



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION  
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL  
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

## CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: I-20-0058-O

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We received an allegation that a co-PI on an NSF Award plagiarized material into three lectures he prepared for an Award-funded course. Specifically, the co-PI allegedly plagiarized online lecture content from one researcher and an online user guide and data sets from a second researcher. We referred the matter to the university for investigation.

The university concluded the co-PI knowingly committed research misconduct. The university required the co-PI to receive responsible conduct of research training, regularly meet with Award personnel to discuss research accountability and mentorship, continue Award-related work after completing the training and meetings, and have his Award-related teaching monitored.

We accepted the University's evidentiary record and conclusions, but more closely reviewed the extent of the plagiarism. We also directly addressed challenges made by the co-PI to the University's finding. We found that (a) the verbal and visual content in the co-PI's three lectures were almost entirely identical and/or significantly similar to the other researchers' online content, and (b) the co-PI did not verbally or visually credit either researcher. We also determined that the co-PI's lectures constituted 'research' under federal statutes and regulations, as they directly resulted from an awarded NSF proposal.

We recommended that NSF make a research misconduct finding, issue a letter of reprimand, require the co-PI complete interactive responsible conduct of research (RCR) training and, for 3 years, require the co-PI submit certifications and assurances and be prohibited from participating as NSF peer reviewer, advisor, or consultant.

NSF accepted our recommendations but reduced the requirements to 2 years. Additionally, NSF required that the co-PI certify compliance with his university-imposed requirements.

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