



Testimonials

“Examining Core Elements of International Research Collaboration”

NAS GUIRR Workshop

July 26-27, 2010

The National Academies
500 5th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20001

John Krueger, Ph.D.
Scientist-Investigator
Division of Investigative Oversight
Office of Research Integrity

I participated in the workshop on “Research Integrity and the Responsible Conduct of Research,” organized by Sandra Titus, ORI.

Comment:

I was pleasantly surprised at how well the general theme of the meeting provided a means to integrate the different subjects. More specifically, I had gained a much wider understanding that factors arising between cultural differences, intellectual property, and research integrity, don’t really exist in isolation. The broad scope of the general session also encouraged addressing issues in Research Integrity in terms of problem-solving skills rather than simply imploring towards better values.

More specifically, the general session the prior day generated an awareness that issues in Research Integrity (RI) now have a critical and tangible economic component to all countries, and in particular developing countries. (The significance of the workshop was further crystallized by a provocative article in that week’s *Economist* magazine, which revealed that

questions about RI was negatively impacting on technological investments in China.) National economic self-interest adds motivation quite different from the repeated exhortative efforts toward better conduct in science, which is the way RI had been generally pitched before. In short, challenges in international collaborations reveal RI is far more than just extolling “values; Should it instead focus on identifying structural causes, promoting skills for detection, for adjudication, and for resolution (including corrective measures)?

Workshop:

The RI workshop consolidated separate insights I gleaned from the diverse topics covered on the prior day, and in particular with respect to the contribution of Research Integrity to advancing international research. Or, conversely and more accurately, how three or four elements in international research must be linked to enable the success of the collaborations.

The first day general session extolled the virtue of having a set of clear agreements at the outset of an international collaboration about authorship, data, intellectual property, *etc.* That's nothing new. However, the views in the workshop made clear that one needs to establish at the outset an understanding, with agreement of the participants, of procedures to follow *should something go wrong*. That pre-agreement should identify who has the authority to adjudicate issues arising through disputes about authorship, ownership, or integrity of data, and the procedures to follow. Procedures and rights should not be relegated to “afterthought.” This step ensures that the ability to resolve the issues is not compromised by international or cultural mistrust.

Pre-understanding for resolving RI issues is a practical notion rather than abstract entity. Emphasis about problem management at the beginning, about what happens after the project is done may rescue a jeopardized program and enable correction of the literature. This view applies to both developed and developing countries.

I came also to understand the impact of international differences in degree/research programs, and that relatively small targeted “add-ins” enable professors in developing countries to engage in research. Incentives vary, and the nature of the remuneration is likely more important than salary. Also, well-targeted features in an international research program may serve as a carrot to enable a form of self credentialing in developing countries.

Notions of Research Integrity (RI) in the USA luxuriate in an atmosphere of abundant funding; and is structured to address a potential impact on data accuracy and to assure the Public of proper stewardship of the programs it funds. However, I learned this notion of RI is not directly exportable to developing countries: The risks *there* may be that issues in data collection affect its accuracy. In contrast, the risks in developed countries arise in data interpretation (and attendant temptation to make the data fit the results sought). A related issue is custody of the data, where it's retained and where it's analyzed. As before, a lack of pre-agreement upon procedures for resolving conflicts (should problems be discovered) is needed for international research collaborations in both developed and emerging countries.

The participants in our group were assembled from wide backgrounds (industry, academics, journals, government, foundations). It was valuable to have the perspective of a representative of the pharmaceutical industry who brought background and perspective to current story in the news, and who countered some myths about differences in research integrity between academic and industrial research. Being fairly diverse in our backgrounds, the opinions were free flowing, but never overly assertive. In that former regard the help of NRC senior staff Tom Arrison was critical in collecting our opinions. His skills kept us on track.

I look forward to the final report.



Teck Seng

Low Teck Seng (Prof)

Managing Director

Agency for Science, Technology and Research

The world of Science is one that is highly dependent on communication and collaboration. The great discoveries of old were great because they were shared, utilized, and appreciated. In this climate of rapid globalization and communication, the GUIRR workshop provided an unrivaled platform for the interaction of perspectives and ideas from key institutes, industries, and governments internationally, and from the USA.

Whilst collaboration of science can occur spontaneously between researchers and institutes; collaboration of science is an important bridge for nations to build strong ties and relationships with one another. And for long-lasting ties, understanding and appreciation of one another's cultures and perspectives are essential. To this, the distinguished speakers of the GUIRR workshop could not have done better. In mere minutes, each of the excellent speakers provided invaluable insights that not only helped to stimulate discussions, but had also sown the seeds for better national collaborations that would without a doubt, bloom into a scientific future of stronger ties between nations.

Feel free to cite my name along with the testimonial. Thanks!



Jamie Lewis Keith

Vice President and General Counsel

University of Florida

Office of the Vice President and General Counsel

My comments are below on the above-referenced workshop in which I participated and was a subject matter expert on the panel addressing legal issues involved in international research. If my comments are useful, feel free to cite my name.

COMMENTS:

Overall, the July 26-27 workshop's broad scope of regulatory, practical and policy issues affecting international research, observed from the perspectives of the academy, government and industry—and even within these realms, from the perspective of researcher, administrator, regulator and lawyer—offered a robust picture of the complexities involved in pursuing international research endeavors. Importantly, it became clear that sustainable and effective international research endeavors require both the core intellectual leaders and agenda, as well as a team of supporting administrative, regulatory and legal experts. In addition, the impact of U.S. foreign policy and regulation was evident.

