

2012

# **[The Second Annual Responsible Conduct of Research Conference Report]**

Series sponsored by the Texas Tech University Ethics Center, the Office of the VP for Research, the Graduate School, and the Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development Center

# The Second Annual Responsible Conduct of Research Conference Report

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## Introduction

The Texas Tech University Ethics Center hosted the second annual Responsible Conduct of Research conference on April 16, 2012. There were 78 participants from 6 different institutions. The conference, held at the Student Union Building, Texas Tech University, included two morning breakout sessions, one keynote address, and one afternoon breakout session.

This year's keynote speaker was Dr. Kenneth Pimple, director of the Teaching Research Ethics Programs at the Poynter Center for the Study of Ethics and American Institutions at Indiana University. Dr. Pimple specializes in professional ethics, research ethics, and teaching research ethics, and his keynote explored the components of research ethics, including peer review and professional regulation.<sup>1</sup>

## Schedule

### Morning Breakout Session 1

**Title:** Data Management

**Time:** 10:15 - 11:15 am

**Presenters:** Drs. Alice Young and Marianne Evola

### Morning Breakout Session 2

**Title:** Ethical Judgment and Conduct

**Time:** 10:15 - 11:15 am

**Presenter:** Dr. Jeremy Schwartz

### Keynote Address

**Title:** Fundamentals of Scholarly and Research Integrity

**Time:** 11:45am - 12:45 pm

**Presenter:** Dr. Kenneth Pimple

### Afternoon Session

**Title:** The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks

**Time:** 1:00 - 2:00 pm

**Presenter:** Professor Jennifer Bard

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<sup>1</sup> Retrieved May 25, 2012, from <http://www.tltc.ttu.edu/content/asp/conferences/rcr/index.asp>.

## Participants

The 78 participants came from six different institutions. The majority of attendees were affiliated with Texas Tech University (TTU), and 12 participants came from Texas Tech University Health Science Center (TTUHSC).

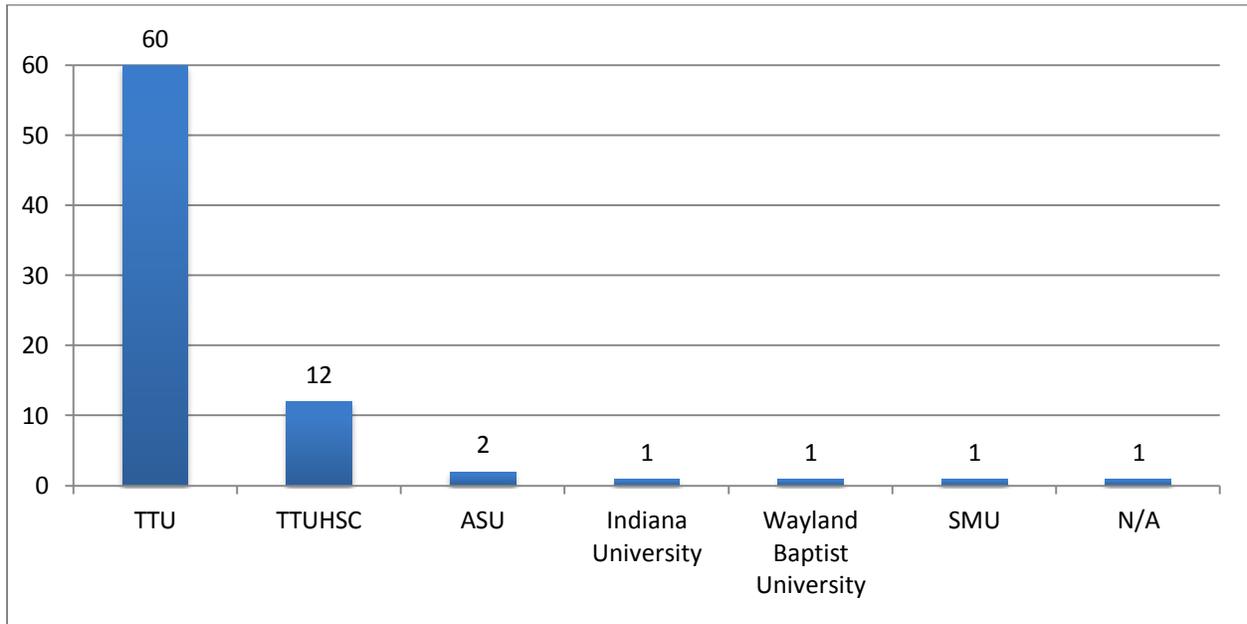


Figure 1. Participants from different institutes

Of the 78 participants, most were faculty and staff members.

