



Memorandum

Office of the Research Integrity Officer
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TO: Senate

FROM: Dr. Christina Wolfson, Research Integrity Officer

SUBJECT: Annual Report Concerning the Investigation of Research Misconduct (2018-19)

DATE: September 18, 2019

DOCUMENT #: D19-04

ACTION REQUIRED: INFORMATION APPROVAL/DECISION

ISSUE An annual report submitted to the Senate and Board of Governors for information in accordance with the provisions of the *Regulations Concerning the Investigation of Research Misconduct*.

BACKGROUND & RATIONALE According to article 11.6 of the *Regulations Concerning the Investigation of Research Misconduct*, the Research Integrity Officer is to provide an annual report to Senate and to the Board of Governors on the operation of the Regulations. The report includes the following:

- (i) the number of Research Misconduct allegations received;
- (ii) the number of Research Misconduct allegations investigated;
- (iii) a summary of the findings of the investigations conducted;
- (iv) a summary of any actions taken pursuant to the investigations.

PRIOR CONSULTATION N/A

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS N/A

IMPACT OF DECISION AND NEXT STEPS The Report is presented annually at Senate and will be submitted to the Executive Committee of the Board of Governors on October 31, 2019.

MOTION OR RESOLUTION FOR APPROVAL This item is presented for information.

APPENDICES Appendix A: 2018-2019 Annual Report Concerning the Investigation of Research Misconduct

2018-2019 ANNUAL REPORT
Report of the Research Integrity Officer
Dr. Christina Wolfson
Prepared September 2019

Introduction

The *Regulations Concerning the Investigation of Research Misconduct* (the Regulations) call for the Research Integrity Officer (RIO) to report annually to Senate and to the Board of Governors on the application of the Regulations. This is the **tenth** annual report presented to Senate and the Board of Governors in discharge of this obligation.

In this reporting year, the RIO was pleased to welcome Dr. David Ragsdale (appointed September 2018) and Dr. Frank Ferrie (appointed January 2019) as Deputy Research Integrity Officers.

Background

The Regulations provide for an internal process for the assessment (inquiry) by the RIO and, where appropriate, the formal investigation of allegations of research misconduct brought against members of the University community regardless of faculty or discipline. The investigation committee membership and process to be followed are governed by the Regulations.

The tables below provide statistical information concerning allegations and their disposition for the past six academic years [2013-2014 to 2018-2019]. It is important to note that it is not uncommon for a complaint to include more than one allegation of research misconduct. What is presented below is the “primary allegation” as determined by the RIO.

The Big Picture

The nature of the allegations received varies from year to year. New categories of research misconduct are added to this table as needed. For this reporting year, three new categories have been added.

| | Table 1: Nature of the Allegations | | | | | | | Total |
|--|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----|--------------|
| | 13/14 | 14/15 | 15/16 | 16/17 | 17/18 | 18/19 | | |
| Plagiarism & Authorship | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 11 | |
| Fabrication/ Falsification | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 8 | |
| Ethical Misconduct | | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 8 | |
| Misrepresentation of Credentials | | | | | 1 | 0 | 1 | |
| Mismanagement of Research Funds | | | | | 1 | 0 | 1 | |
| Misappropriation of Intellectual Property | | | | | | 2 | 2 | |
| Mismanagement of Conflict of Interest | | | | | | 1 | 1 | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| False Accusation of Research Misconduct | | | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| Total | | 6 | 6 | 6 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 33 |

The Source of Allegations

The sources of allegations are varied as shown in Table 2. In contrast to 2017-2018, in this reporting year 5 of the 6 allegations came from external sources. Over the past 6 years the majority of the respondents have been academic staff, though graduate students/postdoctoral fellows have also been named as respondents. The RIO works closely with Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies when the respondent is a graduate student or postdoctoral fellow as per the Regulations.

| | Table 2: Source of Allegations | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | 13/14 | 14/15 | 15/16 | 16/17 | 17/18 | 18/19 | Total |
| Funding Agency | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| University Community* | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 9 |
| External** | 5 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 5 | 20 |
| Anonymous | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 6 | 6 | 6 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 33 |

