



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: I-21-0049-O

Page 1 of 1

We conducted an inquiry in response to an allegation that a declined NSF SBIR Phase I proposal contained plagiarized material. Our inquiry identified plagiarized text and embedded references that were renumbered and reformatted to fit the proposal's reference style. Although some of the copied verbatim text contained accurate citations and references, none included any indication the language was not original to the proposal.

We contacted the PI who denied wrongdoing and claimed background or literature review sections did not need to be quoted. His response did not dispel the allegation; NSF policy requires scholarly writing in all proposal sections.

The PI is co-founder of a very small business that could not conduct an impartial investigation, so we conducted our own investigation, including assessing three additional proposals the PI authored. We found additional plagiarism, including a table copied with minimal modification, in a withdrawn NSF proposal. We also found that the PI served as Associate Editor for a journal with guidelines specifying that verbatim quotes should be clearly demarcated.

Our investigation determined, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the PI knowingly committed plagiarism and that the act was a significant departure from accepted practices of his research community. We recommended NSF make a finding of research misconduct, require completion of interactive responsible conduct of research training, and for 2 years require the PI to submit certifications with each document submitted to NSF. We also recommended a prohibition of the PI serving as an NSF reviewer, advisor, or consultant for 2 years. NSF concurred with our recommendations.

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