



Leadership Discussion Guide: Circumstances Arise

As a professor you find a poor quality paper in a field close to yours was published in a journal. It used measurements similar to ones you had published 2 years earlier. At the time you published, you had reviewed the literature carefully and there were no prior publications. The paper referred to an abstract of theirs, published 3 years earlier, as a way to establish priority. What do you do?

Decision Making Framework:

- 1) List the issues raised by the 2MC.
- 2) What rules or regulations apply to the situation?
- 3) What questions will help you open up the problem?
- 4) What resources could you use or consult to help you make a decision?
- 5) What are your options and how does each option affect others involved in the situation?
- 6) What would you do after considering all of these and in light of your own values?

Issues

Stealing Intellectual property
Creating priority
Reputation
Whistleblowing: should you tell?

Resources

Campus and federal regulations
Research integrity officer on campus
Colleagues
National ethics center website

Rules and Regulations

Federal research integrity regulations
University's regulations

Options

Wait and see
Talk to the research integrity officer on your campus
Talk to adviser or other trusted mentor
Leave the Institution
Contact NIH



Questions

Had the rivaling author done anything? What? With what results?
Would you go after the person?
What if you were between grants?
What would you do if you did not have the resources to go after the individual?
Would your actions change if the rivaling author was a friend or a colleague?
What is your description of the best outcome that could happen?
If you go after the other author and are ignored what are your next steps?
Who would you look to for guidance?
What cross-cultural conflicts could possible arise?

Takeaway Lessons:

1) Information Gathering

You have a lot of information, however, you would need more information before going forward.

2) Seeking Resources

You may need advice before you take the next step. Are you on close enough terms with any member of your committee to seek confidential advice from one person? Does your new campus have an ombudsperson who might be able to provide confidential advice?

3) Asking Questions

Once you have gathered the facts so you have a fuller sense of the situation, One option is to talk with the author based on what you have learned. You should rehearse these questions so you can ask them in a professional affect, without making charges. Depending on how your fact-finding goes, you may want to have someone else present when you ask these questions.

4) Follow the Rules for Having a Dispute Professionally

Before you have your conversation with the visiting faculty member you should read and absorb the rules for having a dispute professionally.

Next Steps:

The main problem is that there is an author possibly using your measures and is trying to get priority. You can confront the author or send an email to the publishing body. If you talk with the author, understanding the possibility of making an enemy is prevalent should be in the back of the mind. If you do not have the resources to go after the person then stretching yourself too thinly would be to damaging to accept.

What Really Happened:

The author did not file a complaint and later was given the chance to write a comprehensive review of the work done fo the field.