*Includes administrative units of the University

**Included Journal editors, members of the lay public, and researchers outside the McGill community.

Actions in Response to Allegations

The actions in response to the allegations received are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Actions in Response to Allegations

| Nature of the Allegation | Year | Total Cases | No Prima Facie Case | Transferred* | Inquiry only OR Investigation | Finding of Research Misconduct |
|--|---------|-------------|---------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Plagiarism/Authorship | 2013-14 | 2 | | | 2 | |
| | 2014-15 | 3 | | | 3 | |
| | 2015-16 | 3 | | | 3 | |
| | 2016-17 | 1 | | | 1 | |
| | 2017-18 | 2 | | | 2 | |
| | 2018-19 | 0 | | | 0 | |
| Fabrication/Falsification | 2013-14 | 4 | 2 | | 2 | |
| | 2014-15 | 1 | | | 1 | |
| | 2015-16 | 1 | | | 1 | |
| | 2016-17 | 1 | | | 1 | |
| | 2017-18 | 0 | | | 0 | |
| | 2018-19 | 1 | | 1 | | |
| Ethical Misconduct | 2013-14 | 0 | | | 0 | |
| | 2014-15 | 2 | 1 | | 1 | |
| | 2015-16 | 2 | | | 2 | |
| | 2016-17 | 1 | | | 1 | |
| | 2017-18 | 2 | | | 2 | |
| | 2018-19 | 1 | | | 1 | |
| Mismanagement of Research Funds | 2017-18 | 1 | | | 1 | |
| | 2018-19 | 0 | | | | |
| Misrepresentation of Credentials | 2017-18 | 1 | | | 1 | |
| | 2018-19 | 0 | | | | |
| Mismanagement of Conflict of Interest | 2018-19 | 1 | | | 1 | |
| Misappropriation of Intellectual Property | 2018-19 | 2 | | 1 | 1 | |
| False Accusation of Research Misconducts | 2018-19 | 1 | | | 1 | |
| Totals | | 33 | 3 | 2 | 28 | 10 |

*Allegations that upon review were transferred to other jurisdictions and not managed through the McGill University RIO.

The first step following the receipt of an allegation is an inquiry conducted by the RIO. The Deputy RIO will take the case in the event that the RIO is in conflict of interest. The possible outcomes of the RIO inquiry are insufficient evidence to proceed to an investigation; admission of guilt; or sufficient evidence to proceed to an investigation. Inquiries only or Inquiries followed by Investigations have taken place in twenty-eight cases over the past six years. Research misconduct was established in ten cases.

Consultative Activities

In addition to the formal allegations noted above, the RIO (or Deputy RIO) opened a dozen files and held preliminary discussions with current or former members of the McGill community who were concerned about an issue of research misconduct. No formal allegations of research misconduct were submitted to the RIO for any of these dossiers, the dossiers were closed.

Additional Statistical Reporting

Each year in addition to the annual report to Senate, the RIO files the following annually:

- (a) In accordance with the [*Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research \(2016\)*](#), Article 4.5(b), institutions are required to report annually to the Secretariat on Responsible Conduct of Research matters involving Agency funding. This is a statistical report only.
- (b) Each institution which receives or applies for US Public Health Service research funding must report to the US Office of Research Integrity concerning any allegations of research misconduct involving U.S. Public Health Service funded research. This is a statistical report only.
- (c) For all allegations involving research funded by FRQ or in relation to allegations against a member of the McGill community based at an FRQ funded research institute, a letter, devoid of personal information must be forwarded to the FRQ with the decision concerning the disposition of the allegation (i.e. insufficient evidence to proceed to an investigation; admission of guilt; or sufficient evidence to proceed to an investigation).

Acknowledgements

The Research Integrity Officer and Deputy Research Integrity Officers take this opportunity to thank all those who have served on, or cooperated with, investigation committees. All recognize the critical importance of such allegations and the major impact that they can have on the academic and professional lives of respondents and complainants. The dedication that committee members and advisors, both faculty and students, have exhibited in these important roles, the integrity with which they have fulfilled their responsibilities, and the time and energy they have devoted to ensuring a fair and impartial investigation of all the issues deserve commendation. The RIO would like to extend her gratitude to the University and its members for the opportunity to have served in this capacity and for their cooperation and support.