

**Turning an unfunded mandate into an integrated part of campus culture:  
Becoming the Research Integrity Officer (RIO) for  
Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)  
Charlene Wolf-Hall**

**Issue:** Research practitioners require understanding and respect for widely held ethical and moral values. Breaches to these affect public perception of science and scientists. The issues of scientific integrity are now more visible, legislators are being advised on science policy, and the public can engage in the issues more than ever before. Sound practices provide a basis for all future research, and there are far-reaching impacts of ethical violations. Research is governed by ethical guidelines and procedures that can be applied to ethical problems that arise during the course of research. Institutional officials are responsible to understand them and apply them and make sure employees and students do too. Guidelines need to be applied deliberately and thoughtfully. Responsible behavior needs to be taught and the learning needs to be assessed.

The challenge for the institution was to meet RCR mandates and deadlines for the America Competes Act, NSF, NIH and other funding agencies requiring RCR. No new funding was available for establishment and implementation. NDSU needed an RIO and RCR plan to be compliant.

**What has been done:** The objectives for RCR compliance:

- Establish new university policy for RCR
  - Ensure new policy matches with compliance issues, is clear and enforceable
- Implement new policy
  - Ensure all units are aware and compliant with new policy
- Develop and implement plan for inculcation of RCR into university culture

**Impacts/New Partnerships:** New types of partnerships were formed within NDSU through the Graduate School, the Research Division and the Academic Affairs division. New connections were made externally to NDSU with funding agencies, other institutions and through the Council of Graduate Schools.

Short term impacts addressed project objectives and included:

- Institutional policy in place for compliance
  - <http://www.ndsu.edu/policy/348.htm>
  - Policy awareness among all units accomplished
  - Provide counsel and oversight to PIs of grants which fall within the policy requirements
- University-wide inventory of existing formal and informal instruction in RCR (find the holes)
- Initiated a list of faculty who are willing to serve as instructional expert resources (fill the holes)
- Developed and implemented low-cost workshops as part of chairs/heads training, new faculty orientation and graduate student orientation
- Seminars and workshops thus far have reached over 100 individuals who will serve as liaisons/advocates for culture change
- Developed internal NDSU resource website including best practices information
- Contribute information to Research Division newsletter

**Outcome of Project (societal impact/ measure of increased quality of life)**

Long-term impacts should include research best practices and high quality scientific enquiry, discovery, innovation and communication.

**How has your project been aided by your FSLI experience?**

Applied strategies learned through FSLI. The fellowship project assignment provided an opportunity for this assignment. The formal mentoring through FSLI also aided in this project.

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