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Issue 11, Summer 2015

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Where Should You Keep Your Data? Federal Agencies Focus on Data Sharing

Federal agencies such as NIH and NSF have long-standing policies that require researchers to share their research data with other scientists and the interested public. In 2013, the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) released a policy requiring federal agencies with over \$100 million in research expenditures to develop plans to share the results of federally funded research with the public and to require researchers to better store and manage their data. One way for researchers to do this is to place their data in existing publicly accessible repositories. The NIH has a list of repositories (which it plans to expand) to assist researchers in doing so. The NSF directs researchers to specific repositories for oceanographic and climate data. Other agencies have similar requirements (a sample are listed below), so be sure to check the terms and conditions of your grant or reach out to your program officers for more information.

Read the full article here: <http://chronicle.com/article/Where-Should-You-Keep-Your/231065/>

Department of Defense Public Access Plan (DRAFT):
http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/pdf/dod_public_access_plan_feb2015.pdf

Department of Energy Statement on Digital Data Management:
<http://science.energy.gov/funding-opportunities/digital-data-management/>

NASA Public Access Plan:
<http://science.nasa.gov/media/medialibrary/2014/12/05/NASA-Plan-for-increasing-access-to-results-of-federally-funded-research.pdf>

National Science Foundation Dissemination and Sharing of Research Results: <http://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/dmp.jsp>

NIH Data Sharing Policy: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/nihgps-2011/nihgps-ch8.htm#-Toc271264951>

NSF Semi-Annual Audit Reports to Congress

The NSF OIG issued its semi-annual report to Congress for the period of October 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015. The report includes a number of areas of interest, including:

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- Over \$4.6 million in questioned costs at four institutions with a focus on costs related to senior personnel salary that exceeded two months.
- A summary of findings from Single Audit reports related to NSF awards. Findings included "untimely or inaccurate submission of financial and/or progress reports; untimely and/or incorrect reporting of time and effort; failure to ensure that property purchased with federal funds was adequately tracked and safeguarded; failure to ensure that the procurement process included verification that vendors had not been suspended or debarred; and inadequate monitoring of subrecipients."

On the topic of research misconduct, the NSF OIG used commercial plagiarism software to analyze over 8,000 proposals awarded in FY11 for evidence of plagiarism. As a result of this analysis, the NSF opened 34 plagiarism investigations, ten of which resulted in findings of research misconduct. The NSF required that \$357,602 be refunded due to plagiarism. The report notes that "less than one half of one percent of the funded proposals contained enough plagiarism to constitute research misconduct." The report includes several pages of descriptions of misconduct and actions taken by NSF management.

You can find the full NSF report here:
<http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2015/oig15002/oig15002.pdf>

New Research Reproducibility Guidelines from the NIH

A new NIH Notice (NOT-OD-15-103) released on June 9th indicates NIH's intent to "revise application instructions and review criteria to enhance reproducibility of research findings through increased scientific rigor and transparency." The Notice provides revised instructions for proposal submission and will be incorporated into the SF424 Application Guide and funding opportunity announcements beginning in Fall of 2015.

This initiative is in response to increased concerns about reproducibility and inability to extend research findings reported in peer-reviewed literature. The new instructions and revised review criteria focus on four areas: 1) the scientific premise of the proposed research, 2) rigorous experimental design, 3) consideration of relevant biological variables, and 4) authentication of key biological and/or chemical resources.

Per the notice, NIH will expect applicants to describe the strengths and weaknesses of the prior research they are citing in support of their application and to "describe how they will achieve robust and unbiased results when describing the experimental design and proposed methods."

You can find the guidance here:
<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-15-103.html>

And you can review the presentation from our most recent Research Administrators Forum:
http://ooc.usc.edu/sites/ooc.usc.edu/files/pdfs/4_NIH-re-Reproducibility-of-Research-Data.pdf

George Washington and Harvard Face Legal Action

Over Research Misconduct Findings

In recent months, George Washington University and Harvard have been sued by a faculty researcher upset over the conduct of a research misconduct investigation.

Both universities face allegations that they violated the privacy of the researchers and that lingering investigations cost the affected researchers business opportunities. Interestingly, both suits were filed in the absence of any findings of misconduct by the HHS Office of Research Integrity, although federal investigations are expected to be underway now or in the near future.

The court documents obtained by "Report on Research Compliance" about both cases reveal many details of interest to universities and other institutions that must investigate misconduct allegations, including the importance of following university process in any investigation and maintaining confidentiality where appropriate.

You can read more about the GWU case here:

<http://www.gwhatchet.com/2015/02/05/former-department-chair-sues-university-for-8-million/>

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