Table 1

Participants from the six institutes

	TTU	TTUHSC	ASU	IU	WBU	SMU	N/A
<b>Administrator</b>	2	0	0	0	0	1	0
<b>Faculty</b>	15	4	1	1	1	0	0
<b>Staff</b>	13	8	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Post-doctoral</b>	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Graduate</b>	18	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Undergraduate</b>	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>N/A</b>	5	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

The 60 TTU-affiliated participants came from 31 different departments/offices.

Table 2

*The breakdown of TTU participants*

	Administrator	Faculty	Staff	Post-doc	Graduate	Undergraduate	N/A	SUM
Psychology		2			3			5
Ethics Center			2		1	1		4
Biology					1		2	3
Chemistry and Biochemistry		1		1	1			3
Geosciences					1	2		3
TLPDC			3					3
Law		1			2			3
Library			3					3
Math					2	1		3
Provost, Office of	2							2
OVPR			2					2
OPA			2					2
Philosophy		2						2
TIEHH		2						2
UC		1				1		2
Business					1			1
Civil & Environmental Engineering		1						1
CEET (Construction Engineering & Engineering Technology)		1						1
Education					1			1
Electrical Engineering					1			1
Fine Arts Doctoral Program							1	1
Forensic Science					1			1
Graduate School		1						1
Honors College		1						1
Human Research Protection Program			1					1
Human Sciences				1				1
Industrial Engineering					1			1
NRM		1						1
Political Science					1			1
Petroleum Engineering					1			1
Theatre & Dance		1						1
N/A							2	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>60</b>

## Evaluations

Thirty-six (36) evaluations were collected. The evaluation included seven questions:

1. What of the following sessions did you attend?
2. Overall, how satisfied were you with the conference experience?
3. Overall, how satisfied were you with the speaker?
4. What did you like most about the conference?
5. In what ways could this conference be improved?
6. What topics would you like the conference to address in the future?
7. Would you recommend this conference to others?

The following charts summarize the responses to questions 1, 2, 3, and 7.

