RESPONDING TO CHANGING ENVIRONMENTS:

INSIGHTS AND ACTION AREAS FOR FEDERAL AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS FROM THE 2022 SENIOR RESEARCH OFFICIALS' CONFERENCE

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OVERVIEW

In September of 2022, Duke University and the U.S. Office of Research Integrity co-sponsored a conference, "The Senior Research Officials' Role in Promoting Research Integrity: Responding to Changing Environments," to convene leaders from U.S. government agencies and North American research institutions to discuss the role of institutional senior research officials in promoting research integrity. The goal was to identify methods of promoting change amongst federal and research institutions in the areas of 1) the integrity of research grant applications, 2) the role of workplace environment in research integrity; and 3) research security.

Through presentations, break-out sessions, and discussions related to these topics, five action areas, important for promoting research integrity and quality, emerged:

1) Breaking the cycle of 'passing the harasser' from institution to institution by (a) requiring candidate disclosure of any employment related misconduct findings and (b) the hiring institution connecting with prior institutions about any misconduct investigations;
2) Curbing hyper competitiveness to publish, improper/inadequate data management, and toxic research work environments that perpetuate racial and gender disparities;
3) Diversifying incentive structures so that published replication studies and teaching/mentorships are recognized similarly to novel research publications;
4) Providing proper training across the various stages of a research career (from students, staff, trainees, and faculty) as a primary driver for change in the research integrity space. Framing responsible conduct of research training as an opportunity for professional development would incentivize faculty to participate actively, which in turn supports the last action area identified in the conference; and
5) Striking a balance between promoting international research collaborations and the need to protect national security. By providing guidance to researchers seeking to establish these relationships, institutions can avoid xenophobia and promote security.

Importantly, attendees expressed interest in future meetings convening leaders from research institutions, fundings agencies, and regulatory agencies. We propose using this inclusive model to convene future meetings both nationally and internationally.

CONFERENCE LOGISTICS

The Duke University Office of Scientific Integrity and the U.S. Office of Research Integrity (ORI) began planning for this conference in 2019. We assembled a committee of representatives from ORI and Senior Research Officials from 12 different U.S.-based research institutions to devise the conference agenda and selected relevant speakers. Three virtual roundtables were held in 2021 and were integral to identifying the key topics for discussion for the in-person conference that took place over the course of two days in September of 2022.

Speakers were invited from academic research institutions, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the National Science Foundation (NSF), the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), the Association of American Universities (AAU), Council of Graduate Schools (CGS), the National Security Division (NSD), Department of Justice (DOJ), and the Council on Governmental Relations (COGR).

The three topic areas included a keynote speaker, panel and breakout sessions. One hundred twenty-two people representing 101 institutions across North America registered for the event.

Methods of promoting change amongst federal and research institutions were identified in the following areas:

THE INTEGRITY OF RESEARCH GRANT APPLICATIONS

- **Michael Lauer**, *NIH, Keynote + Panelist*
- **Naomi Schrag**, *Columbia University, Panelist*
- **Geeta Swamy**, *Duke University, Panelist*
- **Sheila Garrity**, *GWU, Moderator*

