

PURDUE UNIVERSITY  
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
EXECUTIVE MEMORANDUM No. C-22

September 6, 1991

**To:** Directors, and Heads of Schools, Divisions, Departments, Offices, and Regional Campus Chancellors

**Re:** Policy on Integrity in Research

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Integrity in research is an essential part of Purdue University's intellectual and social structure, and adherence to its spirit and principles must be maintained. These principles include commitment to truth, objectivity, fairness, honesty, and free inquiry.

Serious violations of integrity in research are rare. However, those that do occur strike at the very heart of scholarship and the concept of the University. Advances in scientific knowledge depend on reliable data and honestly reported conclusions. Advances in humanistic studies depend upon gathering and interpreting legitimate information in a manner which other scholars, in good faith, can judge and evaluate. Artists present portfolios and performances which reflect unique artistic statements and points of view. For the purposes of this document, the term research will be understood to include all of these and all other scholarly activities conducted at the University (including its regional campuses) or elsewhere if conducted under University auspices. In any academic institution, scholars, researchers, and artists have a special obligation to exemplify the best qualities and highest standards of personal and professional conduct.

The integrity of the research process must depend largely on self-regulation; it is the responsibility of all who engage in the search for knowledge. Advances are gleaned from rigorous application of scientific and scholarly methods in compliance with critical codes rooted in intellectual honesty.

To minimize the incidence of academic dishonesty, major attention must be directed toward establishing the best possible research environment. To accomplish this goal, each researcher and academic unit has an obligation to participate in and focus attention on:

1. encouraging integrity in research,
2. discouraging the quest for success at the expense of integrity,
3. assigning credit and responsibility appropriately,
4. accepting responsibility for the integrity of students and staff involved in research.
5. conducting interpersonal relationships in a professional manner,
6. establishing well-defined research protocols and maintaining careful records.

"Research misconduct" shall mean, for the purposes of this policy, fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or other practices that seriously deviate from those that are commonly accepted within the scientific and academic community for proposing, conducting, or reporting research. It does not include honest error or honest differences in interpretations or judgments of data. The University's response to incidents of alleged research misconduct shall be guided by the following principles:

1. All members of the academic community have a responsibility to report research misconduct if and when they believe substantive evidence exists. Persons who, in good faith, report questionable conduct will be protected against reprisals.
2. Personal relations may make objectivity difficult or impossible. Therefore, anyone appointed to conduct inquiries or investigations related to allegations of research misconduct must be objective, must possess the special competency necessary to understand the research in question, and must be free of real or apparent conflicts of interest.
3. The mere suspicion or allegation of wrongdoing, even if totally unjustified, is potentially damaging to a person's career. Consequently, no information about charges of a lack of integrity in research may be disclosed except to the appropriate university and federal authorities.
4. Academic colleagues should expect data and interpretations to be challenged routinely in a scholarly context. However, when an allegation related to research

misconduct has been directed at an individual, that person must be advised in writing immediately.

5. The individual against whom an allegation has been raised must be afforded the rights of due process, which in this context shall mean being fully informed of all allegations, having the opportunity to communicate with the inquiry or investigation committee during the course of the deliberations and prior to the formulation of conclusions, and not being subjected to adverse changes in employment status due to the allegation during the proceedings. The individual must also be advised of any decisions to disseminate information or to seek information about the research from others.

The following procedure shall be followed in any situation related to research misconduct. The major phases of the procedure are the inquiry, a process of information gathering and initial fact-finding to determine whether an allegation or apparent instance of research misconduct warrants an investigation, and the investigation, which is the formal examination and evaluation of all relevant facts to determine if research misconduct has occurred. The inquiry and investigation are internal administrative and collegial proceedings and not judicial processes. An individual who is the object of an inquiry or investigation may be advised or represented by persons, selected by the individual, the number of which shall be determined on a case by case basis by the committee involved. All such assistance shall be obtained and rendered at the expense of the accused.

