

Vice-Chancellor for Research Proposal

SUNY and the Research Foundation are committed to excellence, objectivity, and integrity in the conduct of scholarly research. The research process must be rooted in consideration of our core values and principles. Freedom of inquiry, openness to new ideas, a love of learning, and a commitment to rigorous study¹ are the principled pillars of the modern university. Academic freedom, together with a commitment to excellence and rigor in research provide the two sides of an indelible compact, one that has enabled the academy, over many years, to build the knowledge base on which today's society depends. Academic freedom is, therefore, a privilege not a right, which can only be truly exercised when combined with a commitment to excellence, rigor, and an adherence to professional integrity.

The result is the development of new scholarship, some unpopular and provocative. Professional integrity allows this new scholarship to be debated, criticized, attacked, defended, digested, and accepted by the scientific community and society, adding to the corpus of human knowledge. Academic freedom coupled with concomitant commitment to integrity and vigor allows SUNY the flexibility to explore highly controversial and emotionally charged areas where significant and strongly held differences of opinion can exist.

The Board of Trustees should adopt a SUNY wide policy requiring the following:

1. Campuses must have clear conflict of interest policies that ensure full disclosure of any past, present or future direct or indirect relationship to a sponsor or potential sponsor. Relationships that exist must be vetted and managed via a comprehensive conflicts management plan.
2. Creation of a campus "center" or "institute" is only allowed if:
 - a. The campus adopts a policy governing the formation and management of "centers" or "institutes" utilizing best practices;
 - b. The policy must include a provision requiring the director of any "center" or "institute" be a member of the full-time regular faculty, unless a specific exemption is granted by the campus president at the request of the appropriate dean; and
 - c. The entity must have an external advisory body made of non-conflicted representatives.
3. Campuses should seek funding from diversified sources:
 - a. If a campus creates a "center" or "institute" to conduct research into a distinct area of focus, to the extent private sponsors support this endeavor, the campus should encourage the PI (s) to seek funding from neutral private sources to the extent possible;
 - b. If neutral or un-biased funding sources are not available, funding should be obtained from divergent sources with differing socio-political, economic, or policy perspectives;
 - c. Externally funded studies cannot be researched and published under the campus or university banner without the direct involvement of at least one full-time regular faculty member.

¹ [insert from TK's report]

4. Each campus should reaffirm its commitment to academic freedom and scientific integrity and excellence. The campus should do so annually by adopting and communicating the Principles of Scientific Integrity and encouraging faculty to acknowledge the Code of Scientific and Scholarly Conduct.

Principles of Scientific Integrity (to be adopted and distributed by the VC of Research):

1. **Transparency.** Basic research should be open to review and vetting. Known potential conflicts of interests should be disclosed along with funding sources and affiliations.
2. **Independence.** Researchers must be free of outside influence when conducting or reviewing research. Many science and technology issues are closely related to a number of public policy issues and priorities, making “high quality objective scientific advice” vital and in the public interest.
3. **Free and Open Communication.** SUNY researchers and scientists should be free to express their opinions so long as it is clear those opinions are theirs and not SUNY’s or the RF’s. This is true no matter how controversial the subject and even if there are public policy implications.
4. **Accountability.** Researchers and Scientists must have the ability to review, comment, and amend a final version of a document or publication that relies on their research or represents their scientific opinion. Scientific accuracy is paramount.
5. **Information Sharing.** Sharing information and research data is a key component of the scientific process.
6. **Peer Review.** To ensure the quality of scientific information only qualified and non-conflicted scientists should be used.
7. **External Pressure and Bias Eliminated.** External pressure must be absent from the research process. Scientists and Researchers must be protected from external pressures from private and public sponsors, government officials, and university administrators.
8. **Conflict of Interest Policies.** Policies and procedures governing disclosure and management of conflicts of interest must be adhered to. Sources of funding should be disclosed and research must be conducted free of outside interference.
9. **Thoughtful and Thorough Review of Misconduct Allegations.** Allegations of “fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research or in reporting research results must be reviewed pursuant to campus policies. Individual whistleblowers must be protected from retaliation.
10. **Scientific Basis for Public Policy and Discourse.** When policy makers utilize faculty research or publications as the basis of supporting or rejecting a policy initiative, researchers and the university should make every effort to present or disclose information related to the underlying research, the findings, the scientific approach and process used to develop the underlying scientific information.²

² United States Department of Agriculture, Secretary’s Memorandum 1074-001, USDA Scientific Integrity Policy p2.

Proposed Code of Scientific and Scholarly Conduct³:

1. I will act in the interest of the advancement of science and scholarship for sound decision making, by using the most appropriate, best available, high quality scientific and scholarly data and information.
2. I will communicate the results of scientific and scholarly activities clearly, honestly, objectively, thoroughly, accurately, and in a timely manner.
3. I will be responsible for the resources entrusted to me, including equipment, funds, my time, and the employees I supervise.
4. I will adhere to the laws and policies related to protection of natural and cultural resources and to research animals and human subjects while conducting science and scholarship activities.
5. I will not engage in activities that put others or myself in an actual or apparent conflict of interest.
6. I will not intentionally hinder the scientific and scholarly activities of others or engage in scientific and scholarly misconduct.
7. I will clearly differentiate among facts, personal opinions, assumptions, hypotheses, and professional judgment in reporting the results of scientific and scholarly activities and characterizing associated uncertainties in using those results for decision making, and in representing those results to other scientists, decision makers, and the public.
8. I will document any of my previously published research or materials in any scholarly publication or presentation.
9. I will protect, to the fullest extent allowed by law, the confidential and proprietary information provided by individuals, communities, and entities whose interests and resources are studied or affected by scientific and scholarly activities.
10. I will be responsible for the quality of the data I use or create and the integrity of the conclusions, interpretations, and applications I make. I will adhere to appropriate quality assurance and quality control standards, and not withhold information that might not support the conclusions, interpretations, and applications I make.
11. I will be diligent in creating, using, preserving, documenting, and maintaining scientific and scholarly collections, records, methodologies, information, and data in accordance with appropriate laws, rules, policies, and procedures.
12. I will place quality and objectivity of scientific and scholarly activities and reporting of results ahead of personal gain or allegiance to individuals or organizations.
13. I will maintain scientific and scholarly integrity and will not engage in fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, reviewing, or reporting scientific and scholarly activities and their products.
14. I will fully disclose methodologies used, all relevant data, and the procedures for identifying and excluding faulty data.
15. I will adhere to appropriate professional standards for authoring and responsibly publishing the results of scientific and scholarly activities and will respect the intellectual property rights of others.
16. I will welcome constructive criticism of my scientific and scholarly activities and will be responsive to their peer review.
17. I will provide constructive, objective, and professionally valid peer review of the work of others, free of any personal or professional jealousy, competition, non-scientific disagreement, or conflict of interest. I will substantiate comments that I make with the same care with which I report my own work.

³ Based upon the United States Department of the Interior Departmental Manual, Chapter 3, pp9-10.