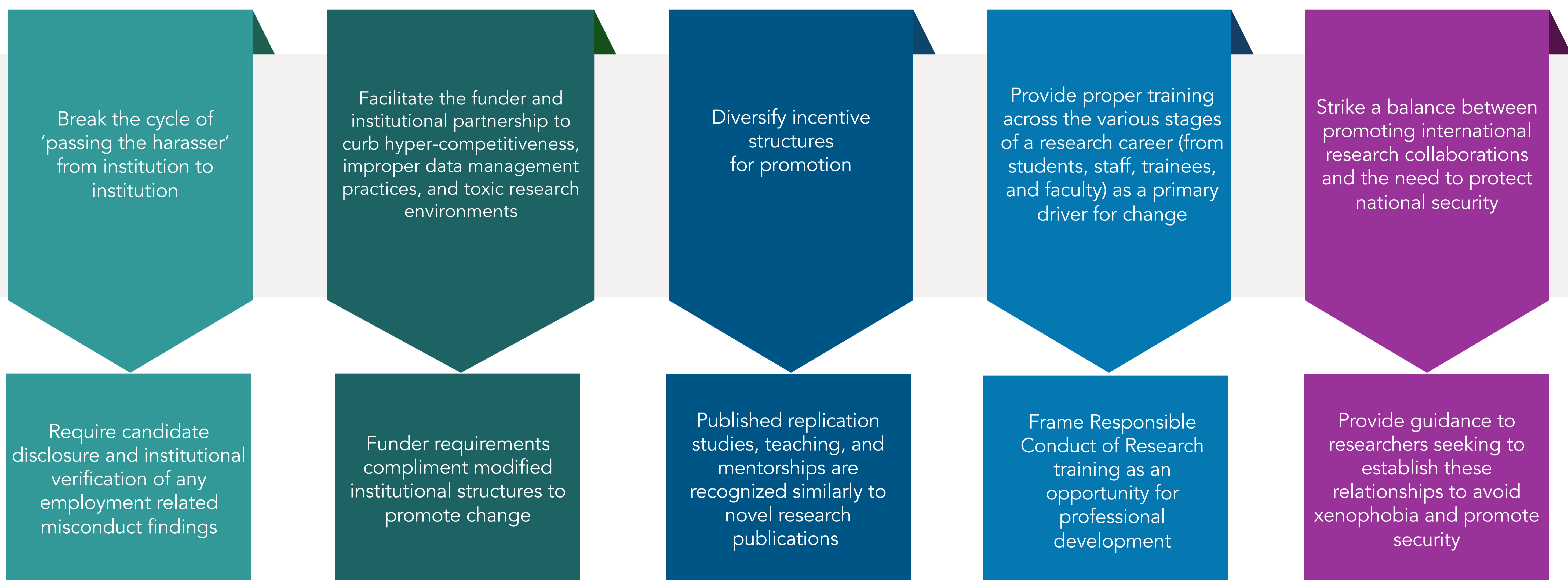### THE ROLE OF WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT IN RESEARCH INTEGRITY

- **Toby Smith**, *AAU, Keynote + Panelist*
- **John Bertot**, *UMD, Speaker + Panelist*
- **Suzanne Ortega**, *CGS, Speaker + Panelist*
- **Kecia Thomas**, *UAB, Speaker + Panelist*
- **Ram Ramasubramanian**, *UVA, Moderator*

RESEARCH SECURITY

- **Rebecca Keiser**, *NSF, Keynote + Panelist*
- **Christina Eller**, *OSTP, Speaker + Panelist*
- **Adam Hickey**, *NSD, DOJ, Speaker + Panelist*
- **Wendy Streitz**, *COGR, Speaker + Panelist*
- **Toby Smith**, *AAU, Moderator*

CONFERENCE OUTCOMES

Five action areas were identified:

Break the cycle of 'passing the harasser' from institution to institution	Facilitate the funder and institutional partnership to curb hyper-competitiveness, improper data management practices, and toxic research environments	Diversify incentive structures for promotion	Provide proper training across the various stages of a research career (from students, staff, trainees, and faculty) as a primary driver for change	Strike a balance between promoting international research collaborations and the need to protect national security
Require candidate disclosure and institutional verification of any employment related misconduct findings	Funder requirements compliment modified institutional structures to promote change	Published replication studies, teaching, and mentorships are recognized similarly to novel research publications	Frame Responsible Conduct of Research training as an opportunity for professional development	Provide guidance to researchers seeking to establish these relationships to avoid xenophobia and promote security

NEXT STEPS

The conference provided a unique opportunity for university administrators and representatives from U.S.-based research organizations and government agencies to share with each other methods of promoting research integrity that create lasting and transformational change rather than transactional change. Additional meetings, at which institutional leaders and federal agencies can continue discussing progress made and challenges that remain in promoting research integrity, are critical to enhancing research culture. We propose using this inclusive model to convene future meetings both nationally and internationally.

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