1. The initial allegation of research misconduct must be reported in writing to the school Dean (the Dean of the Graduate School if the allegation involves a graduate student). The written allegation must be signed but requests for anonymity will be considered and final decisions with respect to such requests shall be made by the school Dean.
2. Upon receiving such an allegation the school Dean will inform the individual of the allegation and appoint a committee to conduct an inquiry into the allegation. The advice of the Head of the department involved may be solicited in appointing the inquiry committee. The committee will be composed of three individuals selected for their expertise in the field.
3. The committee will send a written report of the results of the inquiry to the accused and a copy to the school Dean.
4. If a majority of the inquiry committee votes that an investigation is not warranted, the report will be securely stored in the office of the school Dean, for as long as required by federal regulations, and then destroyed.
5. If a majority of the inquiry committee votes that an investigation is warranted, the President will be informed that an official University investigation will be made into the alleged research misconduct. If required by federal regulations, the

- President will notify the appropriate office of the involved agency. The school Dean will inform the individual that an investigation will be conducted.
6. The school Dean, the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the Chairperson of the Faculty Affairs Committee of the University Senate will jointly appoint a committee to investigate the allegation. The committee shall consist of not more than seven members unless the persons appointing the committee determine that a larger number is required in order to provide the required expertise on the subject and breadth of representation. The committee shall include at least one member who is a peer of the accused.
  7. The investigation committee will make available a written report of the results of the investigation to the accused and jointly to the school Dean, the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the Chairperson of the Faculty Affairs Committee of the University Senate. The investigation must be completed within 90 days of its initiation unless circumstances clearly warrant a longer period.
  8. The school Dean, Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the Chairperson of the Faculty Affairs Committee of the University Senate will jointly inform the President of the results of the investigation. If required by federal regulations, the President will provide a report to the appropriate office of the involved agency.
  9. The accused and the inquiry and investigation committees shall have the privilege of presenting witnesses. Each such witness may be cross-examined by the accused or the committee involved. Pertinent records, exhibits and written statements may be accepted as evidence for consideration by the committee involved at the discretion of the Chairperson.
  10. The inquiry committee's and the investigation committee's determination shall be made on the basis of whether it is more likely than not that the accused committed research misconduct.
  11. There shall be a single verbatim record, such as a tape recording, of all hearings, before the investigation committee. The record shall be the property of the University.

### **APPEALS**

A decision reached by the investigation committee may be appealed by the accused to an appeals committee within five days of the decision. Such appeals shall be in writing and shall be delivered to the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs.

The appeals committee shall consist of not more than three persons selected for their expertise in the field, who shall be appointed by the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Except as required to explain the basis of new evidence, an appeal shall be limited to a review of the verbatim record of the investigation committee and supporting documents for one or more of the following purposes:

- a. To determine whether the investigation committee's hearing was conducted fairly in light of the charges and evidence presented and in conformity with prescribed procedures giving the accused a reasonable opportunity to prepare and present a rebuttal to all allegations.
- b. To determine whether each fact necessary to establish that the accused committed research misconduct was based on substantial evidence.
- c. To consider new evidence sufficient to alter the decision, but only where such evidence was not known to the accused or could not reasonably have been discovered by the accused at the time of deliberations.
- d. The appeal must be completed within 25 days of its initiation unless circumstances clearly warrant a longer period.

### **REGIONAL CAMPUSES**

In cases where the accused is associated with one of the regional campuses, the Chancellor of that regional campus, in consultation with the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, may elect to implement the foregoing procedures either through the use of the offices set forth above, or, in the alternative, through the offices on that regional campus which are equivalent to those set forth above, provided, that in no case shall the authority and duties of the President be assumed by any other person. In either event, the person who appoints the members of the inquiry committee, the investigation committee or the appeals committee may appoint persons from the regional campus involved, the West Lafayette Campus, or both.

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

The duties of the investigation committee will be concluded with their report of the findings of fact. After the completion of any appeal or upon the expiration of the time for appeal, the administration of the University will then determine appropriate sanctions, if any, arising from the committee's report, such sanctions being subject to established University disciplinary procedures including Executive Memorandum [B-48](#).

Determinations made under this policy as to the culpability of the accused and the findings of fact shall be deemed final, and all proceedings under existing

University grievance procedures shall be limited to issues concerning the appropriateness of any sanctions imposed.

The timetable and requirements established by the Department of Health and Human Services for dealing with and reporting possible misconduct in science will be applied to the fact-finding procedure.

Committees shall be appointed as promptly as reasonably possible under the circumstances. After appointment, each committee shall conduct its inquiry or investigation as promptly as reasonably possible consistent with thoroughness, fairness and impartiality.

All procedural questions not addressed by this policy are subject to the final decision of the Chairperson of the committee involved.

At any stage of the inquiry, investigation or appeal, the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs shall be promptly notified if any of the following conditions exist: (1) there is an immediate health hazard involved; (2) there is an immediate need to protect federal funds or equipment; (3) there is an immediate need to protect the interests of any person making the allegation or of any individual who is the subject of any allegation as well as his or her co-investigators and associates; (4) it is probable that the alleged incident is going to be reported publicly; or (5) there is a reasonable indication of possible criminal violation.

Steven C. Beering  
President