March 31, 2014

Hello everyone!

At the ASEE-ERC meeting earlier a few weeks back, I learned that NSF and other agencies are screening proposals, technical reports, and other things that get submitted to them using an automated system even more vigorously. As a result, they are “catching” a lot more reports/proposals and forwarding them to the Inspector General’s office for further action.

One Program Director mentioned that about ten years back, he would take may be one proposal to IG’s office for this kind of matter, now he takes about 2 to 3 each month!

So the message to all of you is that this is very serious business. As faculty members you should be aware of the proper regulations concerning this and be trained on matters related to plagiarism and ethical and responsible conduct of research. This also applies to students and staff. It would be rather unlikely that the agencies that enforce these rules would accept excuses such as someone did not think or understand what plagiarism and ethical conduct of research mean or your staff or students were responsible etc. It is important to you as faculty members to realize that the responsibility to comply with ultimately lies with the PI/Co-PI of the grants.

The WVU website that provides additional guidance on this is: http://oric.research.wvu.edu/rcr_train

Dan Vagird’s office runs regular seminars on this topic. We have had him present in our college at least two times in the last year or so.

Please make sure that you, your colleagues and staff, and students that you work with understand the importance of this and are trained for Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR). There is currently a house bill pending that would increase the penalties for unethical conduct of research that call for barring someone from getting federal funding for a period of at least five and no more than ten years. Needless to say, any kind of issue with this does not make the university look good and we just do not want to be in any problem related to this.

Please contact Dan Vagird’s office with any questions/concerns regarding this.

Best Wishes,