1. Most respondents attended one of the morning sessions, the keynote speech, and the afternoon session (Figure 2).

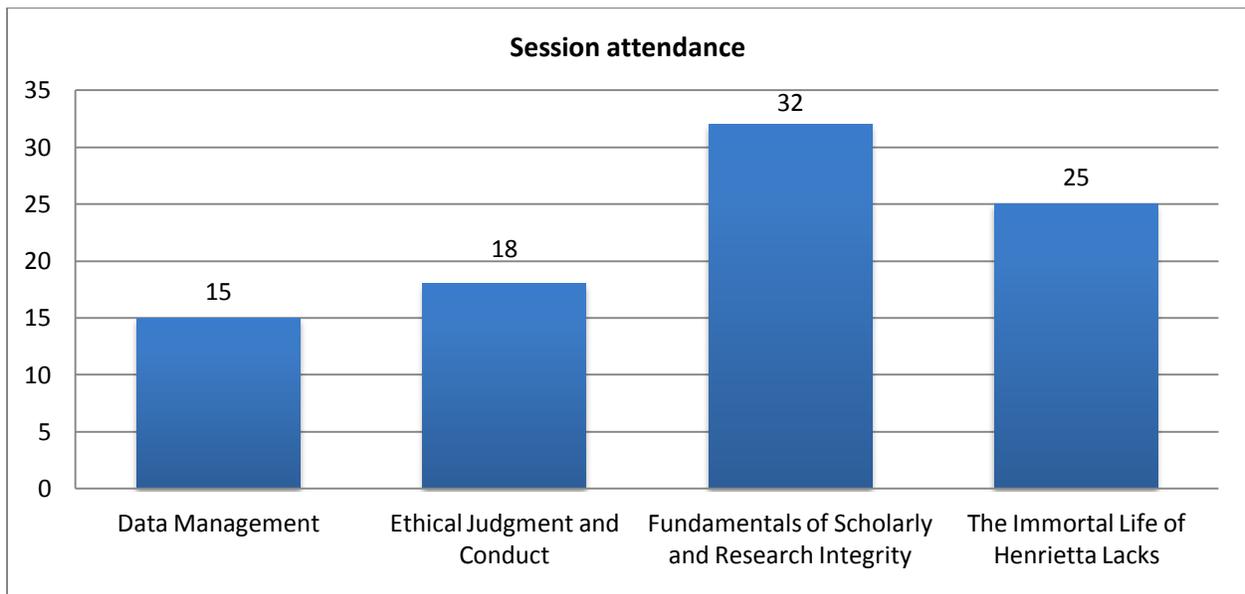


Figure 2. Attendance Number of Each Session

2. The majority of the respondents (75.0%) were *extremely satisfied* or *very satisfied* with the conference experience (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Conference satisfaction

3. Most respondents (61.1%) were *extremely satisfied* or *very satisfied* with the session speakers (Figure 4).

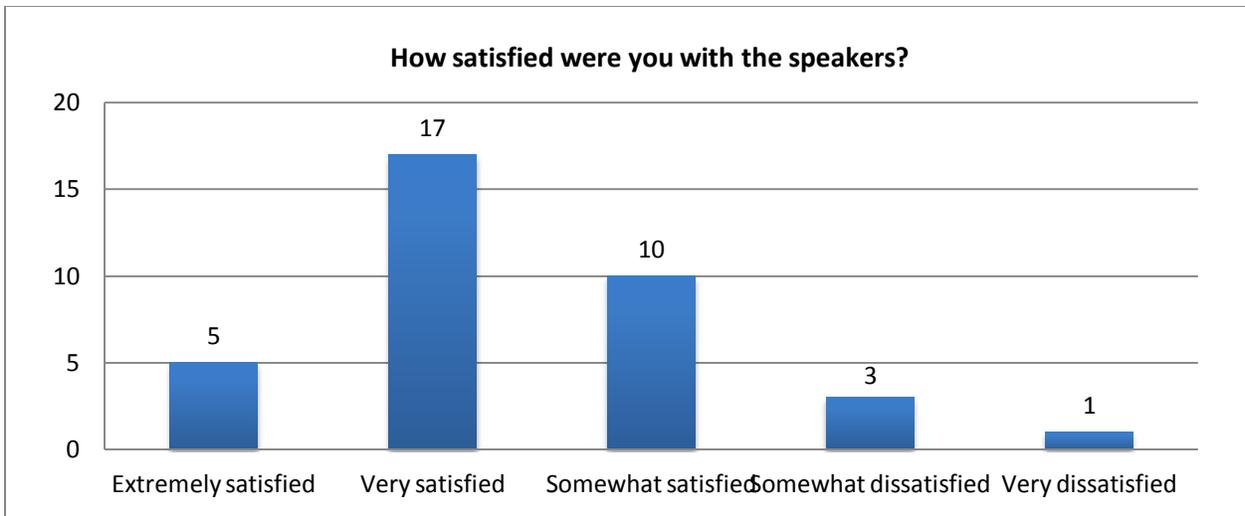


Figure 4. Speakers satisfaction

4. The majority of the respondents (88.9%) would *definitely recommend* or *probably recommend* this conference to others (figure 5).

