Track 3a: Training for Responsible Conduct of Research – Approach, Goals, Content and Assessment

Establishing an Institutional Culture of Research Integrity – Key Challenges & Successful Solutions

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Challenges Facing Higher Education

Department, College and University Culture

“I find it harder and harder to get any work done with all the ethicists hanging around.”
Challenges to Establishing an Institutional Climate for RCR Training

Common Attitudes and Perceptions

- Faculty already providing appropriate training
- Misconduct and misbehaviors “rarely”, if ever, occur
- Applies only to biological and medical research
- Limited to meeting federal human and animal subjects regulations
- Faculty workloads are already excessive
- Faculty behaviors are personal and private and “outside interference” violates academic freedom
- RCR training requires major changes to curriculum and significant new resources – no room in current curriculum
Critical Initiatives

“Top down” and “Bottom up” support are essential

- University committee of respected faculty & key administrators that develops assessment and educational plan, delivers training and builds cultural norms
- Strong and consistent support of Academic Affairs and Research Officers
- University Counsel makes clear the legal, financial and reputational liabilities for allegations of misconduct and questionable research practices
- Assess RCR training practices, attitudes and perceived effectiveness – present findings to faculty, students, and administrators
Successful Outcomes

- Faculty incorporating RCR topics into existing required courses, e.g., research design and methods, introduction to scientific inquiry, etc.,
- Departments/schools promoting thesis and dissertation agreements on authorship and use of data.
- Departments/schools including research integrity and social responsibility/impact questions on comprehensive and advancement to candidacy exams.
- University Outstanding Mentor awards.
- RCR training has been added to new faculty professional development programs.
Successful Outcomes

- Students have exerted pressure on faculty, dept. chairs, university administrators to provide better training.
- University Faculty Senate and President approved mandatory RCR education program for all graduate students.
- Several departments have voluntarily instituted mandatory RCR/ethics course for undergraduate and graduate students.
- Institution has undertaken a major review of its “Whistle-blowing” policy pertaining to protection of credible complaints of misconduct or serious misbehaviors.