

### Topic for Discussion: Authorship

Cross-Cutting Themes: Mentor-mentee relationships, Collaboration, Scientific responsibility

#### Topic Overview – What’s at stake?

- Publications are one of key metrics of academic success and advancement.
- Authorship order signals contribution and holds weight when determining readiness for jobs, career development awards, grants, promotions.
- Being generous with authorship can demonstrate collaboration; advance team science
- Authorship also signals responsibility and accountability for content. Misrepresenting authorship can end up distorting the scientific literature on which our fields depend.

#### Getting the Discussion Started:

- What do you worry about most with authorship? Have there been issues you’ve already encountered or are concerned about?
- What are the norms within your research group regarding co-author responsibilities? How does authorship order get decided? How do you feel about those decisions?
- What other strategies do you have for demonstrating productivity and impact of your work, now that “impact factors” of journals are being called into question by the editors themselves?

#### Use the 4 R’s to think through a particular case or issue.

##### **Process for Thinking through Difficult Ethical Dilemmas**

**Recognition:** *What are the issues being raised? What is the underlying ethical concern? How does this issue impact me?*

**Reasoning:** *What values are at stake? Are there competing points of view? What are the potential benefits and harms of different actions? Are there any rules or guidelines that can help?*

**Responsibility:** *What are my responsibilities? Do others have responsibilities also?*

**Response:** *What should I do – and why?*

#### “Backpocket” Case:

Jana is the newest graduate student to join her lab. The other graduate students are a year ahead of her, and have already begun the research that will culminate in a group publication at the end of the year. Her PI, Professor Chen, is very interested in Jana’s coding skills, as they need to build some software to analysis the data that’s been collected. Jana feels that, although she has only contributed to the project for a year, her contributions warrant a first authorship with the other graduate students because her contributions were more technical in nature. She is shocked when she finds out that Professor Chen intends to have her listed as only a second author, but doesn’t want to broach the topic with him for fear of upsetting him.

#### Assigned Reading:

Catherine Offord, Coming to Grips with Co-Author Responsibility. *The Scientist*. May 2017.  
<http://www.the-scientist.com/?articles.view/articleNo/49233/title/Coming-to-Grips-with-Coauthor-Responsibility/>

#### Resources and Additional References

- International Committee of Journal Medical Editors (ICJME) authorship criteria:  
<http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html>
- NIH Office of the Ombudsman – Questions for Scientific Collaborators:  
<https://ccrod.cancer.gov/confluence/download/attachments/47284665/CollaborativeAgreementTemplate.pdf?version=2&modificationDate=1317863913370&api=v2>