

February 21, 2007

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for your expression of concern.

Purdue's procedures for the submission and review of allegations of research misconduct are set forth in Executive Memorandum C-22, which is available on Purdue's website. The federal government's Office of Research Integrity originated many of the specific rules used in research misconduct policies. As a result, the procedures for handling research misconduct allegations are quite consistent among major research institutions. The confidentiality required by Purdue's C-22 policy is standard.

Please bear in mind that an inquiry into a research misconduct allegation is not an inquiry into the verifiability of a research claim. The elements required to establish an incident of "research misconduct" are set forth in the C-22 policy. Lack of verification is not one of those elements.

Verifiability is decided by experimentation and debate, and often takes time to resolve. There can be legitimate differences of opinion regarding a laboratory observation. The Purdue administration's job is not to decide among such opinions. Your reference to "interviews of any prominent scientist in the area" is misdirected. Such persons have an obvious potential role in experimentation and scientific debate, but their status does not make them witnesses to an incident of research misconduct.

Purdue carefully followed the C-22 provisions in this matter. The C-22 policy is directed to properly presented written allegations that research misconduct has occurred at Purdue. Purdue has not ignored any such allegations with respect to Dr. Taleyarkhan.

Highly conscientious, distinguished senior Purdue faculty worked with great diligence as committee members under the C-22 procedure. I suspect that they would be surprised and disappointed by any insinuation that they were not equipped for their assignment.

As your letter acknowledges, the confidentiality requirements of the C-22 policy prevent me from responding in further detail to your questions. If any of you were in the position of an accused, those requirements would undoubtedly be important to you.

As fellow scientists deeply committed to research integrity and Purdue's mission, Dr. Rutledge and I have personally participated in depth in the university's efforts on this matter and are both personally satisfied that those efforts have been properly conducted.

Sincerely,



Sally Mason
Provost