



## Leadership Discussion Guide: Reputation before Authentication

You are a junior faculty member at a university. While reviewing the paper of a senior colleague in your institution, you sought out other papers this individual has written to assist in your review writing. While reading the papers, you recognize that the large data set used in the paper you are reviewing seems to have also been used in various forms in other papers. You have a hunch that the data is the same but in different orders and the new data is not enough to warrant a new paper. 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

Data reconfiguring  
Potential problems with data keeping  
Was there a confound in the first paper that used the data  
The Graduate Student is senior to you  
What do you really know?  
Do you have other options for work?  
Whistleblowing: should you tell?

### Resources

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

### Rules and Regulations

Federal research integrity regulations  
University's regulations

### Options

Talk to your advisor  
Report the researcher  
Wait and see  
Talk to the research integrity officer on your campus  
Talk to the visiting researcher in question  
Talk to adviser or other trusted mentor





## Questions

Had the graduate student done anything wrong? What? With what results?

What if your hunch is wrong?

Would you go to your advisor?

Do you believe that the graduate student should be dismissed?

What is the perfect end to this situation?

How would you feel if the student is fired almost immediately and you know a proper investigation could not have taken place? Would this upset you since if there was no investigation then what you did could make any graduate student good or bad lose their job?

What are steps you would take to get to that perfect end?

What if you were ignored when voicing the finding? What would you do then?

Is there any possibility that you could retreat to your Ph.D. lab to regroup?

## Takeaway Lessons:

### 1) Information Gathering

You have an idea of what happened but you need to get more information and weigh your connections. Before going forward.

### 2) Seeking Resources

You may need advice before you take the next step. Are you on close enough terms with your Ph.D. advisor or 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 graduate student if you managed to miss something you would want to make sure you are positive. You should rehearse these questions so you can ask them in a low-key, 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. Furthermore, realize that you are junior in this organization so being able to know what happens to the graduate student after everything is said and done is not standard.

### 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:

You have two main options: You can ignore what the student has done or you can take steps to see if your hunch is correct. If your hunch is correct then you will have to determine if you need to report the student. Remember if you ignore it then you are using data and citing a paper that could be falsified. If you take steps to see if your hunch is correct you must document your actions and findings carefully. The person in question is senior to you, if your accusations are not well founded in evidence you will be the one that gets the brunt of negative consequences.

## What Really Happened:

After the student found enough information the student reported their colleague and the colleague was gone from the institution relatively quickly. The student was curious about the reason for the absence, and wondered if it was solely due to the new findings.

