“The Responsible Scientist”
The LAB
Responsible Conduct of Research

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“The scientific enterprise is built on the foundation of trust”
Research is based on the same ethical values that apply in everyday life including:

- honesty
- fairness
- objectivity
- openness
- trustworthiness
- respect for others
“Scientific standard” refers to the application of these values in the context of research.

- **openness** in sharing research materials
- **fairness** in reviewing grant proposals
- **respect** for one’s colleagues and students
- **honesty** in reporting research results
Imagine what you are preparing to do will be reported the next day on the front page of the newspaper…….

The most serious violations of standards have come to be known as “scientific misconduct.”

The U.S. government defines misconduct as “fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism (FFP) in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results.”
Research Misconduct

**Fabrication** - making up data or results and recording or reporting them

**Falsification** - manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that research is not accurately represented in the research record

**Plagiarism** - appropriation of another person’s ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit
All scientific research is susceptible to error.

Honest errors
- Inability to identify reliable data in a mass of confusing and/or contradictory observations
- Reliance on a theoretical or experimental technique not fully developed

Negligence
- Haste, carelessness, inattention-human factor
- Reliance on peer review to replicate research
Research Misconduct actions must:

- represent a significant departure from accepted practices
- have been committed intentionally, or knowingly, or recklessly
- be proven by a preponderance of evidence
Test for Misconduct

Does not include:

* errors of judgment;
* errors in the recording, selection, or analysis of data; differences of opinions involving the interpretation of data;
* or misconduct unrelated to the research process;
* criminal behavior, personal disputes, violations of grant management policies;
* behaviors not unique to research-discrimination or harassment
The effects of misconduct in terms of lost time, damaged reputations, and feelings of personal betrayal can be devastating.

Individuals, institutions, and even entire research fields can suffer grievous setbacks.

Acts of misconduct draw the attention of the media, policymakers, and the general public with negative consequences for all involved.
Researchers have many interests (personal, intellectual, financial, and professional interests); these interests sometimes clash.

The term “conflict of interest” or “COI” refers to situations in which financial or other personal consideration may compromise, have the potential for compromising, or have the appearance of compromising a researcher’s professional judgment.
Conflicts of Interest Examples

- A researcher who wants to start a company to commercialize research results generated in the laboratory might feel pressure to compromise the progress of students by having them work on company-related projects that are less related to their academic interests.

- A researcher might need to decide whether to publish a series of narrowly focused papers that would build the researcher’s record of publication but not help the field progress as quickly as would a single paper containing the researcher’s main conclusions.

- A researcher might have to decide whether to accept a grant to do routine work that will help the researcher financially, but may not help the researcher’s career or the careers of the students in the research group.
Researchers have to make difficult decisions:

- how to divide their time between research and other responsibilities
- how to serve their scientific disciplines
- how to respect their employer’s interests, mission, and values

Someone might have strong philosophical, religious, cultural, or political beliefs that could influence scientific judgments.

Conflicts between these commitments, values and beliefs can be a source of considerable strain and can cause career problems.
• COI is not a reflection of character or integrity

• Institutions and Individuals have them

• Having a COI does not necessarily mean that you cannot do the project

• Need to be managed by:
  transparency through disclosure;
  oversight through monitoring and independent review;
  disengagement
“It takes less time to do a thing right than it does to explain why you did it wrong.”

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow-American Poet & Educator
This presentation was designed to give an introduction and overview of components for Responsible Conduct of Research.

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