

## Research Ethics Assignment

-- "report falsification" case study

As stated in the case, Dr. Goodwin presented fraudulent data in her grant application proposal, and her graduate students finally turned her in after dilemma and wondering. Because of no formal regulation of research in the department, and the institution's unsupportive attitudes to the students' reactions, it took time and price for this research misconduct to be unveiled. Though Dr. Goodwin resigned from the department at UW, her graduate students had paid stiff price for it as well. Most of them gave up their science dreams, which was a great pity. For those who intended to go on with their research in other institutes, they had to do their research over since that part carried out in Dr. Goodwin's lab was not trusted anyway. In sum, it was a big lesson for the whole research world.

Four main parties were affected in this case: Dr. Goodwin, Dr. Goodwin's graduate students (whistleblowers), the institution and the public.

Resignation was the final result which was caused by Dr. Goodwin's dishonesty. She should have not included the picture of an already discovered protein from previous paper. Egoism had been dominated her mind when she was applying to the research grant, which public interests were sacrificed for. Even for herself, it was a big loss, she could have held a prospective research future. Furthermore, her graduate students all suffered mentally and professionally, since most of them gave up science while others wasted years for research in the lab. As to the institution, it would result in reputation degraded. The department or the university, however, should have legislated formal regulation of research, as well as formal department for dealing with research misconduct affairs. In that case, the students could have directly resort to items of the regulation, and go to corresponding department for reporting. What's more, regulation can be an alarm to those who doing research in the university, so that they could be more considerate in order to avoid unexpected things to happen. Finally, cheating is just like theft. It robbed the public of their rights to the truth. Therefore, it was a big threat to the public interests.

Different consequences can be resulted in ethic issues. Apart from Dr. Goodwin's action causing big loss to herself and others, actions by people around her also took effect in this case. Graduate students in the lab made their decision to turn her in, but could not find out proper persons and department for help. They also had many concerns and uncertainty in this process. But they finally got it done, and reveal the truth to the public. The blowing of the whistle partially ended an advisor's future in the academic field, and some way may let the department's reputation down; however, it protected people's rights and gave the public a truth. Honesty, or integrity, should be the central philosophy in ethic issues. Like Mary Allen, she could not believe in that anyway. But she finally decided Dr. Goodwin's actions contradicted her personal values, which made her side with her fellow group members against their advisor.

Let's consider this case by an assumption. What if the students "protected" their future gatekeeper (Dr. Goodwin) in order to make sure that they can still pursue science in that

field? As we can found in Mary's description, Dr. Goodwin was a pretty nice woman in daily life. Their group really enjoyed when they went to her house for parties, or when they gathered in the Union. Given this goodness of Dr. Goodwin, it would not be a surprise that the students would prefer to veil her dishonesty after they knew that. Plus, it was natural that people want to secure their future by pleasing their bosses. Whatever, if this could have happened, it would a even greater disaster to all of them. In which case, it was not those graduate students, but other representatives to be the whistleblowers. Truth will be revealed in a percentage of 99.99%, though there are mysterious things in this world, there are uneven things in this world. Given the law and regulation presented, misconduct will be discovered some time by any means. Time will see.

Above analysis is mostly based on the ethic rightness and self-consciousness. Would it happen to my personal experience, it would not that easy as well. Ms. Mary Allen's reactions and final actions were really normal and natural for most people, I think.

Placed me in the case, I would probably take the following procedure. Discussed with the advisor, suggested that she go to the grant organization to withdraw her proposal and explain why she wanted to remove the application. In a peaceful world, there is always pity in people's mind. Once you realized that you conducted something not right, and therefore you go correct it by yourself, in which way people will accept your mistakes and your correction. When one considers self-interests, our interests, and all interests, if something satisfies all interests, it will be the biggest win. However, if it disobeys overall interests, but just fits self-interests, one should consider quit that intention. A small sacrifice will not be a big loss, since it will turn out to be equal to others. If Dr. Goodwin would not listen to our advice, then I would probably quit from her lab since it is not a place that I belong to, or a place I am looking for. In some way, it is not a good choice; after all, it's still a threat to public interests if her misconduct was not reported. However, that would be my choice anyway. The last thing that I could do is resort to the department or university level help, so that we could reveal the truth.

In sum, it is a bit shock to know this to happen in a famous university like UW. It is not that a surprise, however, since it is not fresh to hear about academic scandals in various research fields. In order to culture a healthy research world, a warm research climate, much more efforts are expected.