

## Closeout for M98120034

On September 30, 1997, an anonymous caller alleged that a PI<sup>1</sup> had committed fraud and/or misconduct in science by requesting NSF support<sup>2</sup> for research already completed. The caller stated that the PI had told him, prior to the award being made, that he was seeking NSF support for a project which was by that time 80-90% finished. It was the caller's belief that the proposed work had served as part of the PI's dissertation research<sup>3</sup> and had also been published in a scholarly journal.<sup>4</sup> The caller was also concerned about the PI's intention to submit a follow-up proposal<sup>5</sup> to NSF.

Prior to the award noted by the caller, the PI had submitted an essentially identical proposal<sup>6</sup> to NSF which had been declined. We compared these two proposals against the PI's Ph.D. dissertation and the journal publication identified by the caller. The research outlined in these proposals is not described in either the dissertation or the publication. Furthermore, the PI stated to us that none of the research had been completed before he submitted either proposal. We concluded that NSF funds were requested for research which had not been published in the PI's dissertation and journal publication.

We discovered that one reviewer<sup>7</sup> of the PI's most recent proposal suggested that the PI should "be far more explicit" when referring to an award he received from a scientific society while another<sup>8</sup> opined that the manner with which the PI did refer to this award "is misleading at best." The award, as it was written in his third proposal, appeared to be fairly prestigious and the reviewers were skeptical that the PI had actually been presented with it. In his previous two proposals this award is designated as an "undergraduate" award while in his third proposal the "undergraduate" designation was missing. The PI stated to us that he did not see any differences in the references he made regarding his award primarily because he wasn't aware of the more prestigious award. We concluded that further inquiry wasn't necessary because the transformation of the PI's reference to his societal award was the result of ignorance and because the PI indicated a willingness to accurately refer to this award in the future.

We also found several inconsistencies between the PI's version of his educational history in his proposals and the records of the registrars at two of his alma maters.<sup>9,10</sup> The PI stated that he had never seen copies of his official transcripts until we asked about his educational records, and that the biographical information he had provided in his proposals represented his best understanding of the facts. We concluded that further inquiry was not warranted because the inconsistencies in the PI's educational history among his three proposals to NSF were the result of inadequate record keeping and because the PI indicated a willingness to accurately update his records.

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6 Footnotes Redacted

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This inquiry is closed and no further action will be taken.

cc: Integrity, IG