



Research Administrator's Forum – 6/19/12

Research Ethics: Case Studies

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Case Study 1 – John Palmer

Summary:

- ◆ John Palmer is an administrator in the Department of Chemistry.
- ◆ Palmer notices that an NSF proposal of Professor Woods budgets for a long-time collaborator at UCSD, Dr. Lee, to act as a consultant.
- ◆ Dr. Woods also budgets for a significant amount of supplies that he admits he will send to Dr. Lee, or re-budget to compensate a grad student as a consultant.

Case Study 1 – John Palmer

The Ethical Dilemma

On the one hand...

- ◆ John wants to maintain a good working relationship with both Dr. Woods and Dr. Lee
- ◆ Research collaborations take many forms, including use of consultants
- ◆ Proceeding by way of a consulting arrangement will free up more money for direct research support
- ◆ If there are issues at UCSD with this arrangement, then UCSD can address them

Case Study 1 – John Palmer The Ethical Dilemma

On the other...

- ◆ UCSD will not recognize any indirect cost recovery, even if the research takes place in Dr. Lee's lab
- ◆ Dr. Woods would be submitting a fraudulent proposal, as would John
- ◆ Dr. Lee and the graduate student would face tax liability
- ◆ Dr. Lee and the graduate student's could raise intellectual property issues.

Case Study 1 – John Palmer

The Ethical Dilemma

◆ John's options:

- ◆ Comply with Dr. Woods' request
- ◆ Do not comply with Dr. Woods' request, and revise the budget accordingly
- ◆ Do not comply with Dr. Woods' request, and alert others in his department to the situation

Which option should John choose? Why? Are there other options?

Case Study 2 – Mary Lamb

Summary

- ◆ Yolanda is a grad student in Dr. Zhu's lab.
- ◆ She notices a manuscript on Mary's desk and sees that a post-doc working under a researcher at a collaborating institution is not listed as an author.
- ◆ The post-doc taught key techniques, contributed to study design, and conducted experiments.
- ◆ Mary tells Yolanda Dr. Zhu removed the post-doc's name and told her the manuscript was final.
- ◆ Yolanda asks Mary to add the post-doc's name back on the author list before submitting.

Case Study 2 – Mary Lamb

The Ethical Dilemma

On the one hand...

- ◆ Mary wants to be perceived as reliable by Dr. Zhu, and wants to complete the task as requested.
- ◆ Mary is not a researcher and is not in the best position to evaluate Yolanda's claim.
- ◆ Mary reports to Dr. Zhu, not to Yolanda.

Case Study 2 – Mary Lamb

The Ethical Dilemma

On the other...

- ◆ The post-doc has a legitimate interest in furthering his scientific career and made key contributions to the research.
- ◆ Mary has no reason to question Yolanda's explanation.
- ◆ Mary knows Dr. Zhu values the collaboration with the other institution and wants it to continue.

Case Study 2 – Mary Lamb

The Ethical Dilemma

- ◆ Some of Mary's options:
 - ◆ Comply with Dr. Zhu's request, despite Yolanda's concerns.
 - ◆ Alert the researcher and post-doc at the collaborating institution.
 - ◆ Attempt to contact Dr. Zhu before submitting.
 - ◆ Encourage Yolanda to share her concerns with Dr. Zhu when he returns.

Which option should Mary choose? Are there other options?

Case Study 3 – David Walker

Summary

- ◆ David is an administrator under Dr. Scott Galbreath.
- ◆ Dr. Galbreath makes no secret that he consults frequently with ABC Pharma and has made a good deal of money doing so.
- ◆ Dr. Galbreath is about to submit an NIH proposal closely related to the work he does for ABC.
- ◆ He does not indicate a conflict of interest on the PAR. When David points this out, Dr. Galbreath gets angry and tells him to submit the proposal.

Case Study 3 – David Walker

The Ethical Dilemma

On the one hand...

- ◆ It's Dr. Galbreath's responsibility to disclose his conflict, not David.
- ◆ David wants to keep his job.
- ◆ The NIH project may hold significant promise to address an important health issue.
- ◆ David does not want to compromise Dr. Galbreath's ability to consult, since he makes significant compensation doing so.

Case Study 3 – David Walker

The Ethical Dilemma

On the other...

- ◆ David would be participating in submitting a false document to the university.
- ◆ The University risks NIH scrutiny for not properly managing a conflict.
- ◆ David would be allowing Dr. Galbreath to violate the university's Conflict of Interest in Research policy.
- ◆ An undisclosed conflict could call into question the validity of the research.

Case Study 3 – David Walker

The Ethical Dilemma

- ◆ Some of David's options:
 - ◆ Stay silent and avoid further confrontation.
 - ◆ Refuse to submit the proposal without a conflict being noted.
 - ◆ Seek assistance from others at USC -- the Department Chair, the Office of Research, the Office of Compliance.

Which option should David choose? Are there other options?