

# Integrity in Research and Scholarship

## 1.1 Introduction

St. Mary's University College recognizes that a commitment to faculty research and the dissemination of new knowledge are central to fulfilling its mission as an undergraduate Catholic arts and sciences institution committed to teaching excellence.

Excellence in research and scholarship depends on the creativity, hard work and dedication of its practitioners. It also depends on integrity. Dishonesty and fabrication undermine the worth and usefulness of research and other scholarly work. Breaches of integrity offend basic professional, scholarly and societal values of honesty, fairness, beneficence and freedom from exploitation.

The St. Mary's University College Research and Scholarship Integrity Policy is designed to promote the highest standards of practice and research.

## 1.2 Definitions

The terms researcher(s) and scholar(s) in this policy refers to all members of the St. Mary's University College community who are involved in research and other scholarly and creative activities.

The terms publications and presentation are meant to encompass the dissemination of all research and other scholarly information. These terms include all means of transmitting research and other scholarly information (printed journals and books, electronic journals and books, performances, exhibitions, in-person oral presentations, visual recordings, audio recordings, newspapers and magazines, television, and radio).

## 1.3 Responsibilities of Researchers and Scholars

St. Mary's University College endorses and complies with the principles and responsibilities outlined in the Tri-Council policy statement *Integrity in Research and Scholarship* as follows:

- a) recognizing the substantive contributions of collaborators and students; using unpublished work of other researchers and scholars only with permission and due acknowledgement; and using archival material in accordance with the rules of the archival source;
- b) obtaining the permission of the author before using new information, concepts or data originally obtained through access to confidential manuscripts or applications for funds for research or training that may have been seen as a result of processes such as peer review;
- c) using scholarly and scientific rigour and integrity in obtaining, recording and analysing data, and in reporting and publishing results;
- d) ensuring that authorship of published work includes all those who have materially contributed to, and share responsibility for, the contents of the publication, and only those people; and
- e) revealing to sponsors, universities, journals or funding agencies, any material conflict of interest, financial or other, that might influence their decisions on whether the individual

should be asked to review manuscripts or applications, test products or be permitted to undertake work sponsored from outside sources.

#### **1.4 Institutional Responsibility**

As an institution St. Mary's University College is committed to promoting integrity in research and scholarship. This policy shall be made known to all members of the St. Mary's University College community engaged in research and scholarship. The policy shall be included in the Faculty Manual provided to all permanent and sessional faculty and laboratory instructors. A session on the principles of research and scholarly integrity shall be included in the orientation provided to new faculty. As well, the policy shall be made available in the Faculty folder of the St. Mary's University College website. The Vice President Academic and the Associate Dean-Faculty shall provide appropriate educational and informational programs to promote the appreciation and awareness of the principles of research and scholarly integrity contained within this policy.

Allegations of scholarly misconduct, including deviating from approved ethical guidelines, falsification of data, failure to disclose conflict of interest, misrepresentation of authorship, and the mistreatment of animals, are a serious matter that may cause harm to the accused, the accuser, the institution and to research and scholarship generally. In compliance with the Tri-Council policy statement *Integrity in Research and Scholarship*, St. Mary's University College has put in place impartial and accountable procedures to:

- a) receive allegations of misconduct in research and scholarship;
- b) conduct and document appropriate enquiries within an established time period;
- c) protect the privacy of the person(s) accused of and of the person(s) making the allegations as far as is possible given the need for due process in pursuing the enquiry;
- d) allow the accused person(s) due process and full opportunity to respond to the allegations throughout the enquiry through mechanisms consistent with due process and natural justice;
- e) decide whether or not there has been misconduct;
- f) determine the actions to be taken as a result of conclusions reached, including:
  - any sanctions imposed
  - any sanctions taken to protect or to restore the reputation(s) or credibility of any person(s) wrongly accused of, or implicated in, misconduct in research, including procedures to ensure that if the charges have been dismissed copies of documents and related files provided to third parties have been destroyed; and
- g) inform the accused person(s) of the results of the enquiry and of the actions that have been decided upon; and
- h) prepare a report on the above.

