



## Leadership Discussion Guide: The Power Of Documentation

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You are a graduate student working with a colleague on a manuscript. During the later stages of the project, you realize that your colleague removed a reference that was appropriate for the techniques used during the study and substituted it for a reference to their thesis, which appears to not match with the techniques used during the study. She also added her Ph.D. advisor to the paper, although the advisor had not contributed anything to the manuscript. 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  
What do you really know?  
Do you have other options for work?  
Whistleblowing: should you tell?  
If you should tell who should you tell and how should you go about it  
Do you have the paperwork to back your

### Rules and Regulations

Federal research integrity regulations  
University's regulations

### Resources

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

### Options

Talk to researchers you have worked with in the past  
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 colleague and advisor done anything wrong? What? With what results?  
Have you documented the situation well?  
If you did not document it well what would your next steps be?  
What would your next steps be if you were not believed?  
What would you do if the colleague reported you for research misconduct?  
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

Read the colleagues previous works. Is there a way that they can validate them putting their thesis as a reference? Who do you trust? Can you contact the research to whom she would be plagiarizing from? You have some 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 your former 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 your colleague and their PhD advisor, and the president of research 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:

This is still a research project that you are working on. If you do nothing then you could end up being charged with research misconduct. If you take steps to change the citations you will need to ensure that you document everything well. You will most likely want to talk with your mentor to get several ideas on how to handle the situation. Reporting the colleague would burn a bridge and this is not necessarily a bad thing however this is something you need to be aware of. If you talk with the colleague they could end up trying to report you.

## What Really Happened:

The graduate student talked with the colleague and soon after the colleague reported the graduate student for research misconduct. The citation stayed the same and due to the lack of documentation the graduate student was not able to defend themselves.

