Draft - Fostering a Campus Culture of Integrity in Research and Scholarship – Draft

PROPOSAL: The UNC Charlotte **Graduate Council** supports and strives to foster an awareness and application of established professional standards and ethical principles in the performance of all activities related to research and scholarship at UNC Charlotte. The members of the Graduate Council believe that it is important to view ethics in research and scholarship as more than a compliance issue and encourage a campus culture where honesty, integrity, and professionalism are valued above all else in research and scholarship.

The values of objectivity, honesty, openness, accountability, fairness, and stewardship underlie the effective functioning of research, scholarship, and other creative activity. These values are standards that apply to disciplinary practices forming best practices in research and scholarship. Promoting these standards is not only ethically sound but is also essential to good science, research, and scholarship.

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte Graduate Council believes it is possible to create a "culture of ethics"; an environment in which misconduct in research and scholarship is much less likely. As such, the Council endorses the following individual and institutional best practices in the Responsible Conduct of Research, Scholarship, and other Creative Activity. Detailed descriptions and applications of these Best Practices can be found in The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2017. *Fostering Integrity in Research*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/21896.

Best Practices for researchers and scholars in research integrity, data handling, authorship, communications, mentoring and supervising, peer review.

Uphold research integrity with vigilance, professionalism, and collegiality.
- Maintain high standards in one's own work. Be aware of personal bias in designing, carrying out, evaluating, and reporting work. Maintain an active commitment to openness in scholarship as the essential foundation of academic freedom.
- Understand the definitions of, and policies to address, research misconduct in the institution, professional societies, and funding agencies.
- Raise questions and problems promptly and professionally. Seek advice from a trusted source prior to making allegations of misconduct in research and scholarship.
- Strive to be a generous and collegial colleague. Criticisms should focus on errors in the work and disagreements on interpretation, but never the person

Data Handling. Manage research data effectively, responsibly, and transparently throughout the research process.
- As a foundation of research integrity, develop data management and sharing plans at the outset of a project. Understand and follow the data collection and analysis standards as established by the discipline.
- Incorporate appropriate data management expertise in the project team to ensure that appropriate statistical and data analytics are utilized on a project

- Understand and follow data collection, management, and sharing standards, policies, and regulations of the discipline, institution, funding agencies, journals, and relevant government agencies Supervisors should stay close to the primary data even if they lack the technical skills to generate the data themselves.

Authorship and Communication.
- Since decisions about authorship of publications are an important aspect of the responsible conduct of research and scholarship, ensure that general and disciplinary standards are followed.
- Acknowledge the roles and contributions of authors.
- Understand that authors are responsible for the veracity and reliability of reported results, for ensuring that the work was performed according to relevant laws and regulations, for interacting with journal editors during publication, and for defending the work following publication.
- Be transparent when communicating with all audiences.

Mentoring and Supervision. Know your responsibilities as a mentor and supervisor. Be a helpful, effective mentor and supervisor to early-career researchers.
- Role model and instruct on best practices in research and scholarship.
- Regularly check work of subordinates and ensure adherence to best practices.
- Clarify expectations and roles for participants on any project.

Peer Review. Strive to be a fair and effective peer reviewer who provides careful reviews, maintains confidentiality, and recognizes and discloses conflicts of interest.
- Provide complete and timely review.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Disclose conflicts, and eliminate or manage them as appropriate.

Research Compliance. Understand and comply with relevant institutional and governmental regulations governing research, including those specific to a given discipline or field.
- Protect human subjects and laboratory animals.
- Follow environmental and other safety regulations.
- Disclose and manage conflicts of interest.

Best Practices for the University in institutional management of research integrity, climate assessment to prepare evidence-based decisions in support of integrity in research and scholarship, compliance, RCR training and education.

Management. Integrate research integrity considerations into overall approaches to research, education, and institutional management.
- Demonstrate that fostering research integrity is a central priority at all levels, including for faculty and institutional leaders.
- Provide training to faculty in effective mentoring and include mentoring as a criterion for hiring and promotion.
- Communicate rights and responsibilities to students, faculty, postdocs, and others engaged in research (e.g., using compacts or MOUs).
- Collect and disseminate data on the career prospects of graduate students and postdocs.
- Consider implications for research integrity when making larger management decisions—(e.g., the number and proportion of soft-money positions).
- Do not exaggerate research results in institutional communications.

Assessment. Perform regular assessments of the climate for research integrity at the institutional and department levels and address weaknesses that are identified.
- Gather data on institutional climate related to research integrity.
- Share data across graduate departments.
- Share best practices of strong departments.

Performing Research Misconduct Investigations. Perform regular inventories of institutional policies, procedures, and capabilities for investigating and addressing research misconduct and address weaknesses that are identified.

- Meet formal compliance responsibilities by ensuring that policies and capabilities for performing fair, thorough, and timely investigations of research misconduct allegations are in place.
- Have multiple entry points to raise questions about possible misconduct.
- Use checks and balances to guard against institutional conflicts.
- Involve legal counsel.
- Incorporate external perspectives when appropriate.
- Protect whistleblowers during investigations and mitigate negative consequences on their careers afterwards.
- Take "after action steps" to ensure that papers are retracted.

Training and Education. Strive for continuous improvement in RCR training and education.
- Engage faculty.
- Make federal requirements a floor, not a ceiling.