



Leadership Discussion Guide: Technicalities

You are a grad student who has written a computer program to help your advisor. A visiting faculty member comes to work temporarily in the lab and brings a set of data that the two of you analyze together using your program. The visiting faculty member then publishes a paper and does not give you credit. 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
Potential problems with data keeping
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
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 the visiting researcher in question
Talk to adviser or other trusted mentor



Questions

Had the visiting faculty member done anything? What? With what results?

Do you have your previous program saved?

If you report the faculty member do you have the documentation to back your case?

If the faculty member has previous programming skills how would you indicate that the program is intact yours?

What steps would you take to ensure that your accusations are backed by data and not feelings?

To whom would you report this to? What would you do if they did not believe you?

What is the best possible outcome for this situation?

What is the source of funding for this project?

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 since the error in her code matches with the error you have been trying so resolve in your program. 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 your Ph.D. advisor or any member of your committee to seek confidential advice from one person? Does your new camps 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 visiting faculty member based on what you have learned. 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.

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 avenues that you can take one is to brush this off the other is to take steps to get the proper credit you deserve. If you brush this off then the visiting faculty member could do this again. If you decide to get credit then you will need to have several tough discussion one with your mentor, another with the research integrity officer and one with the visiting faculty member. Talking with your mentor to get help on documentation and setting up your talking points will be important because once you talk with the visiting professor this could go very well or very poorly. If you have great documentation then the visiting professor would see that giving your credit would be a better idea. If the visiting professor sees unorganized thoughts ideas and accusations then they will probably be inclined to deny your accusations. Furthermore, be careful of your bias. The visiting faculty member might have forgotten to give your credit. Giving them the chance to save face allows any misunderstandings to be resolved.

What Really Happened:

Due to the fact that the action the visiting professor took is legal there were no consequences. However, what was done was not ethical. There is no more information on this case so there is not a clear understanding on the steps that the graduate student took to try to get the proper recognition.

