Lyman Briggs College
Responsible Conduct of Research: Background

Spring 2012

All Lyman Briggs College faculty are required to annually provide documentation to the university (through LBC or a joint appointment unit) that all personnel taking part in MSU-based research under their direction have fulfilled the Responsible Conduct of Research training requirements.

The requirement to ensure Responsible Conduct of Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activities (more commonly known as Responsible Conduct of Research or RCR) in U.S. universities was included in the America COMPETES Act of 2007 (re-authorized in 2010). COMPETES is the acronym for Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education and Science.

The Act directs the National Science Foundation to require all grantees to provide “appropriate training and oversight in the responsible and ethical conduct of research” to all students (undergraduate and graduate) and postdoctoral researchers participating in NSF-supported research projects.

To meet this requirement, the Act provides for the following definitions:

- **RCR** - conducting research in ways that fulfill the professional responsibilities of researchers, as those responsibilities are defined by their professional organizations, MSU and, when relevant, government and other entities that support and regulate research.
- **Research integrity** - the quality of possessing and steadfastly adhering to high professional principles, standards and obligations, as prescribed by professional organizations, MSU and, when relevant, government and other entities that support and regulate research.
- **Research ethics** - the critical study of the moral problems associated with, or that arise in the course of, pursuing research.

The training and oversight must address the following specific areas:

- Data acquisition, management, sharing and ownership
- Conflict of interest and commitment
- Human subjects (if applicable)
- Animal welfare (if applicable)
- Research misconduct
- Publication practices and responsible authorship
- Mentor/trainee responsibilities
- Peer review
- Collaborative science

As per the America COMPETES Act, all proposals submitted to NSF after January 4, 2010 must include a certification that the applicant has an institutional plan to provide the appropriate training and oversight.

While the need for RCR training is currently a federal requirement only for NSF proposals, all Lyman Briggs College faculty are required to annually provide documentation that all personnel taking part in MSU-based research under her/his direction have fulfilled the RCR training requirements. This documentation may be submitted through LBC or, if more appropriate to the research in question, through the mechanisms in place in an academic unit in which the faculty member holds a joint appointment.