



PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY

Responding to Allegations of Scientific Misconduct

Prairie View A&M University
Office of the Vice President for Research and Development

Willie F. Trotty, PhD



Scientific Misconduct Policy

- Federal Regulations established by governmental research sponsors such as PHS and NSF require that the University develop policies and procedures to ensure an impartial process for receipt and disposition of scientific misconduct allegations.
- University Scientific Misconduct Policy applies to ALL research, not just government funded.



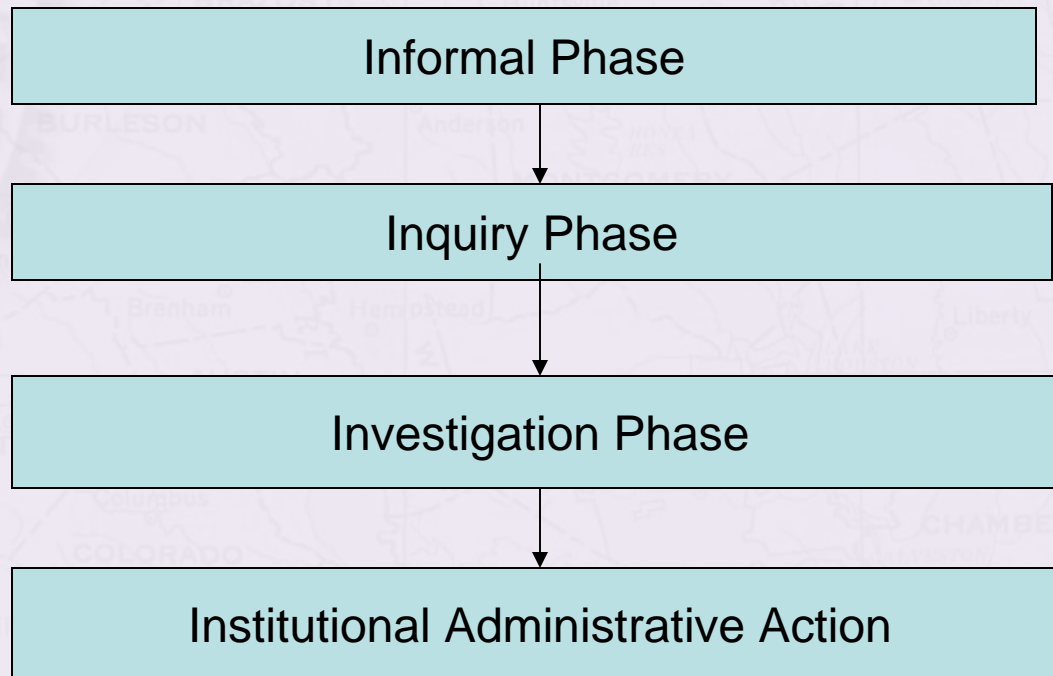
Definition of Scientific Misconduct

- University policy defines “scientific misconduct” or “misconduct in science” as the “fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or other practices that seriously deviate from those that are commonly accepted within the scientific community for the proposing, conducting or reporting research. It does not include honest error or honest differences in interpretations or judgments of data.”



Process for Responding to Allegations

- Process has four phases:



Process for Responding to Allegations

- Informal Phase
 - Begins with submission of Allegation to Vice President for Research and Development (VPRD)
 - VPRD determines whether inquiry warranted
 - Sufficient evidence or information to proceed.
 - Whether research is government sponsored
 - Allegation falls under definition of scientific misconduct.



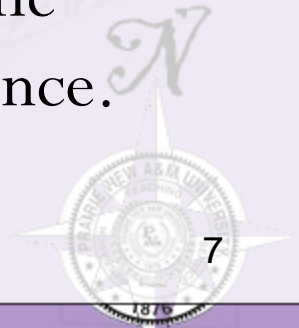
Process for Responding to Allegations

- Inquiry Phase (60 days)
 - Research records secured by VPRD.
 - Notification to Respondent, Institutional Officials, and Sponsoring Agency (if required).
 - Inquiry Committee appointed(3 members).
 - Inquiry Committee interviews complainant, respondent & witnesses.
 - Inquiry submits report with recommendation to VPRD if there is sufficient evidence
 - VPRD determines if investigation warranted.



Process for Responding to Allegations

- Investigation Phase (120 days)
 - Investigation Committee appointed.
 - Investigation Committee investigates. allegations reviews evidence and interviews respondent, complainant and witnesses.
 - Investigation Committee evaluates evidence & testimony and submits report to VPRD.
 - University bears burden of proof to show scientific misconduct occurred by Preponderance of Evidence.



Process for Responding to Allegations

- Institutional Administrative Actions
 - If Investigation Committee finds misconduct, VPRD consults with Provost to decide appropriate actions and disciplinary sanctions.
 - If Investigation Committee does not find misconduct, VPRD consults with Provost and respondent to undertake reasonable efforts to restore respondent's reputation.
 - VPRD and Provost will determine steps, if any, needed to restore complainant's reputation



Retaliation Prohibited

- Federal law and University policy prohibits retaliation against complainants or witnesses.
- Retaliation means “any action that adversely affects the employment or other institutional status of an individual that is taken by the institution or an employee because the individual has in good faith made an allegation of scientific misconduct or of inadequate institutional response thereto, or has cooperated in good faith with an investigation of such allegation.”



Confidentiality

- Inquiries and investigations will be conducted in manner to “maintain confidentiality to the extent possible without compromising public health and safety or the ability to thoroughly carry out the inquiry or investigation.
- Institution will protect the privacy of those reporting misconduct to the maximum extent possible, subject to law and regulations. Anonymity not guaranteed in Investigation Phase.
- Allegations may be made anonymously.



Reporting Allegations

- All employees and individuals associated with Prairie View A&M University must report observed, suspected or apparent scientific misconduct to the VPRD.
- If you are uncertain whether the suspected conduct falls within definition, you may contact VPRD to discuss informally.
- Do NOT attempt to handle any investigation into the allegation yourself. Report it to VPRD.



Reporting Allegations

- Willie F. Trotty, PhD
936.261.1586
- Whistleblower Hotline- Report to Chief Compliance Officer



Obligation to Cooperate

- Employees have an obligation to cooperate with VPRD and other officials in the review of allegations and the conduct of inquiries and investigations.
- Employees have an obligation to provide relevant evidence and records to institutional officials.
- Interference with an inquiry or investigation (e.g., tampering with witnesses or records) violates University policy.



Where to Find the Policy

- PVAMU's Policy for Responding to Allegations of Scientific Misconduct can be found at the Vice President for Research and Development Office's Website under Research and Ethics Policies

