CODE OF ETHICS FOR UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH
Adopted July 1, 2017

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THE PURPOSE OF THE CODE OF ETHICS

This document serves as a guide to ethical standards and as a starting point for discussions and considerations of ethical issues related to undergraduate research across all disciplines. It is meant to serve as a tool, providing reference to key resources related to ethics. It is meant to inform the practices of individuals and institutions, not to substitute for specific institutional policies and practices. It is not meant to be a standard of enforceable conduct but rather seeks to provide a set of best practices adopted voluntarily.

MISSION OF THE COUNCIL ON UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

The mission of the Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR) is to support and promote high-quality undergraduate student-faculty collaborative research and scholarship. In support of this mission, the membership of CUR has developed the following code of ethics to promote dialogue about ethical issues and to serve as a framework for ethical decision making by CUR members and others engaged in and promoting undergraduate research, scholarship, and/or creative inquiry.

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Students, faculty, organizations, and institutions involved in undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative inquiry should be committed to the following (modeled on NAFA 2009):

Integrity
- Exhibit honesty, show responsibility and integrity, and encourage others to do so.
- Avoid conflict of interest among roles when possible, and openly acknowledge current and potential conflicts of interest when they exist.

Collaboration
- Promote disciplinary and interdisciplinary involvement and engagement wherever possible
- Encourage and assist in the development of safe, diverse, inclusive, and equitable communities
- Communicate goals, expectations, and concerns in a clear and timely manner

Respect
- Acknowledge the diversity of people, cultures, and disciplines, as well as their respective contributions to society
- Treat colleagues, students, employees, and the public with respect

Fairness
- Treat others in a fair, equitable, and nondiscriminatory manner

Truthfulness and Transparency: Undergraduate research practices and decision-making processes will be appropriately disclosed, periodically reviewed, and effectively revised as needed.

- Institutional and program policies and practices involved in decision-making, program development, fund allocation, and partnership agreements will be developed with appropriate openness as well as clearly defined and equitable criteria.

- Institutional, programmatic, and individual communications will be accurate, clear, and consistent, with confidentiality protected where appropriate.

- Institutional, programmatic, and individual marketing and promotional materials will provide relevant, timely, and accurate information, and avoid unfair and misleading statements.

Observance of Best Practices: Institutions and organizations will endeavor to identify and follow best professional practices, exhibit sensitivity and respect for diversity, and ensure compliance with the law.

- Programs and individuals will actively recruit students of diverse backgrounds, including race, gender, economic circumstances, and academic preparedness. This is reflected in the Council on Undergraduate Research's statement on diversity that serves as a model for undergraduate research programming:

    > The Council on Undergraduate Research is committed to inclusivity and diversity in all of its activities; therefore, CUR will increase and nurture participation of individuals and groups that have been traditionally underrepresented in undergraduate research.

- Institutions, programs, and individuals will develop and implement clear standards of research integrity. The Office of Research Integrity of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has a wealth of information on research compliance issues. http://ori.hhs.gov

- Institutions, programs, and individuals will be good stewards of resources (financial, facilities, and human resources).

- Harassment of individuals on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, marital status, disability, or other basis—including sexual harassment (as defined and protected by applicable law)—is unacceptable and must not be tolerated.

The CUR Characteristics of Excellence in Undergraduate Research (COEUR) provide a summary of best practices that support and sustain highly effective undergraduate research environments. http://www.cur.org/assets/1/23/COEUR_final.pdf

Conflicts of Interest: Institutions and organizations will identify and appropriately handle potential conflicts of interest, or the appearance thereof, based on the best interests of the students and the common good (The Forum on Education Abroad 2011). Individuals, including students, will be provided with training to allow them to become aware, recognize, and avoid conflicts of interest that could adversely influence their judgment or objectivity. When unavoidable, individuals with conflicts of interest will openly acknowledge current and potential conflicts of interest (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education 2014). Conflicts of interest can arise when an individual or institution is involved with multiple interests that may unduly influence one another, preventing objective decision making. Conflict of interest may be both financially and non–financially related.

WebGURU Guide for Undergraduate Research has a module on openness and conflict of interest. http://www.webguru.neu.edu/professionalism/integrity/openness

Expectations for Mentors: Mentors are committed to help each student realize his or her potential, stimulating the spirit of inquiry, creativity, acquisition of knowledge and under-standing, and formulation of goals (National Education Association 1975). Mentors will not impose their own agenda, and the mentoring relationship must not be exploitative in any way (London Deanery 2014). The mentor is taking on the responsibility of teaching the student the skills, knowledge base, and culture of the student's area of study (Monte 2001). Mentors will treat all research collaborators fairly and appropriately acknowledge contributions. Mentors must be aware of the limits of their own competence in the practice of mentoring (London Deanery 2014).

Ten best practices of mentorship are identified in Shanahan et al. (2015) and include the following:

- Strategic planning for student needs and commitment of time

- Establishment of clear and well-scaffolded expectations

- Instruction of technical skills within the discipline

- Provision of a balance of rigorous expectations with the support and personal interest of student, allowing increasing responsibility of mentees as they grow or mature

- Assistance with professional development and establishment of professional networks

Additional guidelines are provided in the London Deanery (2014) *Coaching and Mentoring Ethical Code of Practice* and Barnett 2008:

- Provision of guidance and observance of relevant federal and state laws, and institutional and governmental policies

- Definition and discussion of the relationship of mentors and mentees

- Definition of appropriate boundaries in terms of accessibility, sharing of personal information, and prevention of intrusion in areas that the mentee wishes to keep private until invited to do so

Expectations for Students: Students are committed to excitement in learning; communication; academic integrity; respect for others; and, when appropriate, working collaboratively. Common ethical principles parallel those of mentors and include the following:

- Acquire and model understanding of professional standards within the particular discipline
- Display honesty and originality in all communications
  - Maintain integrity and accuracy in all work
  - Maintain accurate records
- Critically examine own work and the work of others
- Display objectivity and open-mindedness in the design of experiments, projects, or studies; in the analysis/interpretation of data and texts; in peer review; and in writing
- Treat others with respect and courtesy, which includes preparedness and effective communication
- Protect confidentiality, respect for privacy, and respect of appropriate boundaries
- Demonstrate knowledge of and adherence to relevant federal and state laws, and institutional and governmental policies. Work in concert with Institutional Review Boards, Institutional Animal Care and Use Committees, and Offices of Research Compliance.

WebGURU Guide for Undergraduate Research has modules on professionalism.
http://www.webguru.neu.edu/professionalism
http://www.webguru.neu.edu/lab

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