In the time provided and with the scope of issues covered, it was difficult to do more than identify issues and touch the surface of solutions—some adequate, others partial and a number inadequate and justifying further problem-solving.

SUGGESTION:

If I might share some thoughts for the future, one might consider crafting a series of deeper and narrower workshops, possibly separated in time, with defined foci and experts who serve as facilitators for each. The separate workshops could be placed in one of three over-arching tracks (with topics spanning tracks noted as such): 1) foreign relations, security and competitiveness policy issues; 2) practical, financial and cultural issues; and 3) legal/regulatory issues.

The separate workshops would culminate in a plenary gathering at which the experts/facilitators from each of the focused workshops distill and present what was learned to all of the workshops' participants. At the culminating larger workshop, everyone would work to build an integrated picture; identify the pivotal aspects of successful international research endeavors; and identify the key barriers, known range of solutions, and areas where good solutions need to be developed. (There would be no need to "endorse" any position, just to present what was learned.) Specific pivotal issues could be identified as needing further analysis and problem-solving and a range of identified approaches to issues could be documented.

A greater representation of leading government policy-makers, as well as industry leaders—with the already good complement of distinguished academic researchers and university administrators and lawyers—would be helpful. This is not so different than what was done on July 26-27, but contemplates a greater period to prepare for each workshop; a series of workshop over a longer period of time; a deeper and narrower treatment of issues first; and then a session to integrate and build a comprehensive picture of the policy, practical and legal dimensions of international research endeavors, outstanding barriers and areas for future problem-solving.

I hope this was not more than you desired and that it is helpful. Please feel free to contact me if I can assist in any way and thank you for inviting me to participate on July 26-27.



Dr. Maria Velez de Berliner
President
Latin Intelligence Corporation

Again, it was an honor to participate in the GUIRR workshops. Here is my testimonial. You may use my name and company affiliation.

In a global world, international research collaboration is the keystone of scientific progress without which sustainable development can't be achieved. The depth and breadth of the GUIRR workshops gave participants hands-on experience on how to enter into and benefit from collaboration with foreign counterparts. The workshop on economic, political, cultural, and social risks and how to overcome them, and the discussion on legal implications of "cross-border" research gave participants the knowledge they need to collaborate safely and effectively to their benefit and the benefit of their countries.



Brian M. Warshawsky
Office for Sponsored Research

In bringing together such a diverse cast of contributors, GUIRR's Workshops broadly shared the big picture emphasizing the importance in clearing the administrative hurdles in order that the scientific collaborations may prosper.



Gambo G. Aliyu

Fogarty International Research Fellow

Thanks for considering me worthy of a privilege to address the GUIRR workshop participants consisting distinguished scholars, entrepreneurs and senior government officials. I wish to reiterate with pleasure that I have enjoyed the workshop especially the honor of serving as a subject matter expert.

It was clear from the discussions that nations differ with respect to research regulations and how ideas generated from research work are preserved, shared and commercialized. Finding a common framework that will be acceptable to all will be of immense benefit to all.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity.



Miriam Kelty

*National Institute on Aging,
National Institutes of Health (retired)*

The workshop content made me realize how difficult it may be for US PIs to work in international environments if they do not understand the differences in societal infrastructure and in institutional structures. I expect that few US investigators consider that the political climate of the countries with which they are working might impact on their scientific collaborations. The importance of understanding goals and incentives of collaborators, as well as any constraints they are under, can affect research activities. The recommendations to avoid such difficulties were invaluable.

The combination of formal presentations and break-out discussion groups was well planned and helpful. The break-out groups gave participants a chance to raise issues and discuss them. My group on responsible conduct noted that the training in that area here does not prepare researchers to work internationally, nor does it serve US investigators to work with foreign scientists who come to the US. Without an understanding of their expectations about how science is conducted, we should not assume that we all adhere to the same best practices.

The workshop was an excellent first discussion of an area that merits a lot more attention than it has gotten. I hope that by giving it more attention we will prevent some of the questionable and bad behavior reported in the scientific and popular press that challenges the public's trust in science.



Rafic Makki

Executive Director and interim Executive Director of Higher Education

Abu Dhabi Education Council

This was a meeting about how to build stronger international research collaboration. For me and my organization, the meeting has directly resulted in exactly that!

Coming all the way from Abu Dhabi, I was looking forward to an engaging meeting and one that I can learn from to help Abu Dhabi build stronger collaborative bridges with the international research community. The meeting exceeded my high expectations. The meeting had the two essential ingredients of a successful meeting: well organized and participants who are truly distinguished and very relevant to the topics of discussion. I very much liked the format of the meeting, especially the breakout sessions.

I have followed and developed relationships with several of the participants. We are exchanging ideas and learning from each other. For example, Abu Dhabi has learned a great deal from the development of Singapore over the last 20 years. Since the meeting, I have been in close contact with Prof Low Teck, who spoke at the meeting, to see how we can collaborate as we build Abu Dhabi's scientific research ecosystem. We are also working with SRC along the same dimensions and my discussions with Celia were very informative.

The breakout sessions were excellent. There was a free flow of brainstorming and debate that led to very interesting recommendations.

For future meetings, I would not change much, but would suggest even more time for networking.