

Own it!
Deliberating serious research
misconduct at institutions where the
misconduct occurred

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Problem

- Institutions “warehouse” their misconduct cases.
 - Contributes lack of transparency and accountability
- Is there another way?



Reflexive Deliberation



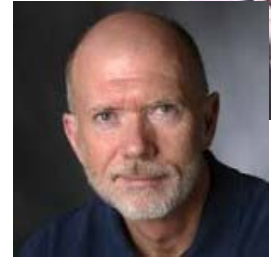
- “Reflexivity” encourages self-reflection, transparency, and critical dialogue.
- Can and should be applied to internal misconduct when appropriate.

Duke Cases

- Pulmonary research misconduct and embezzlement (\$112.5 million settlement)
- Translational Omics (“Anil Potti”) case

Translational Omics (T.O.) Case

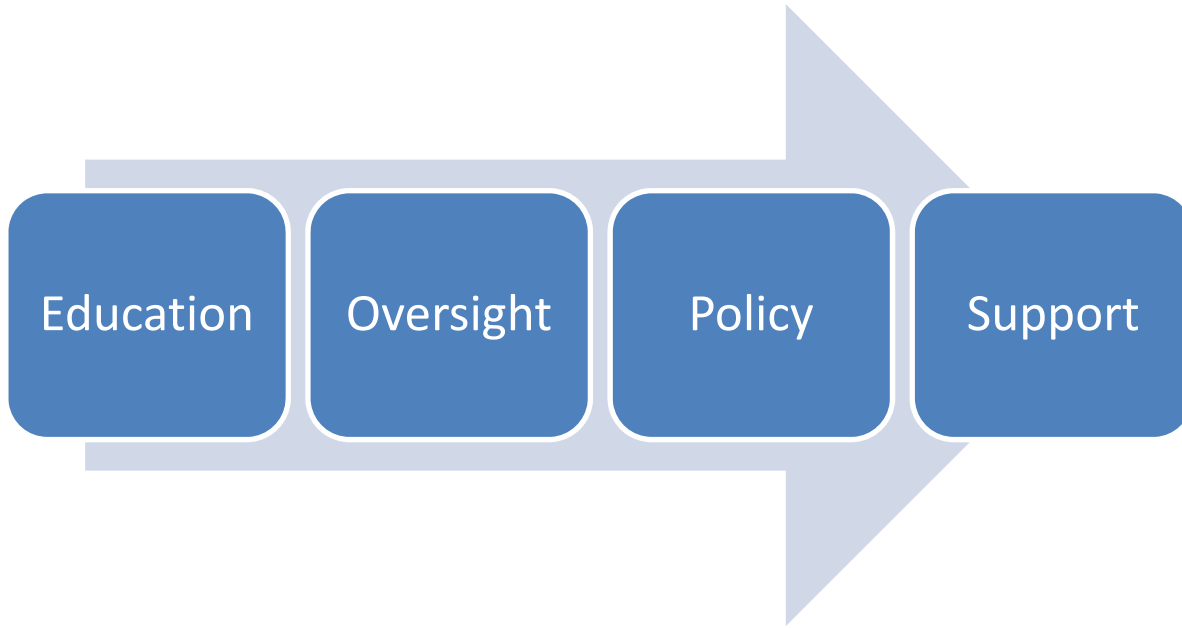
- 2006-2012
- Fabrication & falsification in grants and publications
- Conflicts of interest
- Lack of timely & effective response
- Questions about clinical trial safety
- Mentorship, authorship, peer-review issues



Key Consequences

- \$7-10 million paid for grant and investor claims and legal fees
- 11 retractions
- Ongoing federal scrutiny & intervention
- Loss of morale and trust in institution

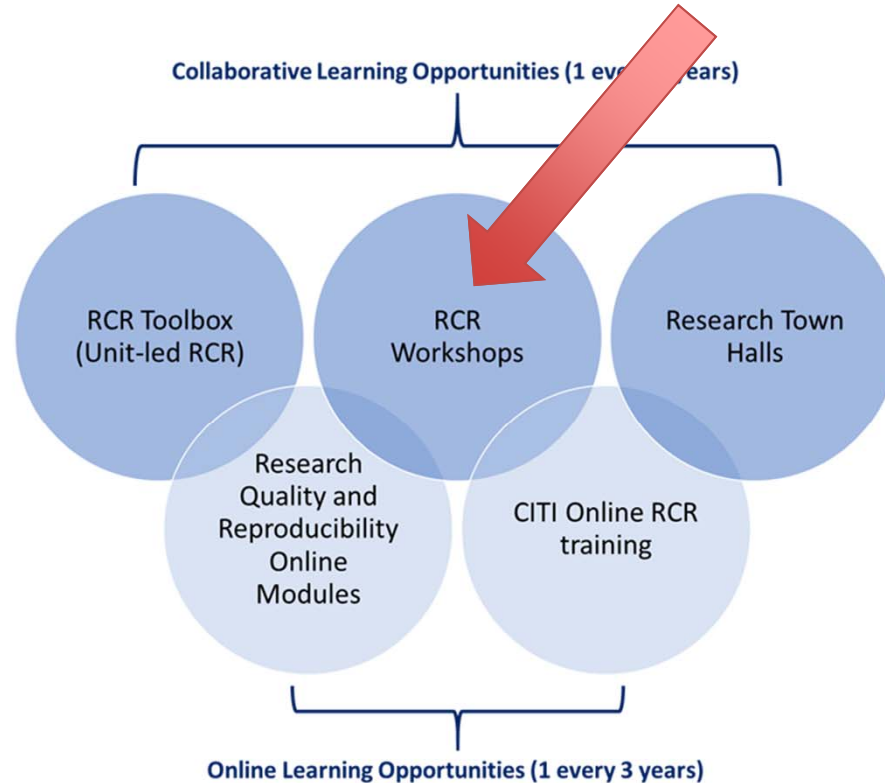
Institutional Response



RCR Education at Duke

- Ongoing & mandatory for ALL research faculty, staff, administrators, and managers at Duke
- Expanded for students and trainees (but not mandatory in all cases)

RCR Education Infrastructure



RCR Workshops

- Held monthly
- Presentations on misconduct, detrimental research practices (DRPs)
- 70-min break-out session on T.O. Case

Omic Case Deliberation

- Used a scripted, 3-page narrative
- Nondirective reaction phase followed by questions for discussion
 - E.g., what do you think went wrong?
 - What can individual researchers do to prevent this sort of thing from happening again?
 - What can departments and institutions do?

Workshop Images



Themes



- Misconduct unacceptable, highly damaging
- Institution bears significant blame
- Reporting concerns (i.e., whistleblowing) is unlikely among career-vulnerable individuals
- This may happen again

Some Feedback

- Workshop Participant A: “What really drove the conversation for me were the individuals [at the workshop] who were around when [the Omics case] occurred. It completely changed the viewpoint of the scripted text for me.”

More Feedback

- Participant B: “I love that this ‘public discussion’ of RCR is happening. I hope it continues. I would like, going forward, to see concrete strategies come out of these efforts to address the ‘culture’ issues that get in the way of ethical research practice...”

Discussion

- RCR programs are a logical platform for deliberating internal misconduct.
- Key factors:
 - Institutional leaders should initiate
 - Process must be meaningful, authentic

Challenges

- Involving less empowered stakeholders
- Keeping leaders visibly involved & receptive to feedback, calls for action
- Anticipating vulnerabilities and risks



Conclusion

- Institutions should “own” their histories of misconduct.
- RCR programs may be less meaningful and effective without them.
- Best practices and research on outcomes are needed.