AUTHORSHIP DISPUTE VERSUS PLAGIARISM

ARIO 2018 Annual Conference

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PURPOSE OF THIS BREAKOUT

Purpose: This session will focus on the similarities and differences between authorship disputes and plagiarism as well as problems that can arise in making this distinction.
PLAGIARISM IN RESEARCH MISCONDUCT DEFINITION

Plagiarism is

- the appropriation of another person’s ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit; AND
- Significant departure from accepted practices of the relevant research community; and
- Intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly; and
- Proven by a preponderance of evidence.
AUTHORSHIP DISPUTE DEFINED

Research misconduct does not include
- disputes regarding honest error
- good faith differences in interpretations/judgments of data
- good faith scientific or scholarly disagreement

Research misconduct is also not intended to include “authorship” disputes such as complaints about appropriate ranking of co-authors in:
- publications, presentations, or other work,
- unless the dispute constitutes plagiarism.
THOUGHT EXERCISE FOR DISCUSSION

If you know each other...
- most likely an authorship dispute?
- maybe a plagiarism issue - if you have unique information or a record of exchange?

If you don’t know each other...
- may or may not be plagiarism.
- Isn’t an authorship dispute.
THOUGHT EXERCISE FOR DISCUSSION

What if...

You don’t know each other, and don’t work together?

- It is difficult to see this could be an authorship dispute.
- Similar ideas – might arise independently
THOUGHT EXERCISE FOR DISCUSSION

Unlike fabrication and falsification (the F and the other F in F F P) when there is plagiarism there is still the possibility that the underlying science may be perfectly valid although appropriate credit, acknowledgement or citation might not have been given.

This might raise a question of whether retraction is the best remedy in some plagiarism cases. Certainly this would seem to be the case for authorship disputes. But . . .
THEMES IN THE INITIAL CONCERN

- Dissertation was used in a faculty’s publication
- Former collaborations
- Someone leaves or wants to leave the collaboration
- Unique idea was mine
- Appropriate credit
- Sloppiness
- No other way to explain it (e.g. methods area)
- Self-plagiarism
- Sentences are an exact match
- Plagiarism software percentage is too low (or too high)
### NSF Case Statistics – Provided by Jim Kroll

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Who are the subjects of NSF OIG investigations?

2005-2015

- Full professor 14%
- Associate professor 14%
- Assistant Professor 37%
- Researcher 13%
- Research Faculty 6%
- Student/Post Doc 14%

Educational Background

- B.S. 81% outside of US
- MS 62% outside of US
- PhD 36% outside of US
Complainant alleges

A Respondent, former postdoctoral fellow from Dr. X’s laboratory, *stole* raw data (research data funded by NIH) from Institution’s laboratory and then used the NIH data in publications after leaving your institution and moving to China.

Additionally, the Complainant alleges the Respondent published a coauthored publication without Dr. X’s permission or involvement.

*Potential authorship dispute or plagiarism?*
HYPOTHETICAL CASE EXAMPLE:

Complainant (a MD/PHD student) alleges

A Respondent, Senior Faculty, took Complainant’s dissertation and placed another graduate student’s name on it and published it without crediting the Complainant.

Another Complainant (a different MD/PHD student) alleges

Same Respondent, Senior Faculty, took idea from Complainant #2, and placed another graduate student’s name on it and published it without crediting Complainant #2.

Potential authorship dispute or plagiarism?
HYPOTHETICAL CASE EXAMPLE:

Complainant forwards an allegation of

-Potential plagiarism: The allegation is that the Respondent (a graduate student, originally from Korea, working toward the MA/PHD at your University) plagiarized words and ideas in a paper presented at a National Association meeting.

-The Complainant’s master’s thesis (in Korean) submitted at Seoul National University was submitted and published years prior to the National Association meeting.

- Potential authorship dispute or plagiarism?