

M92070031
CLOSE OUT MEMORANDUM

On July 24, 1992 the Director of Research at the [REDACTED] informed us that the University's Ethics Committee was initiating an investigation into possible plagiarism involving [REDACTED], a biological [REDACTED] in the School of [REDACTED] at the [REDACTED]. A university inquiry found substance to allegations of possible plagiarism in two papers [REDACTED] the subject, had written.

In allegation (1), three paragraphs pertaining to hypothesis testing and resolution in [REDACTED] published by [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] Oct. 1990, [REDACTED], appeared to be plagiarized from [REDACTED]. The subject's research support, according to the acknowledgement in this paper, was under NSF awards [REDACTED].

In allegation (2), the subject, in a manuscript, [REDACTED] " had plagiarized material from a paper by [REDACTED] et al., [REDACTED] (1986) [REDACTED]

The investigating committee determined that allegation (1) met the university's definition for plagiarism but recognized evidence that the conduct arose inadvertently through editing procedures. The committee also determined that allegation (2) could not involve the subject in plagiarism since he was a co-author of the paper allegedly plagiarized.

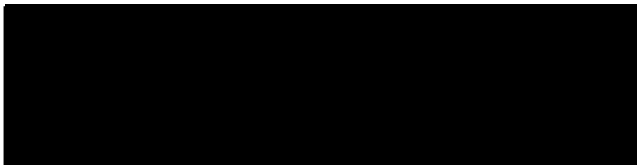
We accepted the university's substitute final investigation report of July 23, 1993 as clarified by a letter of September 2, 1993 from the Vice-President for Research and Education as complete and accurate.

The copying found in allegation (1) is not sufficient evidence that the subject engaged in misconduct in science under NSF's regulation: the behavior did not constitute "recklessness" and therefore does not rise to the level of a serious deviation from accepted practice. For the three paragraphs involved, a proper citation except for one key stroke was given. There were both additions to and deletions from the source text so that the copying was not total. However, quotation marks or indentations were absent. Also, the university found that the act of copying occurred as a result of a careless editing error made by a [REDACTED] individual who must rely almost totally on electronic

word processing for written communication.

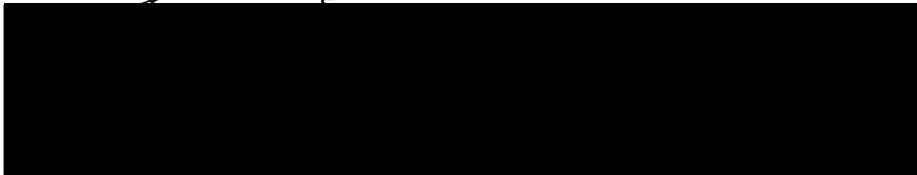
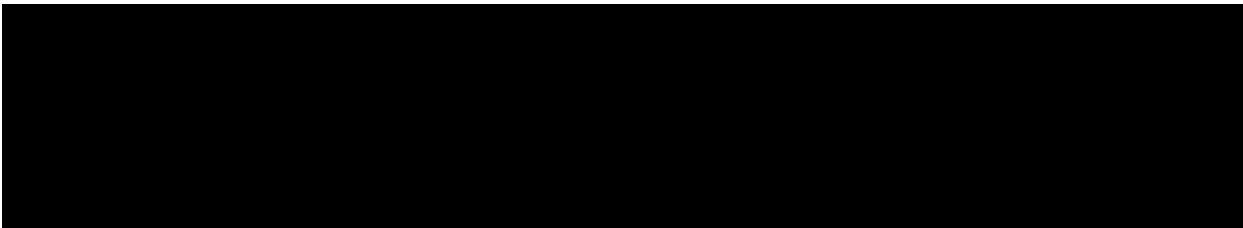
We are further reassured by the following facts: that during both the inquiry and the investigation the subject took full responsibility for the copying which occurred although he did not know how the "calamitous mistake" occurred; he expressed remorse and appreciation for the offense; he agreed to change his writing and editing procedures to prevent similar occurrences in the future; and was willing to accept institutional sanctions.

Under these circumstances, we are closing this case without a finding of misconduct in science and relying upon the university's corrective and preventative sanctions which require (a) certification for one year by the subject to his superior that every manuscript and every proposal for external funding has been checked for and was free of passages copied without proper attribution and (b) the establishment of editorial procedures to prevent future repetition of any copying.



September 28, 1993

Concurrence:



cc: Assistant Inspector General for Oversight
Inspector General

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