

“RCR Ambassadors” – a Pilot Project

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Abstract:

Multi-million dollar fines for research misconduct are a constant financial threat for Rutgers. Although education in Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) is required by some federal grants, we must go beyond the minimal approach to address this serious financial risk. The **RCR Ambassadors Program** is a pilot project to enlist faculty at a grassroots level who will provide local leadership fostering an **organizational culture** conducive to RCR.

Primary Stakeholders:

- Rutgers Senior Leadership
- Faculty Researchers
- Student Researchers
- Deans
- Chairs
- Federal Grant Sponsors

Key Steps/Activities:

Research Deans will be asked to nominate faculty members willing to serve as RCR Ambassadors. The RCR Ambassadors will agree to:

- ✓ Support the particular, discipline-specific RCR education as identified by their department or discipline
- ✓ Liaison with Office of Research to ensure that their discipline-specific RCR education meets standards, i.e. addresses falsification, fabrication and plagiarism
- ✓ Represent their department or discipline as the “point person” for RCR education

Effectiveness Measures:

- ✓ Research Deans support the program of RCR Ambassadors by making nominations.
- ✓ Decline in research misconduct cases in those areas that have RCR Ambassadors.
- ✓ RCR Ambassadors are able to direct faculty, staff and students to appropriate RCR education for their particular department or discipline.
- ✓ RCR Ambassadors choose to become involved in the Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA) Responsible Conduct of Research Collaborative.

Communication/Engagement:

Recognition for Service as an RCR Ambassador:

- ✓ The ambassadors will have their service duly recognized and celebrated with thank you letters and certificates of appreciation.
- ✓ Selected ambassadors will be suggested for stories in Rutgers public relations media.
- ✓ Thank you letters of appreciation will go to the respective Deans and Chairs.

Proposed Timeline:

Fall 2022 through Spring 2023

Current Status/Future Directions:

This pilot program was designed as a volunteer effort without any budgetary expenditure. If successful, it will be expanded, and a more formal funding mechanism will be sought.