

RESEARCH INTEGRITY

MARCH, 2013



The State University
of New York

Statement on Research Integrity The State University of New York March, 2013

The value of research for human society, and the trust that the public places in science and the scientific and technological process, are vitally dependent on research integrity.^{1,2}

The State University of New York (SUNY) and the Research Foundation for SUNY (RF) are committed to excellence, objectivity, accountability, professional courtesy, fairness, good stewardship, and – above all – integrity in the conduct of scholarly research.

Research university systems, such as SUNY, are special places where *knowledge creation* through research and scholarship expands and enriches the process of *knowledge dissemination* through teaching and learning, each component acting together to amplify the co-benefits for people and society. It is in such institutions that the “leaders of each new generation are nurtured; it is there that boundaries to our existing knowledge are explored and crossed; it is there that unfettered thinking can thrive and unconstrained intellectual partnerships can be created. It is there, within each new class, within each new generation, that the future is forged.”³

It is a privilege to be able to conduct research and scholarship at SUNY and connect these vital activities with the academic and public service missions of the system. In this light, the research process itself must be transparent and our researchers must take responsibility for assuring the trustworthiness of their research. Freedom of inquiry, openness to new ideas, a love of learning, and a commitment to rigorous study are the necessary components for first-class research and scholarship. SUNY researchers should not avoid difficult or controversial areas, since it is often in these areas that the greatest societal contributions are made. It is professional integrity that allows such new scholarship to be debated, criticized, attacked, defended, digested, and accepted by the scientific community and society, thereby adding to the corpus of human knowledge. When properly exercised, academic freedom, and the concomitant commitment to rigor and excellence, yields the knowledge base on which tomorrow’s society depends.

SUNY seeks to reaffirm and maintain its full commitment to integrity in research. This commitment will incorporate regular review and update of existing policies with the following principles in mind.

¹ Singapore Statement on Research Integrity, 2nd World Conference on Research Integrity, 21-24 July, 2010, Singapore
<http://www.icsu.org/publications/cfrs-statements/singapore-research-integrity>

² Scientific Integrity; Presidential Memorandum for Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, the White House, March 9, 2009
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/memorandum-heads-executive-departments-and-agencies-3-9-09>

³ Duderstadt, James, J. et al., *A University for the 21st Century*, University of Michigan press, 2003, p324

SUNY Principles of Research Integrity

- 1. Integrity:** Researchers and scholars should take responsibility for the integrity of their work and results. Campus and system administrators should take responsibility for the formulation and implementation of policies related to research integrity.
- 2. Compliance with regulations:** Researchers and scholars should be aware of and comply with regulations and policies related to research.
- 3. Research methods:** Researchers and scholars should employ appropriate research methods, base conclusions on critical analysis of the evidence and report findings fully and objectively.
- 4. Transparency:** Basic research should be open to review and vetting. Known potential conflicts of interest should be disclosed along with funding sources and affiliations.
- 5. Independence:** Researchers must be free of undue outside influence when conducting or reviewing research. Many science and technology issues are closely related to and may influence a number of public policy issues and priorities, making “high quality objective scientific advice” vital and in the public interest.
- 6. Free and Open Communication:** SUNY researchers and scholars are free to express their personal opinions in areas of particular expertise, so long as it is clear those opinions are theirs and not SUNY’s or the RF’s. This is true no matter how controversial the subject, even if there are public policy implications. When engaged in public discussions about the importance and application of their research findings, researchers should clearly distinguish professional comments from opinions based on personal views. In their outside communications, employees have an obligation to indicate that they are not institutional spokespersons.
- 7. Authorship:** Researchers and scholars must have the ability to review, comment, and amend a final version of a document or publication that relies on their research or represents their scientific opinion. Researchers should take responsibility for their contributions to all publications, funding applications, reports and other representations of their research. Lists of authors should include all those and only those who meet applicable authorship criteria. All authors must review and approve the document prior to submission. All those (including funders) who made significant contributions (but do not meet applicable authorship criteria) should be acknowledged in publications and reports.
- 8. Information Sharing:** Sharing information and research data is a key component of the scientific process. Researchers should keep clear, accurate records of all research in ways that will allow verification and replication of their work by others. Researchers should share data and findings openly and promptly, as soon as they have had an opportunity to establish priority and ownership claims. Researcher should be aware of and comply with policies with regard to disclosures, patents and intellectual property rights.
- 9. Peer Review:** Unbiased peer review is essential in research and provides for credibility and important quality assurance for the many stakeholders involved. Researchers should provide fair, prompt, and rigorous evaluations and respect confidentiality when reviewing others’ work. Researchers should not claim that a piece has been peer reviewed if accepted disciplinary norms and standards have not been followed.
- 10. External Pressure and Biases:** Undue external pressure must be absent from the research process. Scientists and researchers must be protected from undue external pressures from private and public sponsors, government officials, and university administrators.
- 11. Conflicts of Interest:** Policies and procedures governing disclosure and management of conflicts of interest must be well developed and rigorously observed. Researchers should disclose financial and other conflicts of interest that could compromise the trustworthiness of their work in research proposals, publications and public communications, as well as in all review activities.
- 12. Misconduct Allegations:** Allegations of fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research or in reporting research results must be reviewed pursuant to applicable policies. Individual whistleblowers must be protected from retaliation. When misconduct or other irresponsible research practice is confirmed, appropriate actions should be taken promptly, including correcting the research record.
- 13. Protecting Human Subjects and Humane Use of Animals:** All researchers must protect the rights and welfare of any human research subjects and must obtain prior approval from their Institutional Review Board for such work to go forward. All research on animals must be conducted in a humane manner. Researchers planning to use live vertebrate animals for research or education must obtain prior approval from their Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee.
- 14. Scientific Basis for Public Policy and Discourse:** When researchers or scientists have reason to believe that policy makers may utilize their research or publications as the basis of supporting or rejecting a policy initiative, researchers and the university should make every effort to present or disclose information related to the underlying research, the findings, the scientific approach and process used to develop the underlying scientific information.⁴
- 15. Research Environments:** Research institutions should create and sustain environments that encourage integrity through education, clear policies, and reasonable standards for advancement, while fostering work environments that support research integrity.
- 16. Societal Considerations:** Researchers, scholars and the SUNY institutions that support them should recognize that they bear an important ethical obligation to appropriately weigh societal benefits against risks inherent in their work. This is especially important in areas that touch on public health and safety.

⁴United States Department of Agriculture, Secretary’s Memorandum 1074-001, USDA Scientific Integrity Policy p2.