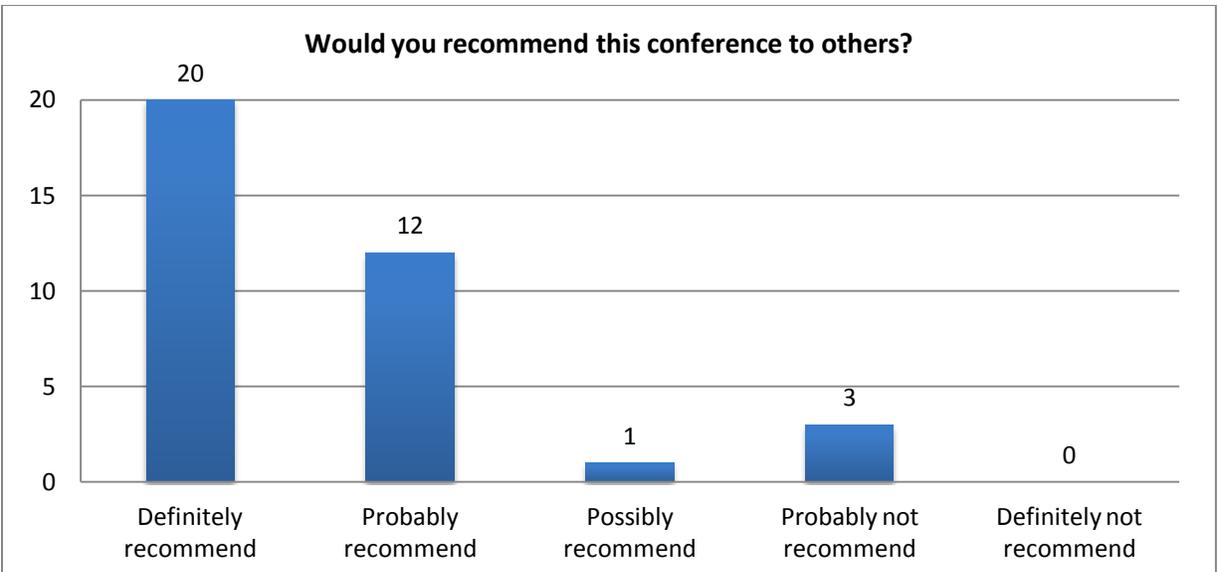


Figure 5. Respondents' Plans to Recommend Conference

## Substantive Comments

1. Thirty-one (31) respondents answered the question "What did you like most about the conference?" Selected comments include:<sup>2</sup>

- Topics chosen very timely and relevant to political discourse.
- Time management, the most essential points provided in 2-3 small sessions.
- Good information. Well organized. Good food. Beautiful atmosphere.
- The Q & A session in each lecture/speech. Food.
- The AM breakout session (Ethical Judgment).
- The data management session and the legal issue of Henrietta Lacks session were very informative.
- The useful handouts from the data management session and the PM breakout presentation.
- Data management: communication, leaderships, management of being mentor. Keynote speaker: "research" component and "purpose, practice, & values."

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A for all responses to question "What did you like most about the conference?"

- Data management: I liked the discussion on lab notebooks including clarity of communication. Additionally, the information on "paper" vs "electronic" was useful. The time frame was just right.
- 1) Discussion on several ways of data management and trying to search the most effective way of it. 2) Discussion on fundamental of scholarly and research integrity.
- Jennifer Bard's presentation. It was very well researched and presented. I also appreciated that this year's conference was more inclusive of disciplines outside of the STEM areas.
- I love the idea of the conference, and I appreciate the hard work that went in to planning the conference. I will definitely make plans to attend the 3rd Annual RCR conference. [...].

2. Twenty-five (25) respondents answered the question “In what ways could this conference be improved?” Selected suggestions include:<sup>3</sup>

- Policy development rather than problematic issues in research ethics.
- [I]t needs to bring more attendees by giving that day as class free to encourage attendance.
- Including more about biological research aspects along with the application for patent information will be great!
- Notification . . . Not everyone that attended the 1st conference was emailed about the 2nd conference.
- Discussions on more case studies. Discussions on how to make the right move in an effective way.
- Solicit presentations through a process of proposals or only accept presentations with a fully developed abstract and presentation description. [...].
- The session that I attended in the morning was unorganized and did nothing to address the problems that are observed in science. These problems primarily are

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix B for all responses to question “in what ways could this conference be improved?”

an increasing number of retractions of published scientific papers. It is postulated that 70% of retractions are due to honest error and 25% are due to fraud. We must find a way to reduce that 25%.

