

May 27, 2020

Dear Jacobs School community,

I'd like to thank everyone for your incredible work in keeping the academic mission of the Jacobs School of Engineering going strong despite the headwinds of COVID-19.

In our physically distanced research and teaching environments, it's important to remember that our actions still have important impacts on others and on the integrity of our teaching, learning and research.

With this in mind, I am writing to invite you to join me in strengthening the ethical foundations of research and scholarship here at the Jacobs School of Engineering. We are currently entering phase two of an innovative research ethics effort funded by the NSF.

I'm acutely aware of the challenges surrounding academic integrity right now, and in particular, ethical behavior in the remote classroom environment. Academic ethics and research ethics are inherently intertwined. We are working hard under the leadership of Christine Alvarado, Associate Dean for Students, to leverage resources from the UC San Diego Academic Integrity Office and support organic efforts here at the Jacobs School.

This particular NSF project, however, is focused on research ethics, including responsible research, mentoring, data management and authorship.

The NSF research ethics project began in January 2019 with efforts to define goals, needs, and strategies to promote a culture of ethics in the Jacobs School of Engineering. Many thanks to everyone who has been involved in the focus groups, workshops, and preparation and review of draft materials.

Professor Michael Kalichman, director of the UC San Diego Research Ethics Program, is the PI on this project. Executive Vice Chancellor Elizabeth Simmons and I are Co-PIs.

Based on evidence from studies of professional ethics, it is clear that ethics is best promoted by an environment that encourages reflection and conversation about the ethical dimensions of the work we do, both in the laboratory and the classroom.

With this in mind, Michael Kalichman will run a series of discussions and train-the-trainer workshops aimed at increasing dialogue and promoting a robust culture of research ethics here at the Jacobs School. He is also working very hard to get as much feedback as possible on a series of draft guidelines linked below.

While this is all completely voluntary, I encourage the faculty, graduate students and all our research staff at the Jacobs School to participate in this effort.

Tools and resources are available on new pages on the Jacobs School Website (<http://jacobsschool.ucsd.edu/ethics>) and are linked below individually:

Draft guidelines on responsible research, mentoring, data management and authorship

These documents are all intended to evolve based on feedback. They are conversation starters, not the final word. The Jacobs School community is invited to review the documents and provide feedback.

<http://jacobsschool.ucsd.edu/ethics/guidelines.sfe>

Workshops for faculty and postdocs

Three “train-the-trainer” workshops are scheduled for interested faculty and postdoctoral scholars. This is an opportunity to meet with like-minded colleagues and learn about approaches, options, and resources for helping promote a culture of ethics in the Jacobs School.

<http://jacobsschool.ucsd.edu/ethics/events.sfe>

Activities to spur research ethics conversations

Listed here are a variety of activities that faculty and other leaders in the Jacobs School might champion as ways to increase reflection and conversation about ethics.

<http://jacobsschool.ucsd.edu/ethics/activities.sfe>

We need engagement from a broad swath of the Jacobs School to create real dialogue and a strengthened culture of research ethics. This is not only the right thing to do, but it will lead to better research outcomes and stronger professional standing for everyone.

If you have specific questions, please reach out to Michael Kalichman at mkalichman@ucsd.edu.

As always, you can also reach out to me directly by email at DeanPisano@eng.ucsd.edu

Sincerely,

-AI

Albert ("AI") P. Pisano, Dean and
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