In keeping with the above principles, St. Mary's University College has adopted the following procedures and policies:

- a) Allegations of misconduct in research and scholarship are to be directed in writing to the Vice President Academic.
- b) The Vice President Academic shall forward a copy of the complaint to the Associate Dean-Faculty and the Chair of the Research Ethics Board. This group shall conduct a preliminary investigation.
- c) The Vice President Academic, Associate Dean-Faculty and Chair of the Research Ethics Board shall meet to determine whether the complaint, if the allegations were true, plausibly constitutes misconduct and an offence under the terms of St. Mary's University College's policy on Integrity in Research and Scholarship. This determination shall be made within ten (10) working days of receiving the complaint.
- d) In the case of anonymous allegations, a complaint may not be investigated if insufficient information to permit independent evidence gathering and verification has been provided or if complainant anonymity would result in substantial unfairness to the accused. When a determination not to proceed has been made, all copies of allegation will be destroyed.
- e) Where a determination is made that the current policy applies to the allegation, the Research Ethics Board shall conduct a full investigation.
- f) The Vice President Academic shall inform both the accused and the accuser of the investigation and notify both parties of the obligation:
  - to maintain and identify all pertinent documents and materials;
  - to protect the confidentiality of the proceedings and the participants;
  - to adhere to all privacy and reputation protections;
  - not to engage in improper acts of retaliation
- g) Where the Vice President Academic believes that information relevant to the case might be lost, disposed of, or altered, he or she is empowered to take whatever steps are necessary to secure and maintain such information.
- h) The Vice President Academic shall forward a copy of the complaint to the Accused and inform the Accused of his or her right to submit a written response, including all exculpatory information (such as persons to interview, documentary evidence to examine) to the allegation within 20 (20) working days.
- i) The Research Ethics Board shall conduct its investigation within ten (10) working days of receiving a written response to the allegation from the Accused. The investigation shall include an examination of all evidence, a meeting with the Complainant and/or his/her third party representative to review the evidence, and a meeting with the Accused and/or his/her third party representative to review the evidence.
- j) Upon completion of the investigation, the Research Ethics Board shall write a report summarizing the complaint, the investigation process followed, source of evidence consulted, meetings held, and a conclusion as to whether or not the accused committed the act(s) if alleged misconduct.

- k) Upon completion of the report, the Vice President Academic shall distribute the report to the accused and the complainant with invitations to respond to the report within ten (10) working days of their receipt of the report.
- l) The Research Ethics Board shall review the responses to the report and offer to meet with the accused. Both the College and the accused may choose to have a third party present. In such cases, all parties shall be provided with the name of any third party at least one (1) working day prior to the meeting.
- m) Following this meeting, the Vice President Academic shall either dismiss the complaint or initiate disciplinary procedures.
- n) In the case of dismissed complaints, the Vice President Academic shall in writing advise the accused person and the complainant and provide a copy of the report to the President. All copies of letters and other documents are to be provided to the Vice President Academic within five (5) working days. One copy of all documents shall be retained in a secure place for one year. All other copies will be destroyed immediately. The secured copy shall be consulted only if a complaint of mischievous or malicious allegation is lodged regarding the original complaint. The archival copy of materials shall be destroyed after one year.
- o) In cases where a complaint is upheld, the matter shall be referred to the President. The President shall meet with the Vice President Academic and Associate Dean-Faculty to determine appropriate disciplinary action. Disciplinary action may include a letter of reprimand to be placed within the employment record, rescission of research facility and resource privileges, rescission of honorific or adjunct title, demotion, or dismissal.
- p) The President shall inform the accused, the Vice President Academic and the Associate Dean-Faculty in writing of the penalty decision and the date on which the penalty takes effect.
- q) If the accused person's work is funded, the Vice President Academic shall prepare a synopsis of the complaint, investigation report and disciplinary action taken and send copies of the synopsis to the funding agency and to the disciplined person.
- r) Persons who are found to have committed misconduct under the terms of the policy on Integrity in Research and Scholarship shall be advised by the Vice President Academic that no action is to be taken to the detriment of the complainant as a result of the complaint.
- s) Allegations of mischievous or malicious complaint shall be subject to the process outlined above and the same disciplinary actions.

## **1.5 Contested Decisions**

In cases where a misconduct or discipline decision is contested, the following procedures are to be followed.

- a) Decisions of misconduct or discipline may be appealed in writing to the President within ten (10) working days of the decision having been communicated to the accused.

- b) Grounds for appeal include potential conflict of interest or bias among the participants in prior proceedings or a failure to follow established policies and procedures.
- c) The President shall inform the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Governors that an appeal has been launched. The Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Governors shall designate from among its members or shall seek from another university or college an adjudicator.
- d) The adjudicator shall review the appeal of the accused and the report of the previous investigation to determine if there are grounds for an appeal. If grounds are found, the adjudicator shall inform the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board which shall launch an investigation. The investigation shall be conducted in keeping with the principles and procedures outlined above.
- e) The decision of the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Governors shall be final.
- f) If a decision of misconduct or discipline is overturned by the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Governors and the complaint dismissed, all copies of letters and other documents related to the investigation shall be delivered within five (5) working days to the adjudicator. One copy of all documentation shall be kept for one year. All other copies shall be immediately destroyed.
- g) If the result of these procedures alters an earlier decision and notice has been sent to a funding agency, the President shall so notify the funding agency.