- I wish the keynote speaker can have some slides and be more interactive to audience. The topics of discussion are interesting but for international people like me (who English is not the first language), it is hard to follow sometime the details of the discussions.
- I wish that the AM speaker had tried to focus the discussion on issues of morality as they related to research ethics in particular. While the free-ranging discussion was a lot of fun, it was not at all helpful for investigators who have to struggle with the competing interests of what is best for them, personally, as researchers with external pressures to do well versus what is considered "right" (or at least REQUIRED by regulation) for them as members of an institution that receives federal funding.
- I have not been to other RCR conferences, but this one seemed sparse. [...] It was a seminar bookended by a couple of discussions. Maybe another breakout session with some case studies would be interesting. [...] The AM breakout on ethical judgment was sorta fun, but... I didn't learn anything, [...]. It needed to be more geared towards reaching some sort of conclusion. [...] Also, I was frustrated at the opening. It was supposed to start at 9:45, and at 10:15 someone finally said, "Welcome". Sitting there drinking ice water for 30 minutes makes you wonder, is this really the opening? Did I miss something? Are they ever going to say hello or welcome or anything? At 9:45 someone should have at least said, "Thank you for coming, please enjoy the refreshments and we will begin at 10:15."

3. Nineteen (19) respondents answered the question “What topics would you like the conference to address in the future?” Selected responses include:<sup>4</sup>
- Conflict of interest issues.
  - Management for Postdocs and new faculty.
  - More legal issue with both sides (law/ethics).
  - Examples of ethical violation by prominent faculty and consequences students offer and consequences other institutions and consequences.
  - The fact that we see a 10 fold increase in retractions with only a 44% increase in the number of scientific publications in the last 10 years.
  - Practical pedagogical strategies for integrating the teaching of ethics and responsible conduct in research/scholarship into various disciplines.
  - [...]. How about offering a workshop in addition to the lecture. The workshop would be to actually teach you specific skills related to theme, i.e. - how to manage people, or a lab, or teach or do service.
  - [...] Research collaboration issues relating to ethics, particularly if one partner is in another country. A presentation by a large foundation member on topic of ethics. Difference in funding agencies (NIH, NSF, foundations) on approaches to ethics.
  - [...] some sort of a panel discussion where researchers and compliance people can say, "This is why my point of view is important" and try to come to some understanding of each other's points of view. It wouldn't be easy, [...] but just having an honest dialogue about these issues would be helpful for everyone-- faculty, compliance staff, and students. [...].
  - What kinds of ethical trouble to researchers typically get into? What are their pit falls, and what can we teach young scientists in order to avoid them? What are some warning signs that you would see in a fellow researcher who was unethical? [...]. What about PETA, are THEY ethical?? How do you treat a mouse ethically -

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix C for all responses to question “What topics would you like the conference to address in the future?”

does the same apply to research on fruit flies, etc..? What about lab safety and where the lines of responsibility are drawn? If a lab worker gets hurt, is it their fault or the PI, etc...? If you are the PI and someone gets seriously hurt in your lab, is that career ending? Should it be? [...].

## Conclusion

The evaluations from the 2012 RCR conference showed that, for most attendees, these sessions were informative and relevant. Many respondents (75.0%) were *extremely satisfied* or *very satisfied* with the conference experience. The majority of respondents (88.9%) indicated that they would *definitely recommend* or *probably recommend* this conference to others.

Attendees enjoyed the timely topics, handout, and Q&A sessions. Some people suggested expanding the conference/breakout sessions and more advertisement. Future topics suggested included conflict of interest, issues of law and ethics, geology ethics, collaboration issues, examples of violations and consequences, biological research, and patent information. Participants also suggested case study sessions, panel discussions, interactive workshops on people/lab management, and pedagogical strategies for teaching research ethics.

