

## Hong Kong's Research Integrity Workshop

The 2012 U21 Researcher Integration Workshop on the theme Research Misconduct was hosted by the University of Hong Kong from 10 -11 December. The objective of the workshop was to bring together regional experience and expertise in the areas of preventing research misconduct, and to promote research integrity (RI) in order to share experiences and raise relevant issues and concerns, thus benefiting university management and researchers in widening their perspective of RI on a global scale.

The first day of the workshop was a closed session for invited U21 delegates only, but the second day was also open to local guests from other higher education institutions, government agencies, funding organisations, and ethics committees of hospitals in Hong Kong. The workshop attracted 19 delegates from 12 U21 members as well as 88 local guests.

On the first day, Dr Richard Masterman (University of Nottingham) and Dr Paul Taylor (University of Melbourne) shared their universities' experiences in formulating institutional research integrity policies, which were based on principles rather than rules, in order to take into account differences in disciplines, cultures, values and needs. Professor Klas Malmqvist (Lund University), Professor Margaret Hyland (University of Auckland) and Dr Hui Wang (National University of Singapore) delivered presentations on implementing research integrity training and education programmes for students and staff members.



Professor Lap-Chee Tsui presenting to delegates at the 2012 Workshop

Members had a frank and stimulating discussion on all topics of RI, ranging from handling misconduct cases (a cross-institutional research misconduct case was also discussed), providing training and education programmes, to formulating research-integrity-related policies. During the course of discussion, certain challenges and limitations were identified, for example:

- How to promote RI in a positive way to inform quality research
- How to get full attention to RI, in particular from senior researchers
- How to assess the effectiveness of RI training programmes
- How to produce synergy among U21 institutions in dealing with differences, and thus establish common understanding towards agreeable research integrity standards while at the same time respecting individual universities' autonomies in policy making

The second day of the workshop was set as a platform to enable a more extensive exchange of views from different stakeholders. As Professor Lap-Chee Tsui, the Vice-Chancellor of HKU, highlighted in his opening address, upholding RI is the foundation for success in all research-intensive institutions, and this belief should be disseminated widely and systemically without boundaries of universities and generations of researchers.

Following the opening address, Professor Nicholas Steneck (University of Michigan) delivered a stimulating speech on RI issues facing universities today. He emphasised that evaluating the research climate and public expectation, as well as the impact and consequences of research misconduct, was extremely important, as it could help universities to realistically address problems in order to effectively formulate policies, regulations, and implement RI education, thus successfully rooting RI in the institutional culture. He encouraged U21 member institutions to harmonise policies based on international standards, to coordinate training across U21 universities, and to perform a cross collaborative climate assessment.

In the sessions that followed, Professor Des Fitzgerald (University College Dublin) presented his views on why it was difficult to determine a threshold for research misconduct; Professor Dick Strugnell

(University of Melbourne) introduced the U21 Global Research Ethics and Integrity Module and other Melbourne initiatives for training research students; Dr Margaret Dowens (University of Nottingham, Ningbo campus) shared her experience in RI education within the context of China, and two students from HKU, Dr Jessica Peng and Miss Norma Wong, talked about RI from a student perspective. The presentations conveyed a strong message that training and education is key to fostering RI and preventing research misconduct.

Dr Ping Sun from the Office of Research Integrity, Ministry of Science and Technology, China, delivered a speech on research integrity from the perspective of the policymaker in the context of China. He introduced and reflected on the major efforts undertaken, experience learned, and the existing challenges faced in China. He pointed out that policy-makers should be actively involved in international discussions on RI issues and make references to universities' expertise and experiences in order to fill the gap between policies and practices.

At the plenary discussion session, through drawing together pertinent issues discussed at the workshop, Dr Paul Taylor proposed a framework on how a shared U21 system in RI education and handling research misconduct could be worked out in future. The proposal stimulated valuable insights from not only 21 delegates but also local participants. As the next step, it was agreed that a U21 Research Integrity Group be formed to enable ongoing discussion and collaboration of U21 member institutions in the area of RI.

In his closing remarks, Professor Paul Tam, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of HKU, concluded that the valuable inputs made by overseas and local participants in this informative and fruitful workshop would contribute to moving towards a U21 approach to RI. He and Professor Frederick Leung, Director of Education and Development for RI at HKU, agreed that they would continue to work closely with U21 delegates and stakeholders to strive to foster RI in our research community.

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