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RCR makeup assignment

Gayle told me about a few experiences she has had considering ethical issues in science. We discussed how to deal with these experiences, what we can learn from them, and how to avoid them in the future.

1. Someone that worked in a lab reported some data to Gayle that had the opposite results from expected. Gayle had the student repeat the experiment, but also had another person in the lab repeat the same experiment. The results from a different lab member showed the opposite effect from the original lab member. When confronted, the original person working on the project admitted that some tubes might have gotten mixed up. Gayle was concerned that this scientist did not mention this originally and had her attend an ethics course. She was a more senior scientist that should have known better and she eventually left the lab, possibly out of embarrassment. It’s important to admit mistakes and be honest with yourself about the data.
2. While working at Argonne, Gayle had a lab with a post doc and an undergraduate student. The undergraduate came to Gayle explaining some unwanted attention she had been receiving from her lab mate. Gayle reported the issue to HR, and HR wanted Gayle to handle the situation. She spoke with the post doc about the issue. The post doc no longer bothered the undergraduate student, but he was upset about the issue and it made things awkward. The undergraduate student only had a few weeks left in the lab, so that ended the situation. If she was still going to be around, Gayle would have spoken to both of them at the same time about how to have a healthy lab environment. It’s important to respect boundaries and discuss issues.
3. At Argonne, one of Gayle’s colleagues had sexist jokes on the outside of his door. Someone reported this issue and he was forced to take down the jokes.
4. In the US, the government pays for research, so that data belongs to tax payers. Even if research is privately funded, it is still best if it is made public to benefit all of society. At Argonne, there was a man that performed a lot of animal experiments and put in 30 years of work. He was laid off when the work was completed, and tried to withhold the data from others by turning in an empty hard drive. More of the data was eventually found, but that kind of behavior was very unethical and bad for the field.