On the other hand, some participants voiced concerns about the conference not starting on time and sessions being unorganized. They also noted technical issues such as control of room temperature and not having visual aids for the keynote presentation. Specific concerns about a discussion-style breakout session show that some attendees had strong expectations about how pragmatic conference sessions would be, how tailored to lab and STEM research practice content would be, and how much direct instruction in research ethics they would receive. Plans for the design and promotion of the 2013 RCR Conference will need to take this feedback into account.

Overall, the 2012 RCR Conference had largely positive responses and organizers received several suggestions for future conferences.

## Appendix A

*All comments for "What did you like most about the conference?"*

1. Speakers.
2. The afternoon session.
3. The Q & A session in each lecture/speech. Food.
4. I really liked the Henrietta talk.
5. The breakout session 3: the Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks.
6. Topics chosen very timely and relevant to political discourse.
7. Afternoon session.
8. Easy access.
9. I enjoyed the speech on The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks.
10. Time management, the most essential points provided in 2-3 small sessions.
11. The afternoon session.
12. Both breakout sessions were very good.
13. Data management session - terribly informative.
14. Breakout discussions.
15. The AM breakout session (Ethical Judgment).
16. Discussion during breakout session.
17. The interdisciplinary representation of the approach and the dialogue.
18. It was well-organized.
19. I really enjoyed the breakout session.
20. Good information. Well organized. Good food. Beautiful atmosphere.
21. The idea.
22. The data management session and the legal issue of Henrietta Lacks session were very informative.
23. The lunch was great. But seriously the legal & ethical part was very informative and helpful.
24. Data management: communication, leaderships, management of being mentor. Keynote speaker: "research" component and "purpose, practice, & values."
25. 1) Discussion on several ways of data management and trying to search the most effective way of it. 2) Discussion on fundamental of scholarly and research integrity.
26. Jennifer Bard's Presentation! Interesting, informative, engaging. Pimple's talk was boring; it did not tell us anything new; it posed no polemic.
27. The useful handouts from the data management session and the PM breakout presentation.
28. Data management: I liked the discussion on lab notebooks including clarity of communication. Additionally, the information on "paper" vs "electronic" was useful. The time frame was just right.
29. The PM breakout session was by far the most interesting. It actually had an impact on my thinking of the topic.

30. Jennifer Bard's presentation. It was very well researched and presented. I also appreciated that this year's conference was more inclusive of disciplines outside of the STEM areas.
31. I love the idea of the conference, and I appreciate the hard work that went in to planning the conference. I will definitely make plans to attend the 3rd Annual RCR conference. I also thought Jennifer Bard's presentation was outstanding! It hit just the right note (I thought) of bringing together ethical issues and regulations.

## Appendix B

*All suggestions for "In what ways could this conference be improved?"*

1. Expanding to include additional topics/speakers.
2. It was good. The speakers in the Matador room were a bit quiet.
3. Good as is.
4. More case studies discussion to help think in-depth.
5. Increase the heat - it was cold.
6. It was good.
7. Nothing.
8. Keynote speaker started a little late, maybe just be more on time. Overall good.
9. Decide on topic RCR or what and fit topic and program.
10. Increase length: more speakers, more sessions.
11. Policy development rather than problematic issues in research ethics.
12. More dynamic speakers like Jennifer Bard who know how to raise a polemic.
13. I think a plenary speaker from the sciences would be best.
14. It's ok the way it is, but it needs to bring more attendees by giving that day as class free to encourage attendance.
15. Including more about biological research aspects along with the application for patent information will be great!
16. Can be done in different setting more of a workshop or case study type - but definitely more interactive!
17. Notification . . . Not everyone that attended the 1st conference was emailed about the 2nd conference.
18. Start at 9 am and start on time. If few people attend, get rid of extra tables so it doesn't look empty.
19. Discussions on more case studies. Discussions on how to make the right move in an effective way.
20. The main speakers need to not read their presentation. That diminished the value of what was said or could be said.
21. Solicit presentations through a process of proposals or only accept presentations with a fully developed abstract and presentation description. The morning breakout on Ethical Judgment and Conduct was poorly done and ineffective.
22. I wish that the AM speaker had tried to focus the discussion on issues of morality as they related to research ethics in particular. While the free-ranging discussion was a lot

of fun, it was not at all helpful for investigators who have to struggle with the competing interests of what is best for them, personally, as researchers with external pressures to do well versus what is considered "right" (or at least REQUIRED by regulation) for them as members of an institution that receives federal funding.

