, who acknowledged copying the material we identified and took full responsibility. We concluded there was sufficient evidence to refer the matter to the PI's University for investigation. The University investigation concluded, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the PI plagiarized, and his actions were part of a pattern. Its report examined multiple proposals written by the PI and determined there was a significant departure from the accepted practice of the relevant research community in several instances, including in two NSF proposals. The University required the PI to complete Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training; consult with a writing consultant or training program; use plagiarism software on all proposals for 3 years; withdraw all pending proposals; and contact another federal agency about an awarded grant. The PI additionally received a formal letter of reprimand and was ineligible for annual salary merit increases for 2 years. As the PI had no RCR training, the Provost required the University to institute tracking to ensure all PIs, graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows receive RCR training before submitting grants.

We accepted the University's investigation report but found there was no intent determination. Based on the University's report, its attachments, the PI's responses, and our analysis of two additional NSF proposals, we concluded the PI knowingly committed plagiarism in at least four NSF proposals and had a pattern of doing so.

We recommended NSF make a finding of research misconduct; require completion of interactive RCR training; and for 2 years, require the PI to submit certifications and assurances with each document submitted to NSF. We also recommended a prohibition of the PI serving as an NSF peer reviewer, advisor, or consultant for 2 years. NSF made a finding of research misconduct, required the PI to certify compliance with the University's requirements in lieu of additional RCR training, required certifications and assurances for 1 year, and prohibited the PI from service as peer reviewer, advisor, or consultant for 1 year.

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