23. The session that I attended in the morning was unorganized and did nothing to address the problems that are observed in science. These problems primarily are an increasing number of retractions of published scientific papers. It is postulated that 70% of retractions are due to honest error and 25% are due to fraud. We must find a way to reduce that 25%.
24. I wish the keynote speaker can have some slides and be more interactive to audience. The topics of discussion are interesting but for international people like me (who English is not the first language), it is hard to follow sometime the details of the discussions.
25. I have not been to other RCR conferences, but this one seemed sparse.... seems like a stretch to call it a conference. It was a seminar bookended by a couple of discussions. Maybe another breakout session with some case studies would be interesting. The keynote speaker was very disappointing. I really don't remember a word that he said, and I didn't write a single note. The AM breakout on ethical judgment was sorta fun, but... I didn't learn anything, and it just seemed pointless. It needed to be more geared towards reaching some sort of conclusion. As it was, there was really no conclusion reached, or even points made, at least not that I got. Also, I was frustrated at the opening. It was supposed to start at 9:45, and at 10:15 someone finally said, "Welcome". Sitting there drinking ice water for 30 minutes makes you wonder, is this really the opening? Did I miss something? Are they ever going to say hello or welcome or anything? At 9:45 someone should have at least said, "Thank you for coming, please enjoy the refreshments and we will begin at 10:15."

## Appendix C

*All responses for "What topics would you like the conference to address in the future?"*

1. Sharing. The experience from previous person by presentation from participant.
2. Geology ethics?
3. How to manage people.
4. Management for Postdocs and new faculty.
5. I have answered this in the earlier sections
6. More legal issue with both sides (law/ethics).
7. Any research and teaching related.
8. What to do when reporting a situation without repercussions.
9. Covered a lot. None came to mind.
10. I think all the topics are related.
11. Conflict of interest issues.
12. Examples of ethical violation by prominent faculty and consequences students offer and consequences other institutions and consequences.

13. The fact that we see a 10 fold increase in retractions with only a 44% increase in the number of scientific publications in the last 10 years.
14. Practical pedagogical strategies for integrating the teaching of ethics and responsible conduct in research/scholarship into various disciplines.
15. Perhaps a couple more topics offered rather than just 3. How about offering a workshop in addition to the lecture. The workshop would be to actually teach you specific skills related to theme, i.e. - how to manage people, or a lab, or teach or do service.
16. How to manage and deal with people - like dealing with all - starting from P.D to undergraduates in the most effective way - will be very helpful to me who is working as a Post Doc.
17. Results of some of the 50-60 projects funded by NSF. Research collaboration issues relating to ethics, particularly if one partner is in another country. A presentation by a large foundation member on topic of ethics. Difference in funding agencies (NIH, NSF, foundations) on approaches to ethics.
18. I would love to see some sort of a panel discussion where researchers and compliance people can say, "This is why my point of view is important" and try to come to some understanding of each other's points of view. It wouldn't be easy, because the compliance side will always have the winning hand--"You have to do it this way, or else!" but just having an honest dialogue about these issues would be helpful for everyone--faculty, compliance staff, and students. Here are the competing pressures....be aware of them.
19. What kinds of ethical trouble to researchers typically get into? What are their pit falls, and what can we teach young scientists in order to avoid them? What are some warning signs that you would see in a fellow researcher who was unethical? When someone is old enough to be in graduate school - is it too late to change their ethics? What is the history of ethics in research - we've heard about robbing graves to dissect the bodies - but I'm sure there are other scenarios as well. What about PETA, are THEY ethical?? How do you treat a mouse ethically - does the same apply to research on fruit flies, etc..? What about lab safety and where the lines of responsibility are drawn? If a lab worker gets hurt, is it their fault or the PI, etc...? If you are the PI and someone gets seriously hurt in your lab, is that career ending? Should it be? These are just some ideas off the top of my head.